

Series: Galatians  
Title: The Believers Rule  
Text: Gal 4: 14-18  
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Paul wrote of those who gloried in the flesh.

**Galatians 6: 11: Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. 12: As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13: For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.**

Then Paul declares the believer's rule by which we walk.

**Galatians 6: 14: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16: And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. 17: From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. 18: Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.**

**Subject:** The Believer's Rule

**Proposition:** The believer walks by faith in Christ, glorying only in the cross of Christ, motivated to good works by Christ's love for us.

*In Christ the world is crucified unto me and I to the world.* The confidence of the sinner born-again of God is not in his flesh. Nothing done in the body or not done in the body avails. The flesh profits nothing, Christ said. The Spirit of God says through Paul, *neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails.* What avails then? To be found in Christ. It is only in and by Christ that his people are a new creature, a new creation. Christ created us anew in his righteousness and his holiness. Christ alone avails!

**Galatians 6: 16: And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.**

## THE BELIEVER'S RULE OF LIFE

Our rule is to walk by faith, glorying in Christ alone, because Christ made us a new creation. By circumcision within, in the Spirit, in the new birth, God gives faith to believe we are complete in Christ by Christ.

Colossians 2: 10: Ye are complete in him...11: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

13: And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14: Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15: *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

The result is a new creation all of Christ. We begin glorying only in the cross of Christ, preaching the glory of Christ crucified, trusting Christ to work in our own heart and in the heart of his redeemed.

Paul once glorified in appearance, not in heart. So did we. Now he preached Christ and him crucified. Now, by the new birth, he trusted God to give his children spiritual life. Now he was willing to suffer and be persecuted and rejected for Christ's sake. Now he was merciful and longsuffering and gloried only in Christ. Who made the difference? Christ!

2 Corinthians 5: 12: For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to *answer* them which GLORY IN APPEARANCE, AND NOT IN HEART.

They accused Paul of being too fanatical, of being beside himself and of being too sober-minded, too serious and dogmatic because he preached only Christ crucified. He said it is for your cause.

2 Corinthians 5: 13 For whether we be beside ourselves, *it is* to God: or whether we be sober, *it is* for your cause.

What made Paul suffer such persecution yet continue preaching and glorying only in the cross of Christ?

2 Corinthians 5: 14: For the LOVE OF CHRIST constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15: And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

The love of Christ for Paul constrained him in the new man to continue glorying only in the cross of Christ even in the face of persecution. He now had discernment to judge that since Christ died for all his people, then all his people died in him. Our body of sins was crucified in Christ. Now, being risen in Christ and being regenerated to newness of life, by the Spirit of Christ constraining us, we live unto Christ rather than unto ourselves.

2 Corinthians 5: 16: Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.

Some think Paul knew Christ when he was Saul. Some think he is the rich, young ruler. But now Paul knew Christ in the Spirit. Whether Paul was the rich, young ruler or not he once knew Christ only after the flesh but now in spirit. One commentary illustrates this well, writing,

“When he knew Christ after the flesh he considered Christ the leader of a new sect, the leader of a new party, a menace to holy religion. He says we do not see Him like that anymore. We know Him now in the Spirit, by the Spirit.”

So it with believers toward Christ and toward one another. Before we used to be religious. We used to know men and women in the flesh. We gloried in appearance, not in heart. The emphasis was on the outward, on works of the flesh. The message we heard was the preaching of works.

Now by Christ being formed in us in Spirit, we glory in Christ alone in the new heart. Our confidence is not things seen with the carnal eye but things seen only by faith (2Co\_4:18). Now we thus judge, we discern spiritually, that nothing of the flesh avails. *Circumcision nor uncircumcision avails*. No work of our flesh avails to make us accepted with God or to add to what Christ has accomplished. Nor will Christ let us be overly cast down due by our sins and infirmities. Our bodily deeds do not avail in a positive way nor do our sins avail negatively. Nothing shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Nothing shall undo the righteousness and holiness we have been made in Christ alone!

Now we thus judge—now we judge spiritual discernment because the Spirit has given us spiritual discernment. He has given us faith to see things not seen with the carnal eye. Now “the love of Christ constraineth us.”

We see this old man, with his deeds, has been crucified in Christ—judged of God, crucified, buried and we are risen to newness of life in Christ and seated in him at God’s right hand.

