

Fallen From Grace, Part 1: The Works of False Doctrine

Scripture: Galatians 5:1-6

Code: 1665

Galatians 5 and we'll be looking at verses 1 through 12. In the book of Galatians the issues are very clearly drawn. There are only two religions in the world. It appears on the surface as though there are thousands of religions, but there aren't. There are only two religions. The religion of human achievement and the religion of divine grace. There aren't any other. Now the religion of human achievement comes under all kinds of brand names, but its all the same thing. It is Satan's system of religion. It is the system that says you can redeem yourself by your own efforts, your own good deeds, your own good works.

In the book of Galatians it happens to come under the brand name of circumcision and mosaic legalism. But it could come under any name, Muhammadism, Buddhism, etc., etc. It's all the same thing right on down to the things that bother us, right at the very steps of our houses Jehovah's Witnesses and so forth. It's really all the very same religion. It's the religion of human achievement. Now throughout all of the history of man, God's religion of divine grace as been opposed by Satan's religion of achievement or self effort or self righteousness. And the book of Galatians jumps right in the middle of this particular controversy and solves it for all time. The book of Galatians defends capably and effectively the doctrines of divine grace over against the doctrines of human achievement.

For every man who ever lived, ultimate salvation boils down to as simple a question as this, do I magnify my own achievement or do I humbly bow beneath the grace of God? That is the issue that faces every man. Today it's defined, do I magnify my own achievement or do I humbly bow beneath the cross of Jesus Christ? Now as the apostle Paul has carefully outlined the fact that grace is superior to the religion of achievement. He continues to do so even as he begins the third and final section of the book in Chapter 5. There have been three sections in the book and all of them deal with the same thing. They all deal with the doctrines of grace being superior to the doctrines of works or human achievement.

We saw in the first section, for example, the historical argument where Paul argues for grace against law on the basis of his own experience and the testimony of others. Then in the second section, we saw the theological argument where the apostle Paul amasses Old Testament Scripture to defend the fact that grace is superior to works. And now as we come to this third section, we find the moral argument. Here Paul appeals to the practical inside changes brought about by justification by faith. So he shows that historically, doctrinally, and morally or practically grace supersedes works as the

way to God.

And in Chapters 5 and 6, we have the third and final section. Chapter 1, Paul defends his apostleship. Chapter 2, he defended his doctrine of justification by faith, and Chapter 3, he applied that doctrine to practical living. And he shows us that the life of faith really works. And that's really an important argument isn't it. It's one thing to know it was a historical fact. It's one thing to know it's a theological fact. It's something else to know it works. The life of faith works. That is what is in Chapters 5 and 6.

Now in this practical section, Paul emphasizes the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And the reason he emphasizes the ministry of the Holy Spirit is this, it is the Holy Spirit who makes the life of faith work. The life of faith wouldn't work any better than the life of law or life under legalism if it weren't for the indwelling Holy Spirit who empowers us. And so in Chapters 5 and 6, most particularly in Chapter 5, he gives great emphasis to the ministry of the Holy Spirit and calls on all men to yield to the Spirit's control.

Let me just illustrate that. Look at verse 5. "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." Verse 16, "Walk in the Spirit." Verse 18, "If you be led by the Spirit you're not under the law." Verse 25, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." And there in just those simple remarks we have the emphasis of Chapter 5 on the Holy Spirit. To make the life of faith in grace work depends upon the power of the Holy Spirit. So we come to this practical section of implementing the life of faith, implementing the life of grace in the energy of the Holy Spirit. And this becomes a great argument for justification by faith, because if justification by faith really works that's a substantial amount of evidence in its favor.

Now Paul begins with a very potent exhortation to the Galatians not to surrender the freedom which they have in Christ, but to stand firm in it. They had known that freedom. They had been set free in Jesus Christ, and then the Judaisers came and tried to put them back into bondage. The bondage of legalism, and at the very start of Chapter 5, verse 1 Paul cries out to them don't do that. Don't go back into the bondage of legalism.

Let's look at verse 1, and we need to look at it very carefully and we'll use it as kind of an introduction then we'll proceed into our outline beginning with verse 2. Verse 1, "Standfast therefore," and I'm reading it out of the authorized and I'll explain perhaps a better translation in a moment. "Standfast therefore in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free. And be not entangled again with a yoke of bondage." Now the translation of the first part, right out of the literal Greek is this. "For freedom Christ has set us free." "For freedom Christ has set us free.

Now what Paul is saying is this, that Christ set us free to be free men. He did not set us free to be in bondage again. He set us free to be free. You say well, were the Galatian Gentiles in bondage? Certainly, they were in bondage to a legal system. It was not the mosaic system, but it was a system

of law under which they were bound. But when Christ set them free He set them free to be free. Not to go back into bondage again. That's what it's saying at the beginning of the verse.

Our former life was slavery. Jesus Christ was our liberator. Conversion was the act of emancipation, and the Christian life is the life of a free man. And this freedom as expressed in Galatians is freedom from law, freedom from law. It's freedom on conscience. Freedom on the tyranny of the legal system. Freedom from the terrible frustration and pressure of struggling to keep the law when you can't. Freedom from the terrible pressure that comes by trying to do things that will gain God's meriting favor. It is the freedom of being totally accepted with God and knowing it, because of what Christ has done.

