

Fallen from Grace, Part 2: Works of False Teachers

Scripture: Galatians 5:7-12

Code: 1666

Galatians Chapter 5, and this is part two of our study entitled Fallen From Grace, which involves Chapter 5, verses 1 through verse 12. And as we're well aware and at the risk of repeating myself for the umpteenth time, Paul as he writes the book of Galatians is very upset. To put it mildly, he is concerned because false doctrine has penetrated into the Galatian churches. There were people who had come out of paganism. People who had been wonderfully converted to Christ, they had forsaken idolatry, they had forsaken heathen practices, they had accepted the freedom and the salvation that comes in Jesus Christ. They were, in fact, converts of the apostle himself. They had received the Holy Spirit as he indicates in Chapter 3. They had begun to see the work of the Spirit in them. They had begun to see some fruit. They had begun to make an impact on and in their community.

And then the Judaisers had arrived and the Judaisers had told them it's nice that you believe in Christ, but that alone will not save you. It is not enough just to believe in Christ, you must also obey some laws, some rules, namely the mosaic ceremonial law. And of course, throughout all of the book of Galatians Paul reacts violently. In Chapter 1, verse 6, he says "I marvel that you're so soon removed from Him that call you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel. Which is not another. That is it's not another true gospel, but there are some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. And though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you let him be a cursed."

And he's reacting violently. Chapter 3 he reacts again. "Oh foolish Galatians. Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been openly set forth crucified among you. This only what I learn of you. Receive you the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith." Are you so foolish having begun in the Spirit are you now made perfect by the flesh.

In Chapter 4 he reacts again in verse 9. "But now after you have known God or rather or known by God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements into which ye desire again to be in bondage. You observe days and months and times and years." In other words, you're back on a Jewish ceremonial calendar. You're thinking you're pleasing God by the little things you do, not by the heart attitudes.

"I'm afraid of you lest I have bestowed upon you labor and vain." And in verse 19, he says, "My little children of whom I travail and birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now and changed my tone for I stand in doubt of you." And then in Chapter 5 as we begin our study for tonight, we find in verse 1 that he says "Standfast therefore in the liberty with which Christ has made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

So Paul is violently reacting, at least in those five particular places to the information that he had received that the Judaizers had infiltrated the churches in Galatia and sown the seeds of legalism. Now just by way of quick definition, legalism is attempting to please God through works rather than faith. It is saying that if I do these religious activities, God will like me better. God will save me. God will bless me on the basis of the things that I do rather than on faith and the attitude of my heart.

Now Paul argues against salvation by works then in Galatia. He is all the way through Galatians in effect saying it isn't a question of what you do, it's a question of what you believe. It's a question of faith, not works. And in the first two chapters he started with his personal credentials, which establish the right that he had to preach this message. And in Chapters 3 and 4 he established the fact that the Old Testament even taught salvation by faith and grace. And now in Chapter 5 and 6, he shows that salvation by grace and faith also is obvious from practical living. It's not just a question of apostolic authority, Chapters 1 and 2 or Old Testament revelation Chapter 3 and 4, but it's a question of practice. The life of faith is the one that functions that works that is blessed of God and so he takes the practical argument in Chapters 5 and 6.

Now beginning at verse 1 just to review the verse says "Standfast therefore in the liberty with which Christ has made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." To give you a more literal Greek translation, it says this. "For freedom Christ has set us free." In other words, Christ set us free to be free, not to become bond slaves to a legal system. Now as I've said before, this doesn't mean that we're poopooing God's moral law, not at all.

God's moral law is still valid. God's moral law is still right. Paul said the law is holy, just and good. He said I love the law of God. I desire the law of God. God's moral law is still good, but I do not look to my ability to keep that law to be saved. And I do not look to my ability to function under certain ceremonial rituals to be saved. That is a matter of faith and grace only.

And here Paul says Christ set us free to be free. And Christian liberty is the freedom to walk in the Spirit and for the first time in your life not fulfill the lust of the flesh. When I was saved, I was free. Not free to sin whenever I wanted and get away with it, but I was free not sin for the first time. And I had an inside compulsion, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Christian liberty is to be controlled from the inside, not to be pressured from the outside. It is freedom to do what I want to do out of love. Not bondage to do what I have to do out of fear, but freedom to do what I want to do out of love.