Not only that but we discern that this earthly tent shall soon be destroyed. But we have a new body prepared by Christ awaiting us hereafter. So the world is crucified unto us and we to the world. Christ by his life, death and resurrection has made all God’s elect a new creation in him. By his Spirit, a new man is created within the sinner in the new birth—Christ in you the hope of glory (Col 1:27). We shall soon have a new body in heaven.

But all is of Christ. We have nothing in which to glory in or of ourselves. *We glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us and we to the world.* God gave us faith to walk by faith looking away from ourselves, away from all things below, to Christ above in whom we are complete. He constrains us, motivates us, by Christ's love for us. We walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor 5:7). We glory in heart, in spirit, in Christ, not in the appearance of the flesh. This is what Paul means by a new creature.

2 Corinthians 5: 17: Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18: And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation

## **GOD IN CHRIST GETS ALL THE GLORY**

Notice, Paul said, "All things are of God!" God in Christ reconciled all his elect to himself. The Spirit has given us life and given us the ministry of reconciliation. He has ministered into our hearts the good news of reconciliation accomplished by Christ bringing us to be reconciled to God through faith in Christ. And he has given us the gospel of Christ's accomplished reconciliation so that we glory only in the cross of Christ by preaching only Christ and him crucified.

God in Christ gets all the glory for this new creation. Who created the first creation? God alone.

Genesis 1: 1: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Likewise, the triune God in Christ Jesus gets the glory for creating the new creation. Christ created his elect entirely new in him and Christ creates us a new man by Christ being formed in us in the new birth by the Spirit. It is only through the means God ordained which is the preaching of this good news of Christ's person and work. This is why Paul says *God forbid we should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The work is all of Christ. He did not fail to accomplish the work of redemption for his people and he shall not fail to quicken each one by the Spirit. But he only does so through the preaching of the cross of Christ. This is why we glory only in Christ. This is why we preach only Christ crucified. This is why we pray and wait on the Spirit of Christ.

Revelation 21: 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new

Ephesians 2: 13: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14: For he is our peace, who hath made both [Jew and Gentile elect] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain ONE NEW MAN, *so* making peace; 16: And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18: For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Isaiah 65: 17: For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19: And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

Christ, by his blood, made us righteous. Christ, by the Spirit, creates the new man within each one he redeemed; it is Christ's righteousness and holiness that makes our new man righteous and holy. Christ gives faith to rest entirely in him alone.

Faith's confidence is Christ alone. Our confidence is not our own flesh nor another's flesh. Our confidence is Christ who is the Power and Wisdom and Righteousness of God for his people. We glory only in the cross of Christ because Christ redeemed his people, Christ robes us in his righteousness, Christ sanctifies by the washing of water by the word, Christ keeps us and Christ shall present us to himself without spot or blemish.

This is the rule we walk by and the love wherewith we love sinners. We continually preach and hear of his faithfulness and his great love for his people in laying down his life. Through the gospel the Spirit blesses

the word to our new man and Christ's love constrains us. This is not done by the message of our works or the bare preaching of the law or precepts. Works of faith are worked in us by his love for his people through the preaching of the gospel of Christ, not by any other constraint! It is made effectual and continues to be made effectual by the Spirit of God in the new man. All is accomplished through the preaching of the gospel of Christ and him crucified.

### **AS MANY AS WALK ACCORDING TO THIS RULE**

The gospel of Christ crucified is the rule of the believers walk. We walk by faith in Christ, glorying only in the cross of Christ. Works of love are produced in the new man by the Spirit by Christ's love for us. It is all through the means of preaching his gospel giving all glory to Christ.

This was Abel's rule who "obtained witness that he was righteous." It was Enoch's rule who had "this testimony that he pleased God." It was the rule of Noah who "became the heir of righteousness which is by faith." This was the rule of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who were heirs "of promise." It was the rule of Sara who "judged him faithful who had promised."

Not one of them had the ten commandments given at Sinai. They were made a new creation by the Spirit. They walked by God-given faith glorying only in Christ. Their constraint was the love of God in Christ revealed through the gospel. Noah was a preacher of righteousness—Christ our Righteousness!

Paul gloried in the cross because only in the person and work of Jesus Christ does faith behold the full display of the character of God Almighty. Some say that the 10 commandments are the summary of the character of God." It is not! The law is holy, just and good and we delight in the law in the inward, new man.

But there is no mercy in the Law. God is merciful. But God's mercy is beheld in Christ on the cross dying in place of his people.