Now freedom from the very oppressing awareness that we can't keep the law is tremendous freedom. And this is what is given us in Christ. But let me hasten to add that freedom is more than just a negative thing. It's not just a not being under the pressure concept or a not having to keep the law or a not anything. It's also a positive endowment. A freedom is not just being out of prison, freedom has all kinds of positive factors. In fact, in Romans 8 we find that, you know, all through Romans 7 and even 6, the man there is pictured as kind of a slave. In 6 particularly, he's been a servant of sin. But he's set free in Chapter 8 and we find that all of a sudden what the law could not do, God could do by the Spirit.

Whereas, the man under the legal system could never please God, could never do what God wanted, could never really fulfill ultimately God's law, through the Holy Spirit indwelling that man, he now has the capacity to do those things, so it's not just being out from under law, it's being able to fulfill the law in the energy of the Holy Spirit. And we're just reviewing some things. Positively then, freedom as Paul sees it is the state in which a person is walking and living in the Spirit. Our freedom is walking and living in the Spirit.

Later on in Galatians he says "It is then producing the fruit of the Spirit." Also in Chapter 5, he says, "It is doing the will of God with joy." And later on in Chapter 6 he says "It is fulfilling the law of Christ." So being free in Christ is not just being out from under law, but it's having a brand new capacity to fulfill everything God wants in your life and that by the power of the Spirit who is in you, this is freedom. Freedom to do the moral law, but not out of constraint externally, but out of power internally. The Spirit produces the ability in us to do what the pressure from the outside could never do before we knew Christ.

Now notice again verse 1. And in the translation we gave you Christ has made us free to be free. That's what he's saying. And I think we ought to note this, it is Christ who has made us free. It is not our own merits. It is not our own deeds. He himself did it by becoming a curse for us. Chapter 3:13 says, "He redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us."

Now Christ paid a high price, the sacrifice of Himself to set us free. And wouldn't it be ridiculous if Christ were to set us free only to put us in bondage again. You know there are some Christians who live in terrible legalistic bondage. And this verse speaks to them. Do you think...and how ridiculous it is that Christ let you out of your cell only to put you in another cell? No, that isn't freedom, that's just transfer. You've been freed under the law a person already had no more liberty than a child under a tutor and a guardian. Not old enough to act independently and to act alone. He was always under restrictions, always giving orders, always giving commands, and so it is with the person under the law.

But once a person comes to Christ Paul has said in Galatians he becomes a mature man. He becomes a full grown son. He is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. He is a free man. He is no longer bound by external restraints. He is free in the Spirit to act out his maturity and his liberty. And now these people had already been set free, they had already been liberated there was no reason under the sun to put themselves to put themselves under the ceremonial law of Moses. There was no reason under the sun to put themselves under the rituals of Israel. That was done away with. They were set free and yet here they go putting on a straightjacket of legalism again.

Now let me just give you another illustration that may help. The reason that we put people in prison is because they do not have the eternal restraint to keep themselves from committing crimes. We put people in prison because we have to put them under external controls because they're not able to control themselves internally, right? We say to that guy, he's got to be institutionalized. What does that mean? We've got to put him in box that he can't get out of. Why? Because he cannot control himself internally.

In other words, he does evil things. He does unlawful things. He does harmful things. Well, the same thing is true of a person who's committed to an asylum for those who are mentally ill. Those who are sick, as we use the term. And the reason we do that is because they do not have the ability inside to control themselves so we control them outside. That's exactly what the law does. The law is like a prison. It keeps people bounded by walls, because they don't have internal capacity to govern themselves within the limits of law.

Now when a person becomes a Christian, that doesn't mean that all of a sudden he is free to be a criminal. It means that he now has the capacity to walk out of his cell and still live within the bounds of law, but not by being walled in, but by the internal restraints that are built in through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, do you see? That's liberty. It's the liberty not to need to be bounded by rules, but to be free to walk in the Spirit and as he says later, if you do walk in the Spirit, you will not fulfill, what, the lust of the flesh.

So it is not a question of the bounds or the walls. In the Old Testament, they needed walls and they were all in jail, because there wasn't any internal power. And so we've been set free and the Spirit of God is the control. Now if I place myself under a legal system, I go back into a cell and I get into one of these deals that we don't do this and we don't do that and I'll never do this and this is our little thing and we do this and so forth and so on and here are the rules and you better keep them or you're not going to be saved. You're going to do this or else, etc. All you have done is eliminate the necessity for the Holy Spirit, right?

You said in effect, I'm going to live within my little walls, you've rejected internal control and you've opted out for externals. That's putting yourself under bondage. You know what Christian liberty is? It's the freedom to follow the leading of the Spirit in my life independent of any external controls. The rules haven't changed. God's morality hasn't changed, but I'm not confined by it externally. It's produced internally through the Holy Spirit. Well, I hope that helps you to get at least a grasp on it.

