

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 23RD–24TH, 2024 // GALATIANS

## THE LAW (GALATIANS 5:1–12) SET FREE FOR FREEDOM, NOT SLAVERY

The Judaizers were teaching legalism to the Galatians. Paul reminds them of their identity in Christ and warns them to stand firm.

- If we don't stand firm in our identity in Christ, we can "submit again to a yoke of slavery." **What gods do we return to over and over again?**

## CIRCUMCISION

Paul's issue with the Judaizers wasn't with circumcision, but with using circumcision as a confession of faith. If they adopt this teaching, "Christ will not benefit [them] at all."

- When we embrace the law and attempt to earn acceptance ourselves, **what's the need for Jesus? Is Jesus enough or not?**

## "...ALIENATED FROM CHRIST;...FALLEN FROM GRACE"

Paul is referring to the system of law versus the system of grace. They are trying to be accepted by God by their own works (legalism), rather than trusting in Jesus.

- When we embrace legalism, it's not that God's grace has been taken away, but **we turn our backs on His grace.**

## WHAT HAPPENED?

The Galatians had a good start in the faith and were running well. However, the corrupting influence of legalism crept in, and this **prevented them from obeying the truth.**

- **We need to be familiar with God's voice and test everything with God's Word** (1 John 4:1) because a "little leaven" will eventually spread.

## PAUL'S HEART OF PROTECTION

Paul wishes the false teachers, who are so forceful in pushing circumcision on Believers, would go the whole way and "mutilate themselves." Paul loves the Believers too much to not confront the false teachers.

- **If we see a Believer headed on the wrong path, will we lovingly step in?**

## THE FLESH (GALATIANS 5:13–21)

### "...DON'T USE THIS FREEDOM...FOR THE FLESH"

Legalists fear that people will use freedom to sin. Paul is aware and instructs us to use the freedom to "serve one another through love."

- **If we use God's grace as freedom to sin and live however we want (Romans 6), then we need to examine whether or not we have an authentic relationship with Him.**

## THE SPIRIT VERSUS THE FLESH

We may want to please God, but our sin nature can pull us into disobedience (Romans 7) without the Holy Spirit's help.

- **The Holy Spirit empowers us to walk in obedience.** If we depend on Jesus daily, **we will gradually move away from evil and look more like Him** (sanctification).

## "WORKS OF THE FLESH ARE OBVIOUS..."

Though it is an interior, invisible battle, the results are outwardly evident. Paul lists sins dealing with sexuality, religion, relationships, drunkenness, and "anything similar."

- **We need God's help in these battles because we are incapable to overcome the flesh on our own strength.**

## PAUL'S WARNING ABOUT SIN

Paul is direct about the consequences of sin here: "those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

- Who will not inherit the kingdom of God? **One who lives in habitual sin, ignores God, and refuses to repent. People will know us by our fruit** (Matthew 7:13–23).

## THE SPIRIT (GALATIANS 5:22–26)

### WORKS OF THE FLESH VS. FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

The works of the flesh seem overwhelming—both in us and around us. God is good enough and big enough to change everything with the fruit of the Spirit.

- **The fruit of the Spirit can always conquer the works of the flesh. Sometimes we give the enemy too much power.**

## SINGULAR FRUIT

There is a significance in plural (works of the flesh or gifts of the Spirit) versus singular (fruit). These aren't fruits only available for some, but the fruit should grow in all Believers.

- A person saved by faith will be a person in whom the fruit of the Spirit grows. **Is there fruit growing in your life?**

## "...HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH..."

Paul uses "crucified" to remind us of what Jesus did for us on the cross and that we are to take up our cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24).

- If we belong to Christ, **we will take action to crucify the flesh. It will be a battle until we get to heaven, but it's a battle we have to get serious about.**

## "...KEEP IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT."

"If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit." If the Spirit is the source of our life, let the Spirit direct us and guide our steps. He will convict us when we're off track.

- **When we experience conviction, how will we respond?** If Jesus is Lord over our life, it means that we aren't in charge.

## DON'T BECOME CONCEITED

Once Believers experience freedom in Christ, freedom from the flesh, and live by the Spirit, Satan will tempt us with pride. Once pride creeps in, we become conceited.

- Humility is needed if we want to belong to Christ and live by the Spirit. **There is no hope in this life without Jesus.**

## FREEDOM OR IMPRISONED?

- It is for freedom, not slavery, that Christ has set us free. **Our prison doors are wide open because of Jesus.** Will we walk out or remain imprisoned? We all have a choice.
- If we've experienced the freedom of Christ, **why do we run or crawl back into our prison cells** (gods who can't save us)?

## THE FLESH IS STRONG...

- If the Spirit doesn't live in us, we will be hopeless in the battle against the flesh. Without the Spirit, we will live in habitual sin and will not inherit the Kingdom of God.
- **Addressing sin isn't popular, but it's necessary.** The good news is there is an answer for imprisonment to sin.

## BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS STRONGER

- When we begin a relationship with God, we have a new identity (Galatians 2:20), and the Spirit who lives in us is stronger than the flesh.
- We have to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit by **reading, praying, worshiping, and obeying.**
- **The more we are conformed to the image of God, the less power the flesh has on us.**

## WHAT FRUIT DO WE BEAR?

- Are the works of the flesh obvious? Do we use our freedom to live selfishly? **We have to get serious and crucify the flesh.**
- Do we bear the fruit of the Spirit? **When we experience the love, grace, and power of God it should transform us. We should walk toward Jesus and away from evil.**
- **Romans 8:13–15**
- **Galatians 5:22–25**