

2. The Book of Galatians 1:6-10

Liberty From Law-Part 1

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Last time we met, we started a new series through the Book of Galatians—but instead of going through the book verse by verse we decided to study it topically based on its main theme.

The main theme of Galatians is **liberty**—the liberty (or freedom) that is ours in Christ.

The Key Verse of the Book is Galatians Chapter 5 verse 1—

Galatians 5:1 (NKJV)

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.

So, as I said when we began this series—we are going to focus our attention on 3 main areas (topics) of liberty that Paul brings up in this epistle—

I. Liberty from Lies

II. Liberty from Law

III. Liberty for Life

Last time, we started looking at—“**Liberty from Lies**” which in some ways is an introduction to the second main point—“**Liberty from Law**” but I decided to include it as a main point because of the day in which we are living. By that I mean—we are living in a world full of lies—and it seems to be getting worse by the day.

Some of these lies tend to be kind of innocuous—what many call ‘*little white lies*.’ Most people don’t realize that there are no innocent, harmless ‘white’ lies in God’s eyes. **All lies are sins** that will condemn a person to hell if not repented of and washed away thru the precious blood of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 21:8)

But granted, from a human standpoint some lies tend to be small and insignificant—while others are profoundly hurtful and life altering (like the lies associated with marital infidelity).

I think that most people understand that all lies, whether serious or small, can only affect us while we live on this earth—in other words, they can only hurt us *temporarily* in this life and can do us no more harm after we’re dead. But then there are some lies that will not only affect us in the temporal—but will keep on affecting us in the eternal as well.

These lies tell us how to get to heaven—when in reality they will damn us to hell.

Lies that are passed off as spiritual ‘truth’ that, if believed and embraced, will give a person new life—a life that will stretch out into eternity and bless them forever—or so they are told.

(Think of Muslims who blow themselves up in a crowded marketplace or fly jet planes into skyscrapers in Jihad thinking that when they open their eyes in death, they will be in paradise surrounded by their 72 virgins—only to find themselves in a place of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth for all eternity!).

Well, the lie of Islam wouldn't be birthed for another 550 years—but Paul dealt with other lies in the first century Greco-Roman world—one of the more prevalent ones Paul and the other apostles dealt with was the lie of *Gnosticism*.

The word *Gnosticism* and *Gnostic* comes from the Greek word 'gnōsis' which means 'knowledge' (mystical knowledge).

The Gnostics believed that *matter* (contained in the physical universe) was evil and therefore Jesus (being God) couldn't have been a flesh and blood human being because His physical body would have made Him *evil* and God is not and cannot be evil—therefore, Jesus couldn't have come '*in the flesh*'. So most Gnostics claimed He must have come as a *spirit* and not as a physical *man* (a denial of His humanity).

This doctrine (a branch of Gnosticism) was called, *Docetism*—the belief that Jesus had no actual physical, human body—He only *seemed* to have one (they believed He was really a phantom, a ghost).

That's why the apostle John opened his first epistle with the words—

1 John 1:1 (NKJV)

¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life--

In saying this, he was coming against Gnostic heresy which taught that Jesus didn't have a physical or human body—a direct attack on the humanity of Christ.

Some of Satan's lies are so outrageous and 'out there' (like Scientology and other esoteric belief systems) that most people won't be taken in by them.

But then there are lies that are far more subtle and plausible from a Christian point of view, the reason being, because they take elements from the true gospel of Jesus Christ and mix them with just enough lies so that the final product can't save those who embrace it.

These would include the lies of Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses—and the one that Paul is dealing with in his letter to the Galatians—the lie of the Judaizers, which is legalism.

After Paul visited the area of Galatia, he later learned that the Judaizers had come into the area after him trying to pervert the gospel that Paul had given to them—and the churches were listening to them!

The word *Judaizer* comes from a Greek verb meaning "*Those who teach others to live according to Jewish customs and laws.*" As we said last time, the Judaizers taught that, in order for a person to become a Christian—he first had to become a Jew! They taught he had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses—**then he could put his faith in Christ and be saved.**

Their message was a mixture of Christianity and Judaism—of grace and law—of faith plus works.