But what happened to these Galatians? They were...they had acknowledged salvation and it was by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is then going to move in and take up a work. And He is going to guide them from the inside. He is going to change their behavior. They walked out of their prison. They don't need walls anymore, they have internal controls. They're under control internally. And what have they done? They have that Holy Spirit there. They turn right around, walk right back into a cell that they don't even need to be in and thus confine the Holy Spirit to their cell.

And that's what Paul is saying. Christ set you free to be free. Don't be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. You don't think he went to all that trouble to turn you loose so you can go down a corridor and back into another cell. All you've done is stifle the Holy Spirit. Now the particular yoke of bondage that the Gentiles were under at this point or were at least being brought to their attention was circumcision because the Judaisers, the teachers that had arrived in Galatian were telling them they had to be circumcised in order to be really accepted by God. That God only accepted Jews or those who had the sign of the covenant. And circumcision was the sign of the covenant. If you didn't have the sign of the covenant, you weren't accepted by God.

And so they were telling all these Gentiles that you've got to be circumcised which was just like ushering them all into a cell again. Having escaped from one ritualism are they now going to run right into another one? Now I'll be honest though, I think it's in some ways easier to live in a cell than it is to make the use of your freedom isn't it. Wouldn't you agree to that? I mean if you were in a cell, you'd probably be a pretty good person.

I mean if you were just walled in and all sealed off there wouldn't be a whole lot of things you could do. It is easier. It is easier to live in the confines of a prison as a slave than it is to make the right use of your Spirit directed freedoms. Illustration Israel in the wilderness. Wanted to leave the wilderness.

Wanted to forget the promise land and go back to where? Egypt. Much easier to be a slave in Egypt than to exercise your freedom independently.

And there are some people who are just more comfortable when somebody lays down all the rules. They're not yielded enough to the Holy Spirit to live their own lives and so they have to live within somebody else's external frames. Now this is the theme of these verses. Christianity is freedom not bondage. It's not freedom to do evil. It's freedom to do good from inside power, not outside restraint. Paul specifically then attacks the yoke that has been threatening the Galatians, self-righteousness, fleshly works, religion. And it's just as damnable as any kind of aboriginal animism. It's just as damnable as Satan worship. It's just as damnable as any of the worst a cultic thing you could ever imagine, even though it comes under the title of sophistication that we know as Judaism.

In this case, the religion of self effort, the religion of works, the religion of human achievement was associated with the Judaisers and circumcision. Now Paul makes his appeal then in verse 1. He supports his appeal in verses 2-12. And we'll take verses 2-6 and 7-12 next time. The passage is divided into two parts. Now watch, Paul makes his appeal and then he starts in his attack against the error of the Judaisers. It's divided into two parts. Verses 2-6, he attacks false doctrine. And in verses 7-12, he attacks the propagators of false doctrine. So we could say that verses 2-6 the works of false doctrine. Verses 7-12, the works of false teachers. So he attacks not only their teaching, but he attacks them as well. He discusses the nature of false doctrine, then he discusses the character of false teachers.

We'll look at the false doctrine this time and next time false teacher. All right, verses 2-6 then, the work of false doctrine. Now the false doctrine said this. The false doctrine of the Judaisers and it's the same as any work system just their particular little handle on it said that Christians had to be circumcised to be accepted by God. Now you say well, that's a small thing it's only a minor surgical task. Why make such a big fuss. Besides many doctors think it's very healthy to be circumcised. What's the big deal?

Well, Paul made a big fuss over it in this case. The case of Gentiles, because the false teachers were pushing circumcision not because it was a physical health measure, not even because it was a ceremonial ritual, which he tolerated in the case of Timothy, but he did not tolerate it here because it was a saving act in the minds of the Judaisers. He didn't mind if it was health reasons I'm sure. He wouldn't have even minded if it had been a Jew who wanted to be circumcised in order that he might have a better avenue of witness with his own people. For that reason, he took care of it in Timothy's case. But he did mind it, and he minded it greatly when somebody introduced it as a saving act. It stood for a particular kind of religion that he hated and that God hated and that was the religion of human achievement. The religion of good works. The salvation that comes from legalism.

They were saying in effect that faith in Christ was insufficient to redeem them. That Moses started it, Christ continued it, but you've got to finish it, legalism. Now Paul suggests four things the doctrine of salvation by works produces. And we'll look at them. Four results of the doctrine of salvation by circumcision. Salvation by works. One, and these are really important. One, "Christ profits you," what, "nothing." Verse 2, "Behold I Paul say unto you that if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing."

Now you notice he introduces this was a strong statement of apostolic authority. "Behold no less than I Paul say unto you." And here it could be that he is establishing his apostolic authority by using his name. There is another thought, he may also be emphasizing as he says "I Paul," he may be emphasizing his Jewishness. In other words, he's saying even I a circumcised Jew, proud of my heritage, proud of my traditions, am telling you circumcision is useless and in fact, it renders Christ not beneficial to you. Even this Jewish patriot, this apostle sees the unimportance of circumcision. And so what he does is this, in verse 2, he puts his readers in a dilemma. Here's the dilemma. You can choose either circumcision or Christ, not both, not both.