And so Paul says continue therefore to stand firm and don't let yourselves be oppressed by a yoke of bondage. And he's referring to legalism. I told you last week there are only two kinds of religion, right? The religion of human achievement, and the religion of divine grace, and the two cannot mix. That's very clear. And that's Paul simple appeal. All the way through, he's saying you can't mix works with grace. You can't mix works with faith. It's all of grace. It's all of faith. Or it's all of law and it's all of works and there's no mixture.

And now in the last part of Galatians, 5 and 6, he supports his argument that salvation is all of grace and faith by looking at the practical aspect. And what I mean by that is, he gives us a portrait of the Spirit filled life and shows how the Spirit filled life operates from internal control rather than external law. Now Paul, in writing to the Galatians, attacks both the false doctrine and the false teachers in verses 1-12. We saw last week that in verses 2-6 he attacks the false doctrine. He exposes the false doctrine of Judaism and then in verses 7-12, he exposes the false teachers themselves.

First of all, let's review the work of false doctrine. Verses 2-6, Paul has just appealed to them in verse 1 and said don't go back into legalism. Don't get trapped again in the false doctrine of bondage to laws. And here he shows why. Because the work of false doctrine produces these results. Result one, verse 2, "Behold, I Paul say unto you that if you be circumcised Christ shall profit you," what, "nothing." Now the issue that the Judaisers brought up was that the only way to get into the kingdom of God and the only way to come to God was through becoming a Jew first. And the only way to legitimately become a Jew was to be circumcised.

It was nice that you believed the Messiah, that's great, that's wonderful, but it doesn't get you there because you didn't become a Jew first. You've got to go through the right of circumcision. And so he says, if you're counting on your circumcision, then Christ profits you nothing. This kind of false doctrine renders Christ's work without benefit. Everything that Jesus did on the cross means absolutely nothing to the person who hopes in his works for salvation.

The second result of the work of false doctrine is you become a debtor to the whole law, verse 3. "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised that he's a debtor to do the whole law." In other words, Paul says, if you're going to put yourself under law and get circumcised, then you're going to put yourself totally under law because you can't mix the two. So it's as clear as that. There's a fork in the road, one goes this way, one goes that way, never the twain meet. You either go grace or you go law. You don't go both.

So if you choose to be circumcised, you have taken the path of legalism and law and you better be perfect because you've started that way and there's no other route. Take your choice. You become debtor to the whole law. And incidentally, you say does anybody make it? No, Galatians 3:13 says, "Anybody who subjects himself to law winds up being cursed." He winds up being cursed. The work

of false doctrine then results, first of all, and Christ profits you nothing. Secondly, you become debtor to the whole law. Thirdly, you are fallen from grace, verse 4.

In verse 4 he says, "Christ is become of no effect unto you whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace." Now what he's saying is simply this and he says this all through Galatians in different ways, but basically what he's saying is this. Once you have entertained any allowance of legalism, you have fallen from the principle of grace. They cannot be co-equal. They cannot coexist. In verse 4, he says if you decide that you need to get circumcised to get saved, it's nice that you believe in Christ and you want to do that, but you want to add some ritual or some legalism or some works pattern. You have just disqualified yourself from grace totally. You have subjected yourself to the entire law and the only way he'll ever be redeemed is to be perfect if you want to go that route and all the work of Christ is without benefit. You might as well scratch it.

And of course, the end result of all of this comes in verse 5 and 6. You are excluded from righteousness. In Galatians 5:5, it says, "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." Now here Paul makes a contrast. All of the people who are looking for salvation and righteousness through works never find it. "But we," he says, "wait." Not work, but wait for the hope of righteousness by faith, not works." And notice at the beginning of the verse it comes through the Spirit.

And again I say the difference between living a legalistic life and living a Spirit controlled life is the difference between and outside pressure and an inside power. Legalism is where I'm pressured by externals to behave. The liberty I have in the Spirit is where I'm free to function in response to the indwelling Spirit. And the two cannot mix.