Paul wrote this letter to counteract *their* message by presenting (actually defending) the one and only true gospel—the gospel of Jesus Christ—the gospel of grace! That brings us to the second major section in our series, “A Journey in Liberty through Galatians”—“**Liberty from Law**” which is really liberty from religion.

II. Liberty from Law

Paul now launches into the main body of his letter to the Galatians—

Galatians 1:6 (NKJV)

⁶ I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel...

“**I marvel**”—“*to be astonished or bewildered*”.

Paul didn’t marvel that false teachers were teaching a false gospel—he marveled that the Galatians, to whom he had personally taught the truth, were turning so quickly from that truth and buying into these lies!

This is the pain of every pastor and why John said, “*I have no greater joy than knowing my children are walking in the truth*”.

“**turning away**”—“*to desert or abandon*”.

Galatians 1:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

In the Greek Paul uses a play on words. The word ‘**different**’ in verse 6 is *heteros* and in verse 7 the word translated ‘**another**’ is the Greek word *allos*. It’s a play on words because both Greek words can be translated ‘another’—and so we could read verses 6 and 7 this way:

“Galatians 1:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a another gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.”
(paraphrased)

The word *heteros* (translated ‘different’) in v.6 is the word we get the English word ‘heterosexual’ from—and means “*another of a different kind.*”

The word *allos* (translated ‘another’) in v.7 is a word that means “*another of the same kind.*”

When Jesus said—

John 14:16-17a (NKJV)

¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth...

He used the Greek word *allos* which meant the Holy Spirit was not going to be another God in the sense of being a totally different God—but the exact same God in a another or different form. That’s why the translators translated verse 6 with the word ‘**different**’ and verse 7 with ‘**another**’.

Paul is saying—

Galatians 1:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a [totally] different gospel, ⁷ which is not another [the exact same one that I gave to you]; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

The word “**pervert**” means to “*twist or distort*” and it carries with it the idea of making something an opposite. To add anything to the true gospel doesn’t improve it or make it a *little* different but still basically good.

To add anything to the gospel will distort it into something *completely* different and make it the opposite of good news—in other words, it will no longer *save* a person from hell but will only *damn* them to hell—and that’s the opposite of good news!

As we said last time, there’s only one entrance into salvation/heaven and that is thru Jesus Christ—He is the Door (John 10:9)—He is the Way (John 14:6)!

But any door that leads to something of great value is going to be locked! Likewise, the door leading to salvation (which is priceless in value) is locked and requires a ‘key’ to open it. What is the key that unlocks the door and allows a person to enter into Christ and find salvation—it is the gospel!

So, the gospel is to salvation what a key is to a lock. However, we all know that a key won’t unlock a door if it’s somehow gotten bent or twisted.

The key must be straight and true if it’s going to be used to open a door—and the same is true with the gospel!

If Satan can bend, twist or distort the gospel, he can keep the door of salvation locked to seekers—which is the whole goal of Satan’s false teachers, preachers and pastors (whether they realize it or not)—to pervert the gospel to keep people out of heaven!

Galatians 1:7 (NKJV)

⁷ ...but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

The word “**trouble**” means “*to make seasick*”—as when a person boards a ship and encounters a storm at sea where they are tossed to and fro by waves on the sea making them seasick.

That’s what legalism does—once you ‘get on board’ it tosses you in and out of salvation, up and down emotionally (God loves you when you do right but is angry with you when you blow it and do wrong) until you are so spiritually and emotionally sick you either abandon the faith or worse—abandon life by committing suicide! (Explain)

“...some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.”— How?

By telling you salvation isn’t a gift you receive by faith but a wage you work to earn—a clear lie based on what the Bible says about salvation:

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NLT)

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Galatians 1:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Notice that Paul says—“if an angel from heaven preaches any other gospel to you...”—not “*an angel from God.*”

Satan and his fallen angels still have access to heaven and therefore could conceivably bring a false message ‘from heaven’—but never could or would an angel from God do that.