You can choose everything or nothing on that basis. A man's faith rests on Christ entirely or not at all. Now in order to make this clear he presents a hypothetical situation in verses 2-4. And it's hypothetical we know because of the word if. "If it were true that you were to be circumcised," the literal here is if you should get yourselves circumcised. Now he's not talking to people who have. They haven't yet, but they're hanging on the edge. They've already flirted with them, with the Judaisers. I mean, they'd already been dinking around with the Judaisers information. You say how do you know that? Well, it's clear from Chapter 4, verse 10.

He says, "You already are observing days and months and times and years." In other words, they've already talked you back into the Judaistic calendar stuff. They've already throne you back into ceremonial stuff. Now he says if you were to go further than that and be circumcised, now this implies that it's not yet happened, that it is theoretical, that they are considering it, but haven't done it. Paul isn't saying you that have been. If you were to be, he is saying. They were already yielding to the Judaisers in some things, the danger was that they would then yield to circumcision and they would reduce their religion to the religion of human achievement to ritual. If they accept circumcision thinking it is necessary for salvation, then they will forfeit Christ.

There's a verse that I think will lend help to us in understanding this and that's Romans 11:6, just listen to it. "And if by grace then it is no more of works otherwise grace is no more grace." Did you get that? I'll read it again. "And if by grace," talking about salvation here, God's election to salvation, "If it is by grace, then it is no more of works otherwise grace is no more grace." If you add any works to grace, what have you got? Works not grace.

So if they accept circumcision, even if they figured it was 99% Christ and 1% circumcision they forfeit Christ. A supplemented Christ is a supplanted Christ. Now Paul is speaking doctrinally. He wants to show that faith or grace and works or law can't go together. What he literally says there in verse 2 is Christ will be no good to you. Now that's a strong statement because these people...these people had heard about Christ. They had been exposed to Christ. Many of them had believed in Christ. Some of them were on the very edge of believing in Christ. And he says you might as well just forget it. If you accept circumcision in any sense as part of your salvation Christ is absolutely no good to you.

Now this is basic to the doctrine of salvation. It is impossible to receive Christ, now notice, it is impossible to receive Christ thereby acknowledging you can't save yourself. And then turn around and get circumcised acknowledging that you can get saved by yourself. You can't mix the two. You must choose between a religion of law and a religion of grace. Between Christ and circumcision. And if you're a Christian, you're going to have to choose between living a life of bondage or a life of freedom, which means if you live a life of legalism, you're living in the flesh. You've put up walls that are external, fleshly walls, or you can live a life of the Spirit.

You add anything to Christ, he says you lose Christ. Salvation's in Him alone. And any person who submits to circumcision for justification or any person who believes he's saved by certain works that he does or believes that if he keeps the seventh day or if he does a certain amount of missionary work or whatever it is, if he believes that, if he at all fears the law, or if he at all disbelieves in the absolute all sufficiency of grace, then he'll never be able to be saved by what he disbelieves.

If a man disbelieves that all of salvation is all in Christ, he can't be saved by what he disbelieves. Christ's provision of salvation can't be worth anything if you don't fully trust it. Now the Galatians haven't gone this far yet, but it sure is necessary to put the thing in focus, because there were an awful lot of Jews who were hung on this. Paul could well have reflected on his own writing of Romans and in particular Chapter 9 where he draws a portrait of Israel that includes this concept. "What shall we say then," Romans 9:30, "that the Gentiles who followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness. Even the righteousness which is of faith."

You know everybody's been looking for righteousness, Jews and Gentiles. And you know who found it Paul says? Gentiles. And I suppose if we were to compare the two we'd probably say the Jews were looking harder. The Gentiles found it. Why? Israel followed after the law of righteousness has attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they sought it not by faith, but by the works of the law, do you see? So many Jews wanting righteousness, searching for righteousness, seeking righteousness, never found righteousness because they tried to find self-righteousness. And the Gentiles just kind of wandering around got invited to the banquet didn't they? By faith they came upon righteousness.

So first of all he says false doctrine, the false doctrine of human achievement renders Christ worthless to you. He may as well have never died. You may believe 99% in Christ act in your behalf and 1% in some act of your own and you're disqualified. It might as well be that Christ did nothing, never existed and never lived. He prophets you nothing. He benefits you nothing. All of His sacrifice on the cross is absolutely empty, absolutely meaningless if you count on work that you've ever done to save you. All of grace, absolutely all. And if you add one work, grace is nor more grace. You've destroyed it and you've destroyed the gracious work of Christ. That's a pretty strong statement then isn't. Now he's saying here, he's continuing to compare and he's showing the absolute dichotomy between grace and law.

All right, let's go to the second thing. The first result of the doctrine of achievement is Christ profits you nothing. The second is this, "your debtor to the whole law," verse 3. And boy this is really a hard one to handle. He says in verse 3, "I testify again to every man that is circumcised." Every man literally, it says every man who lets himself be circumcised that's the Greek rendering. Every man who let's himself be circumcised. "If you are to do this, here's another thing you've done, you are debtor to do," what, "the whole law." If you want to live by law fellow, you're going to live by the whole thing. One goof and you're finished.