*"God is love."* But there is no love in the Law. The *fulfillment* of the law is love. But the love of God which fulfilled the law for his people is seen in Christ on the cross. "Greater love hath no man than this than a man lay down his life for his friends"; "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his only begotten Son to be the propitiation for our sins." That is the constraint of his people which is far greater than law. *"If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."* Christ laid down his life for his people when we were ungodly. We ought to lay down our lives for one another when we are ungodly. Law will not make a man lay down his life, but love will.

There is no grace in the law. The law is hard, cold, unyielding, demanding perfection and death to sinners. In Christ on the cross, we behold God's grace to the guilty. All God's glory is seen in the face of Christ Jesus crucified in place of his people. In Christ humbling himself to take flesh like his brethren, bearing our sin, satisfying God's holy justice and Justifying his people we behold the character of God. In Christ being longsuffering toward us, good toward us, sending us the gospel and granting us repentance and faith we behold the character of God and his grace.

We beheld this glory in the face of Christ. Like it was in the first creation, God said let there be light and he shined into our hearts to give us the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. God forbid we should glory in ourselves, in our works, be discouraged by our sins or glory in what we made others do or any other thing. Let us glory in Christ alone. He made us a new creation by his blood and righteousness and life.

So the believer's rule is the law written on the heart in the new birth. It is not the ten commandments. Romans 2 declares the Gentiles who never had the law of Sinai had the law written on their conscience. Cain knew he had done wrong when he killed Abel and he tried to hide it. The law written on the new heart in the new birth is the "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus"—it is the everlasting covenant of grace, the gospel of Christ. Scripture says it is the law of faith whereby we believe on Christ. It is the law of righteousness whereby we behold Christ is the only one who fulfilled the law and who is our Righteousness. It is the law of liberty whereby we behold Christ has set us free by his redemptive blood and we shall never again become slaves under the curse of the law nor the dominion of our sin-nature. It is the law of love, the law of Christ who bore our burden and restored that which he took not away.

## THE ISRAEL OF GOD

Paul says as many as walk according to this rule peace be on them. And it is! Christ has accomplished peace with God and he is our peace. Paul said in Colossians that peace of God rules our hearts. When any war against us our sin-nature may make us answer back contentiously. But the Spirit of Christ settles our hearts. He makes his child remember that if Christ wrought peace for him and settled his heart in peace then Christ alone is able to do so for that one warring against him. So he makes us look to Christ, speak of Christ, pray to Christ for the one in need and take every opportunity to show them we love them and seek peace.

Paul says as many as walk according to this rule may the mercy of God be upon them. And it is! God's tender mercies are new every morning for the sake of Christ. He delights to show mercy for the sake of Christ. He makes his children delight to show mercy for Christ's sake.

Those who walk according to this rule are the Israel of God. God's Israel is not those vainly boasting of their works. It is not the natural children of Abraham and not those boasting of fleshly circumcision, or baptism or any other work.

The *Israel of God* are "the children of Abraham by faith" (Galatians 3:29,) whether Jew or Gentile. They are God's holy nation chosen of God the Father, redeemed by Christ, born-again of the Spirit, united in Christ's body, who walk by the rule of faith, constrained by Christ's love, giving all glory to Christ.

## THE TRUE MARKS IN THE BODY

Paul said *from henceforth let no man trouble me*. Let them cease to throw hinderances in the course of my preaching. Let no man slander me anymore. Let no man oppose or attempt to obstruct the gospel of Christ I preach. Let no man trouble me about the necessity of circumcision or any other bodily work for salvation.

Paul said *for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus*. Christ was nailed to the cross, as far as man is concerned, because they hated Christ and salvation by him alone. Paul bore the marks of enmity and rejection from men who hated Christ and gloried in their flesh. He bore the marks from whips, and scourging, stoning, because he preached the gospel of Christ and him crucified.

Likewise, every believer bears in our body the mark of our Father's name in our foreheads by the Spirit of God. We have been sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. We have the mind of Christ. The Spirit has given us an understanding that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. We bear the marks of faith and love. In the new man the Spirit creates fruit: faith, hope and charity. We glory only in the cross of Christ.

This is only by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ inseparably united with the new spirit he has created within us. Notice, it is the grace of our Lord—not with your body—but with your spirit. With your new man united with Christ with Christ in you. Paul knew there were yet some true brethren in Galatia. This was Paul's prayer for them and this is our prayer for our brethren. This is the only way we are saved and continue glorying only in the cross of Christ.

**Galatians 6: 18: Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.**

**Amen!**