All of Christianity becomes summed up then in verse 6. "In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision." It doesn't matter what you've done to you in terms of ritual. But faith which worketh by love. Faith which works, yes, faith works. It isn't works that lead to faith or works that lead to salvation. It's saving faith that issues and works.

We're not saying that Christians are antinomians, that they're lawless. They just run around ramped all over the world never behaving as they should and violating God's morality in some kind of blissful security. No legitimate faith works by love he says at the end of verse 6. "But my works are not to save me they are because I have been changed through faith." And we've covered that in such great detail.

Let me just remind you of some passages that can lend assistance in our understanding at this point. Colossians 1:10. He says, "That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing being fruitful in every good work." God desires a Christian to be fruitful in productive good works. Good works are part of the Christian's life. They're part of his experience, but they do not earn him anything. They do

not earn him his salvation. They do not earn him his favor with God. They merely indicate that he has been saved. We become new creations in Christ and the issue of that is the Holy Spirit produces good works.

Now we know as we've studied law and grace and we're still kind of rummaging through some review here, but we know as we have studied law and grace that the law has a problem. Law can't change people on the inside, right? It can't have any effect on the inside of a man and that's the problem. You know, it's kind of like prohibition in a sense. You know, we could have prohibition again and we could wipe out all the liquor picture legally. In other words, we could just say that all alcoholic beverages are illegal. Now that's nice, that would be an idea. It'll never happen. But you know what would happen if we made a big law like that, the same thing would happen that happened before. All it does is make everybody go underground and you get speak easies and, you know, backwoods stills and all that kind of stuff.

Why? Because you haven't done a thing to change the desires of the people involved. All you've done is make an external pressure that isn't going to have any effect at all. That's what the law did. The law said don't do this, don't do this, don't do this, and it all went underground. And the Spirit comes along and doesn't stand on the outside and say don't do this anymore. The Spirit comes and lives within us and gives us the capacity not to do it. That's the difference. The law never changed anybody. The law made strict your behavior, but it never changes people. But salvation through faith by grace changes people on the inside, and they have a different capacity and that's the distinction that Paul wants to make.

So he says, don't go back to legalism in Galatians 5. Don't go back and get tangled up in what Christ set us free from. And so he condemns the false doctrine of legalism. But immediately following that beginning in verse 7, and we draw your attention to that for our study tonight. Verse 7-12, having condemned the false doctrine in verses 1-6, he now condemns the false teachers themselves.

Now there aren't too many kinds of people in the Bible that the Lord Jesus really blistered up one side and down the other. Mostly He was very tolerant and some people who were even very, very immoral, He showed nothing but love. He hated the sin and loved the sinner. But in the case of those people who were false teachers, He has nothing but the most blistering kind of maledictions and condemnations.

And we leave now Paul's speaking in a sense of and about the Galatians and he begins to talk about these false teachers themselves. And from verse 7-12, he just really flattens them. And if we saw in verses 2-6 the work of false doctrine, here we're about to see the work of false teachers. And Paul shows the evil character of false teachers in six statements about them. And if you want a good outline on how to characterize a false teacher, here it is in six statements. But let me just show you a passage that gives you some idea of how Christ Himself felt about those who propagated false

information.

Matthew 23:13, and this is a very potent portion of Scripture. Matthew 23:13, I'm going to read through it a little bit, so you might turn to it and follow along. Those people most responsible in Israel at the time of Christ for the propagation of God's truth were the scribes and Pharisees. They had perverted it all and instead of teaching the grace of God and faith, they were teaching legalism and law and so Jesus in Matthew Chapter 23 really lets them have both barrels.

Beginning at verse 13 in Matthew 23. "But woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men." You know, whenever a scribe was ushered into the scribal office he was given a symbolic key and this was called the key of knowledge and it was symbolic of the fact that the scribe was to open up the knowledge of the holy to the people. And instead of that, He says, "woe unto you, you have shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. For ye neither go in yourselves, neither permit them that are entering in to go in." You've locked everybody out including your own selves.

"Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you devour widows houses." This is taking advantage of helpless people by illegal tactics "and for a pretense you make long prayers," piocety. "Therefore you shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you compass sea and land to make one proselyte and when he is made, you make him twofold more the child of Hell," and the word there is Gahanna, the burning place, "than yourselves."

"Woe unto you blind guides who say whosoever shall swear by the temple it is nothing, but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple he's a debtor." They had this little game. If a man swore, it was supposed to be binding. So they would swear and some guy would try to them to it and they'd say nope, nope I didn't swear by the gold, I only swore by the temple. Verse 17, my sentiments exactly. "You fools and blind, well which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And whosoever shall swear by the altar it is nothing, but whosoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is bound." You fools and blind, which is greater the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?

"Whosoever therefore shall swear by the altar swears by it and by all things on it, and whosoever shall swear by the temple swears by it and by him that dwelleth in it. And he that shall swear by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it." When you call God the record to establish your word, you better hold to it. "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin." And those are little tiny things. Little puny herbs, plants, and seeds. They were so meticulously legalistic that they would tithe a part of the seeds. "And you've omitted the weightier matters of the law such as justice, mercy, and faith. These ought you to have done and not to leave the other undone. You blind guides who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel." Pretty vivid.

You know what He means by that? When they...you know this is just a symbol, but some people when they would drink wine would pour the wine through a strainer to strain out any gnats or anything else to purify it. And He says, religiously and spiritually you're great at straining out gnats, but you swallow a camel.

"Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you make clean the outside of the cup and the platter but within they're full of extortion and excess." On the outside you look good, inside you're rotten. "Thou blind Pharisees cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like whited sepulchers." That means tombs that have been white-washed. "Which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness." Verse 29, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous and say if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them and the blood of the prophets."

You know, they would make heroes out of the dead prophets and they would say why if we were alive in the day that such and such a prophet were slain, we would never have done that. "Wherefore, ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye are the sons of them who killed the prophets. Fill up then the measure of your fathers. You serpents, you generation of vipers how can you escape the damnation of Hell?"

Jesus never uttered in any occasion stronger words than that. And because He repeated Himself so many times you get the idea that He felt it was important. He was blistering false teachers. And if we find Paul, and go back if you will to Galatians 5, just a little bit vindictive, we'll understand that he does so in the great tradition of our Lord. He shows here in verses 7-12, and we'll see it just briefly, the work of false teachers.

Verse 7, first of all false teachers hinder the truth. They hinder the truth and here he leaves the doctrine and attacks the men. Verse 7, "Ye did run well," and it's the metaphor of a race and Paul used that very often. "Ye did run well. Who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth?" You were running so well he says. The race started out and you were moving out and it looked so good. Who stepped in front of you? Who put obstacles in your track? Who messed you up? Who hindered you?

You the general pattern of the Galatian church was very good. They had started good. They had progressed. They had been fruitful. They were running well. And he says but who hindered you? Who moved in drained you of the power? And when I read the word who, please understand it's not simply what's his name that he's talking about. What he's saying is who would you ever allow to do a thing like that? Who is so great and so beyond me and so beyond the Spirit that you would allow him

to come in and destroy that which God Himself begun.

The who should be blown up with a question mark. Whoever would you allow to do that to you? There was so much joy in the beginning and so much of all that God had intended and now legalism was being sown and the runners were beginning to wobble on the track and trip and fall and stumble. No, Paul is not asking for information. He's not saying would you please name the ringleader, I'd like to get him. He's not asking who in that sense. He's saying before you continue, listen, before you continue to follow the false teaching you're following you better find out who this person is that's teaching it. Who is he from the standpoint of what gives him the right to do that? You better check out what kind of a person he is. Paul is not after identity, he's after character. He's after character. He's not saying who is he by name, but what kind of a person is he that you would allow to do this?

Paul has a little bit to say about what kind of people they are over in Chapter 6, verse 12. He says, "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised." They want to just exalt their own circumcision, their own Jewishness. Verse 13, "For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law, but desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh." They want converts. They want to string a bunch of converts after their name.