That's pretty strong stuff. He says, "I testify," interesting word martyromi, it shouldn't be translated just simply testify. That doesn't really unload nearly the concept. It should be translated, "I protest." Strong statement. I protest, look at this, again to every man. Now it may be that the again means I just said it in verse 2. I'm saying it again in verse 3. It may mean I'm protesting again as I did to you on a previous occasion. So it's either a previous verse or a previous occasion, but whatever he says, "I am protesting that everyone who lets himself be circumcised is debtor to do the whole law."

In other words, if you're going to wipe out grace, there's only one other thing you can live under, what is it? Law. And the only way to be justified by law is to do what? Keep the whole law. Man I don't want any part of it, do you? I don't want a thing to do with it. Man, I just accept the fact that God loved me and redeemed me by pure Grace. I didn't do one single thing to add to it and I'm scared to death to try to do one thing to add to my salvation. Then I'm out of grace and under the whole law and I'm damned because I can't keep it. No thanks. Pretty strong argument isn't it.

Those who try to keep the law are in real trouble, believe me. James 2:10, remember that verse? "Whoever shall keep the who law and offend in one point is guilty of all." Can you imagine a dear Jew who tried all his life to keep the law and he worked and struggled and you know this hypothetically he went and all of sudden when he was 67 years old he blew it. Pretty horrible thing. That could never happen, because he would have blown it at least 66 years before that. Galatians 3:10, "As many as are under the works of the law are under the curse."

If you're under the law, you're under the curse. Why? Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. Everybody under law is cursed because nobody living under law can keep the law. If you want to do good works to get to God, you're under the good works system. You need to make sure you do nothing but good works. If you ever do anything but good works you are cursed. So if you want to trade in grace for that kind of a life, that's your privilege. So Paul warns that the false doctrine renders Christ profitless. Christ means nothing. Puts them under the bondage of the whole legal system. You can't break one command and be saved by law. Then he gives them a third result.

A third result of this false doctrine is you're fallen from grace. You are fallen from grace. Verse 4, "Christ is become of no effect unto you whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace." Now some people have read this verse on being fallen from grace and just kind of panicked a little bit because they'd been taught all their lives that the doctrine of security says that when I come to Jesus Christ and am justified by faith, that's a forever thing. And so they get all uptight and they say oh fallen from grace. And some people say this teaches you can lose your salvation.

Beloved this whole passage here has nothing to do with security at all. It has to do with the contrast between law and grace. What he's really saying in a very general sense is if you try to mix law with grace, you have fallen away from grace as a principle. And he's talking in broad theological terms. The issue is not the security of the believer. That issue's covered in a lot of other passages. That's a very important issue and it's in detail covered in many places in the word of God. Not here. This isn't the issue. What he's saying here is you can't mix law with grace. If you try to mix law with grace you have wiped out grace. You see?

If you come all the way up to grace and you say grace is where it's at and all of a sudden you add law, you've fallen from grace as a principle. And you've fallen into law. If you include works, you fall from the grace concept. You've lost hold of grace and it's meaning. Now if a man believes in salvation by works he's cut off. He's severed, and the term Christ has become of no effect unto you. It could be translated several ways. It could be translated you're severed from Christ. You're cut off from Christ or the authorized version is a fairly good translation. Christ becomes of no effect to you. Very similar statement to the one at the close of verse 2. He profits you nothing. You're severed, you're fallen away from the grace principle.

If a man tries to combine law and grace he makes Christ of no benefit. Why? Because he puts himself under the law, and if he's going to live under the law, Christ can't do anything for him. He's cut off from Christ. Christ exists in the realm of grace. If he wants to exist in the realm of law, those two worlds never, what, mix. Now technically, this could be illustrated apostates, this principle.

Take a person who is exposed to the grace of Christ, okay. Let's take a Jewish person and let's say that he has heard the gospel message and that the gospel message has been confirmed to him in

miraculous ways. Let's say that he lived in apostolic times and he had seen signs and wonders and mighty deeds to confirm the gospel. Let's say he'd seen gifts of the Holy Spirit operating within the apostles that confirm that this was a divine thing. And he heard the gospel of Jesus Christ preached in clarity.

And let's say for visual illustration that here is the gospel of grace awaiting him. And he begins to move toward the gospel of grace. And his eyes are opened and his mind understands and he comes to this point. And he gets right to the edge of the gospel of grace and all of sudden all of his legalistic buddies say hey, hey, you know what you're doing? Are you going to throw out all the law of God? All God's holy and sanctified law which He authored Himself. All that great law that is the heritage of all Israel. All that law that God laid down for us from the time of Moses. Are you going to throw that all out. Do you believe God has traded in that whole thing for a free for all?

And the guy lingers in the balance. You know there are such people and they're discussed in Hebrews 6, turn to it. Now let's see what happens to it. Hebrews 6:4, this is a very important passage and we've covered this in our study on Hebrews. If you need more information on it and want to dig into it deeper to understand it, why you listen to that tape. But in 6:4 it says "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened," that's intellectual understanding, "tasted the heavenly gift," the heavenly gift is salvation. They just got a smattering of it. They got a lick of it. They tasted it. The gospel, they tasted it. They were made partakers of the Holy Spirit. The term there is to be in association with.