Joseph Smith founder of the Mormon church claimed the angel Moroni came to him...(Finish)

1 John 4:1 (NKJV)

¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 Timothy 4:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

2 John 1:9-11 (NKJV)

⁹ Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; ¹¹ for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

Twice in Galatians 1 Paul pronounced those who pervert the gospel ‘**accursed**’.

The word he uses is *anathema*, which means “*dedicated to destruction*” or “*eternally damned*” or as one translation put it—“*cursed to the lowest hell.*”

No matter who the preacher may be—whether an angel from heaven or hypothetically—even Paul himself—if he preaches any other gospel, he is accursed!

Galatians 1:8–10 (NKJV)

⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. ¹⁰ **For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.**

Apparently, Paul’s enemies had accused him of being a “*man pleaser*” in some way.

The word “**persuade**” means “*to make a friend of.*”

Men-pleasers don’t invoke *anathemas* on those who proclaim false gospels—they want to be friends with everybody, not cause trouble.

If Paul had wanted to ‘**please men**’, he would have remained a zealous Pharisee and promoter of the Law rather than becoming ‘**a bondservant of Christ.**’

The word **'bondservant'** is the Greek word *doulos*.

Doulos only means one thing in Greek—slave.

There are six or seven words in Greek for *'servant'* which is a different concept from doulos.

- *A servant is someone who works for another—a slave is someone who is owned by another.*
- *A servant is the employee of another—a slave is the property of another.*

The New Testament identifies Christians as the *douloi* (slaves) of Christ 150 times.

A slave in New Testament times was bought and owned—he or she had no legal rights, owned no property and could not refuse any of their master's commands. They were totally dependent on their master for everything needed to live—and were rewarded or punished as pleased their master.

But the concept and language of slavery is offensive to us—we don't like it.

We associate it with *evil* and so the translators of the N.T. sought to soften *'doulos'* (slave) by translating the word in almost every New Testament version as *'servant'* or *'bondservant'* instead of 'slave'.

It started with the Geneva Bible in 1560 because the translators were afraid that there would be too much stigma associated with the word *slave*—that the word would carry with it too much negative baggage causing the new translation to be seen in less than a completely positive light.

So, Christians for 5 and a half centuries have been cheated out of a proper understanding of our true relationship to our Lord Jesus Christ.

The word **'bondservant'** doesn't even appear in the Greek (it's a made up word)—but if you tell me the New Testament says that I am the slave of a Master who owns me and whose commands I have no choice but to obey—now I get it!

However, if you tell me I'm the *servant* of Christ then that means I'm an employee and puts me in a negotiating position—which is a huge difference from being a slave who has no rights, no power and no will of their own.

If we see ourselves as *servants* (employees) to a boss it completely messes up and confuses Jesus' statement, *"No man can serve two masters"*.

If *'master'* means *'boss'* that doesn't make sense because a lot of people have more than one boss over them at work—or work two jobs serving two bosses. But no man can be a *slave* to two people because you can't be *owned* by two people.

That's what Paul had in mind when he said in Galatians 1:10—

Galatians 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant [slave] of Christ.

If you are a slave of Christ, you only have one Person to please—the Lord Jesus Christ and not even yourself.

When Jesus is truly your Master, your Lord, you give up all independence, all autonomy—you are no longer in control and calling the shots!

This determines not only success and victory in the Christian life—but it really demonstrates whether or not you really are a Christian (John 10:27).

Obedience is the *evidence* of saving faith and true salvation—not the *cause* of salvation.

One is faith-based (*'salvation by faith leading to obedience'*—grace), and the other is works-based (*'obedience leading to salvation'*—legalism).

Luke 6:47-49 (NKJV)

⁴⁷ Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. ⁴⁹ But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

Someday we will stand before the Lord, and if we are truly saved as evidenced thru a life of obedience—we will hear Him say to us, *"Well done good and faithful slave...!"*

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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