In other words, they saw the Spirit confirm the gospel. They saw signs and wonders and miracles did these ones reading Hebrews. Yes, they did read in Hebrews 2, 3, and 4, it was all there. They were actually partakers in the miracles of the Spirit. And they had been enlightened intellectually. They had heard the gospel of salvation. They had tasted the good word of God. And there the word is *rama*, not *lagas*, which means they had heard speeches concerning God. They had had a taste of the utterances of God. And the powers or the signs and wonders, characteristic of the age to come. Here they are. Here's grace platform and they've ascended all the way and they've seen the signs and the wonders confirming the gospel and they're standing on the edge.

"If they shall fall away," verse 6 says, "it's impossible to renew them again to repentance." Now that's an apostate. That's a guy who comes all the way up to the edge of grace and then says no, no, I believe that Christ died. I believe that it meant something, but it's also got to be works. That's apostasy. That's apostasy, and if he falls away it's impossibly renewed under repentance. Why? Because if he wouldn't receive Jesus Christ with all that information, he'll never get any more information.

If that didn't stimulate to salvation, God can't do any more than that. If he falls away at that point, it's over, it's over. And he uses an illustration of it in verses 7 and 8. "The earth which drinketh in rain that

comes down upon it and brings forth herbs fit for them by whom it is tilled receives blessing from God." You know some people are like earth, they just suck it up and stuff grows. That's salvation. Some get the rain of God's gospel and it bears fruit. Verse 8, "But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected is near unto cursing." That literally means devoted to destruction whose end is to be burned.

There's some parched hard ground and the water of God's gospel just runs off. And all that's ever there is briars and thorns. So here we see the illustration. The gospel comes and to some it's received and bears fruit, but to others they come all the way up and then it just runs off and their left with a devotion to destruction. To fall from grace then if we were using that concept and I don't think Paul is necessarily applying the concept to anybody in Galatians 5. I think he's just showing you that law and grace don't mix. But we could apply it to an apostate. A guy who comes all the way up, sees what Christ has done, even believes to a degree what he's done, even says that's great, I'm glad he did it. And I believe it and I can see it all, but it's got to be works too. Boom, he has fallen from grace back into the depths of the pit of legalism.

Also, it would be possible perhaps to illustrate that same concept with a Christian. You say could a Christian fall from grace? Yes, a Christian could fall from the principle of the grace life. You say what do you mean by that? You are saved by grace, but do you know something your life is a matter of grace. Do you know what grace is? It's just God's free favor in your behalf. It's just God's free blessing, just keeps coming. And it comes when you yield to the Spirit, right? When you operate in the flesh, you just close the door to God's blessing.

God's grace is going to flow to you as long as you're yield to the Spirit, right? As soon as you start operating in the flesh, which, you just drop the door and you cut yourself off from the flow of God's grace. And here by this we mean the grace of every day blessing that comes from God. Some interpret the passage in Galatians 5 and you can go back to it now, to refer to Christians. I don't really think it refers necessarily to anybody, but it refers to a principle that could apply to Christians. When a Christian...well you as a Christian say well, I'm just going to do what I'm going to do. I'm going to live in the flesh. Are you still going to be equally blessed as if you were living in the Spirit? Are you? No.

If you say well, I'm not going to walk in the Spirit today, I'm going to walk in the flesh. And that's exactly...you say I've never said that. Oh yes you have. You say that every time you walk in flesh, just not that loud. Sure. That isn't any different. And you say well, I'm going to walk in the flesh. You know what you've done? You think God's going to give you as much gracious blessing as when you walk in the Spirit? No, you've just cut off the flow of grace in the sense of daily blessing. And because Christians have lost their grip on grace as a way of life doesn't mean God's lost His grip on them in terms of saving grace.

God graciously wants to work in you and grace is a daily thing. In 2 Corinthians is it 9:8? I'm guessing a little bit, I hope it is. Right, 9:8, amazing. It says this. "And God is able," listen, "to make all grace abound toward you." "God is able to make all grace abound toward you." That's a tremendous promise. Listen to this, God just wants to unload His blessing. He's able to do that, but you know there's a condition there isn't there? And in that particular passage it was the condition of spirit lead giving. If you're open to the Spirit and you respond to the Spirit in the matter of giving, God will just pour grace all over you. It's just a simple illustration. You live in the Spirit, God pours out grace, all grace, all grace.

You know, you can be saved and not grow in grace. You know how I know that? Because Peter said grow in grace. And if he had to command it, it means it doesn't have to so. He wouldn't say grow in grace if everybody always did automatically. Now listen because a Christian refuses the grace of sanctification, does not mean he forfeits the grace of justification. Do you see? The process of sanctification can be retarded by the flesh. You can begin as a Christian to live in the flesh and do all kinds of things. Oh God must be so happy with me. Look what I did again today. Oh I did this holy thing and that holy thing and God's going no, no, no.

And even though the process of sanctification can be retarded by the flesh, that does not mean that the grace of justification is thrown away. Do you see? You're just cutting yourself off from the flow of every day grace, blessing. My friend if every time sanctifying grace got interrupted, justifying grace got interrupted, justifying grace wouldn't be worth anything. Retaining salvation would then by works wouldn't it?

If every time you sinned and did a work of the flesh you lost justifying grace then how would you keep justifying grace. By doing works. Then it wouldn't be grace. It would be works. And if you mess grace up with works, you've done in grace. So retaining salvation would be by works and salvation wouldn't depend upon grace at all. We'd all be legalists. And the Bible would have to say everybody has to be a legalist to keep saved. No, so the issue in Galatians 5 it could be illustrated by an apostate. It could be illustrated by a Christian. In whose life? The Christian's life. He's fallen out of the grace pattern and he's living in the flesh rather than walking in the spirit and letting God just pour out His grace.

And he's going all kinds of little spiritual things and saying God I read my Bible today aren't you happy and God's saying flesh, flesh. Or Lord did you see how austere I was today? I sat there and I behaved as I ought to. My dress was at my ankles and my hair was in a bun and I didn't wear any lipstick. And that's works, that's flesh. Now if you happen to like that and that's just normal for you, maybe it's of the Spirit, I don't...

But anything you do to earn the favor of God is flesh. Anything you do out of love for Him, deed to the Spirit, right? I may do the very same thing. I may spend time reading my Bible. And you may spend time reading your Bible. You may do it out of the love of Jesus Christ and I may do it to earn God's

favor. For it's you a blessed act and God pours out grace. For me it was an act of the flesh, right? It's all a question of what? Motive.

So he's simply saying that as a principle law and grace cannot get together. They cannot come together, they are opposites. There are three negative results then from following the false doctrine of human achievement. Christ profits you nothing. You put yourself under the debt to do the whole law and you fall from grace as a principle. And then a final result, you're excluded from righteousness. And this in verses 5 and 6. You miss out on just what you're looking for. If you try to live by law, you forfeit just exactly what you're looking for. Remember Romans 9? "They attained to the law." They tried to get to righteousness. The Jew wanted to be righteous so bad and he missed out on just what he was looking for, because he sought to be righteous in himself.

And here the pronoun changes from you to we. "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by," what, "faith." We accept righteousness not by works, but by what? Faith. By faith. The Judaisers and the rest of those and the human achievement religion are seeking hope for righteousness and that's what the phrase there should be translated. Wait for the hope for righteousness through works, through the flesh. They exercise the flesh by works to get righteous. Paul says, but you know what we do? We seek it through the Spirit by faith. Through the Spirit we wait by faith for the hope for righteousness.

You say what do you mean by the hope for righteousness? Well, righteousness is ours right now, isn't it? But there's an aspect of it that's hope for when we will be with Him, we'll be like Him, right? In other words, there is a fullness of righteousness that'll be ours when we see Jesus Christ face to face. Paul points it out I think adequately for our understanding without going into a lot of passages. In Romans 8:19, "For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God." We wait for that time when we're fully manifest. Verse 21, "The creation itself also shall be delivered from bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

In other words, there is a future aspect that we wait for the full blown manifestation of our righteousness. Illustrated simply like this, I'm a righteous. Did you know that? So are you if you're a Christian. I am absolutely righteous. Do you know that I am as righteous as Jesus Himself? You say oh, I talked to your wife and I know better. I don't care what my wife says, I'm as righteous as Jesus Christ Himself. Now that isn't blasphemous is it? Because it's true, right?

His righteousness was imputed to me when I believed. But there's a sense in which practically I am waiting for the fulfillment of the manifestation of that righteousness in my flesh, right? That's what he's saying here. Sure we're looking for righteousness. We're looking for that absolute complete full hope for righteousness, but not by our works, but by what? By faith. That's the difference.

Now this verse has three words that just seal the argument and I want you to get them, Spirit, wait, and faith. Now notice with me, "we through the Spirit," oh that's good. Those who attain to righteousness by the law do it not through the Spirit, but through the flesh, through the flesh. We through the Spirit. We can't attain righteousness in the flesh. We gave up on that. The hope for righteousness we seek through the Spirit. Then a second beautiful word. The word wait. Look it doesn't say for we through the Spirit work for the hope for righteousness. It doesn't say we work. It says we what? We wait, isn't that terrific.

You say well, I was saved, but I'm working to be one of the 144,000. See? Of which there are already five million. We believed and we were given that righteousness. We worked and we strive and we struggle and we're working toward that righteousness. You know what I'm not working for it, I'm waiting for it. It's going to be just as free a gift to me as my salvation was. Do you know that?

Some day I'm going to die and go to be with the Lord and be instantly righteous. A gift, a gift, I'm just waiting. You say well do you work? Sure I work, but I don't work for righteousness. You say what do I work for. I work because my heart is filled with love for Christ and issues and good deeds. I'm not trying to earn anything. I'm just working out what's going on in. You can't stop me from doing it. I want to do it. So I'm waiting for the ultimate righteousness. I'm not working. Then it says another great word here, faith. The hope for righteousness is mine by faith not works. So watch, the Spirit in contrast to the flesh waiting in contrast to working and faith in contrast to works.

My final glorification is just going to be a gift. I believe that and on the basis of that faith, God will respond. Then he says in verse 6, "For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision." That isn't even an issue in Christ. You Gentiles don't boast about your uncircumcision and you Jews don't boast about your circumcision. Your sign of the covenant, both are irrelevant. They don't matter. They don't matter one bit.

To illustrate this, to show you that nothing really matters accept grace and faith, the Corinthians were having trouble. They'd go down to the marketplace and there was a guy selling good meat and a good price, the only thing was it was meat offered to idols, right? People would go in and say oh great god so and so and they'd put some food down and some priest would come running and take the food out the back door and sell it in the local priest market. And they'd make money that way. And so maybe a Christian would go along and he'd buy some of this stuff. So he'd have this real psychological battle and this guilt thing. I am not eating meat offered to idols.

So Paul comes along and said what's an idol? It's nothing. Eat up. He says in verse 8, "For food commends us not to God, for neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse." Who cares. So eat or don't eat, doesn't make any difference. It's irrelevant. You see old rituals and old ceremonies don't mean anything in Christ. It's all faith. It's all grace. So he says the outward is unimportant, but there is something important. Faith which works by love, because

immediately if he hadn't said...somebody said oh yikes what a deal. You Christians just come get saved, sit around. No works, don't you do any...sure we work. You do? Oh yeah, we don't work unto righteousness, we work because of what? Of love.

In other words, love produces things. The whole law is fulfilled when faith works by love. Let me show you what I mean. Instead of working according to external rules, I work out of love boiling on the inside of me. Illustration, the Bible says the law, "Thou shalt not kill." Okay, let's say I'm living under law and I don't know the Holy Spirit, He doesn't know me, I'm not saved. And somebody comes in and does something to me and I decide to kill them. The only thing that's going to restrain me is external, the forbidding of that by the law. On the other hand, if I love that individual, does love kill? No, so I don't need a law.

The law says "Thou shalt not steal." I don't need that law, because if I love people, I'm not going to steal from them. You see it's all different. It's internal instead of external. Devoted love springs from the Holy Spirit and works in the life of faith and it precludes the necessity of law. Look at verse 14 of Galatians 5. For all the law is fulfilled in one word. "Thou shalt," what "love thy neighbor as thyself." If you love people you aren't going to kill them. You aren't going to steal from them. You aren't going to swipe their wives. You aren't going to covet if you love them. You aren't going to lie. It's all there.

Paul said the same thing didn't he in Romans 13:8, beautiful passage, listen. "Owe no man anything but to love one another, for he that loveth another fulfills the whole law. The law says thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, not bear false witness, not covet," so forth and so forth. But the whole thing is summed up in this. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Love is the fulfilling of the law.

So instead of having to keep the law by external restraint because the Spirit's in me producing love, I just do the law from the inside out. That's what Paul meant in Romans 8 when he says "Now by the Spirit on the inside I fulfill the law." That could never be fulfilled by externalists. So my faith works, yes. Yes, my faith issues in works the work of love, but my working is not to obtain righteousness. I already have that. My works are the result of that righteousness. So the one who listens to false doctrine, regarding salvation by works finds that Christ profits him nothing. He is debtor to the whole law. He's fallen from grace. He's excluded from righteousness. Because righteousness belongs to those who come by faith.

There was an artist long time ago, I read about him this week. He had a dream all of his life and his dream was to sculpt the masterpiece. A masterpiece of multiple characters. He finally received a commission from a great donor to do a work that was to be placed in a great museum and it would bring him honor and fame. And so he began to work. He worked from the early years of his life until the end of his life. Year after year after year he toiled and his masterpiece. It was mammoth. He finished it. And he was all ready to win the acclaim of the world. And they found there was no way to

get it out of the room that he'd built it in. And nobody was willing to pay the price that it would have taken him to work to destroy the huge building in which he had worked. Everything he'd done was captive to the prisoner of the room in which he'd done it.

And I thought as I read that, if that's not a picture of the man trying to earn his way to heaven. Everything he does in this world to merit a claim from God, he's going to leave in the room of this earth and it'll never be before God. There'll never be any acclaim. Whatever you do by way of works will perish with this earth. Salvation is by grace. Let's pray.

Lord, we know that it is clear in Scripture that our Lord Jesus Christ has provided for us a free salvation by grace. And that there is nothing that is to be added, there is nothing that could be added. We thank You for such an absolute and complete salvation. Father, we know that there may be dear ones in our midst tonight who are counting on their own effort to gain heaven, to gain righteousness, to gain eternal life. Father, we pray that You'd shake them out of the misunderstanding and that they would humbly bow at the feet of Jesus Christ and accept what He has done on their behalf and His death and resurrection, dying for their sin, rising for their justification before You.

And Father we pray that no one would leave this place tonight whose heart is not right before you. Who does not humbly bow as a sinner recognizing only thy grace and none of his own merit. Father are some too who are Christians and maybe they've fallen from the grace principle in terms of their daily life because they've put themselves under legalism and they're being motivated by desire to gain Your favor rather than the outspringing of a Spirit filled life. And they're operating in the walls of the flesh, imprisoned by their own self-righteousness.

We pray Father, that they would come too and bow at the foot of the cross and accept a grace that has begun and that is given there. We thank You for grace greater than our sin, freely given in Christ. And Lord, as we close our time together, we pray that You would draw to Yourself all those who need your grace and we'll give you the praise in Jesus' name. Amen.

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