And we saw this morning in our study how this is typical of all false teachers. They want to get a following, don't they? Very important. They want to lead people astray. They want to establish a following. And so he says, who would you ever allow to do this to you? Now notice the little phrase at the end of verse 7, and these are simple truths. But he says at the end of the phrase in verse 7, "that ye should not obey the truth." Now what do we mean when we say obey the truth?

Well, first of all, it can refer to salvation. So he could be referring to the fact that the Galatians have actually begun to forsake the true doctrine of salvation. That they've actually come to the place where they're no longer believing in saving truth. To obey the truth can have reference to salvation. In Acts Chapter 6, for example, verse 7, "And the word of God increased and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly," listen, "and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." That means salvation. Obedience in Scripture to the faith. Obedience to the truth often refers to salvation. And so Paul may be saying to these Galatians, what has messed you up so that you are even failing to propagate salvation in the true way?

In Romans Chapter 2, again, in verse 8 we have a similar use of the concept obeying the truth. "But unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness will come indignation and wrath." And there the concept of obeying the truth again refers to salvation. And he's saying there that those who reject salvation will know judgment. Again in Romans 6:17, "God be thanked that whereas you were the servants of sin, you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine was delivered you." And again obeying the truth here is equal to salvation. In Chapter 10 of Romans and verse 16 it's the same thing. "They have not all obeyed the gospel." And you can

compare again Romans 15:18, Romans 16:26, 2 Thessalonians 1:8 and find again the same use.

The concept then of obeying the truth is as basic as salvation. Now it can go a lot passed that because obedience to the truth is not just an issue of salvation, it's also an issue of the Christian life. You say well is he talking to Christians or is he talking to unbelievers? I think he's talking in principles. He's saying to them this, you started out right in obedience to the truth of salvation and the truth of Christian living in the Spirit. Somebody is hindering you so that you no longer are committed to the truth of salvation and you're no longer to committed to living under grace truth.

And the issue isn't whether he's talking to Christians or non-Christians he's talking about principles that can apply in either case, but it's a sad day, beloved, it's a sad day when a church founded by the apostle Paul forsakes the doctrine of salvation that redeemed it and yet how true today across our land and across the world. How many are there who stand in pulpits and in churches and propagate false truth regarding salvation. And do so in the very church which originally was bought by the precious blood of our Lord Christ.

And you know for a Christian, sometimes we can find ourselves falling into the patterns of legalism. Obedience is critical to us. We must be obedient to grace truth and never all into legalism. In 2 Corinthians 10:4, Paul says, "Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. And bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." The believer is to be obedient for the direction of Christ in his life. To the leading of Christ.

Romans 6 talks about if you've yielded yourselves servants to obey Christ, then you ought to obey Him. If you're His servant, obedience goes with it. 1 Peter 1:22, Peter talked to the Christians about obeying the truth and then loving the brothers. So the idea of obeying the truth is a general pattern and in sadness Paul is acknowledging that these false teachers have come in and hindered your obedience to truth. You know, I think sometimes in the Christian church, even among believers and some perhaps well-meaning people, that there are those who sell the church a bag of legalism. A bunch of dos and don'ts that are supposed to be the equivalent of spirituality. And when you have bought that, my friend, you have been hindered from running well.

You're not even running, you're crawling. You may not even be crawling. You may be just plopped in the middle of the track. So whether they were non-Christians on the edge of Christianity forsaking the true doctrine of salvation or whether they were Christians who were being led to disobey grace truth for legalism, the principle is the same. You do not run the Christian race right and you do not run it well when you're legalistic. It hinders you. There will be no fruitfulness as God would have it, that much fruit just won't happen.

So we can be hindered. False teachers hinder the truth. In 1 Timothy Chapter 4, just to give you another illustration, I call your attention to a couple of verses there. The Spirit speaks expressly. "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils," we read this this morning in connection with Acts 20, "speaking lies in hypocrisy." Now one of the things that false teachers always do is speak lies hypocritically. And it doesn't seem to bother them, since their conscience is seared with a hot iron.

You know what that means? That means it's like skin that's been burned. It's insensitive. I have a whole lot of that. I had an accident one time. I was thrown out of car going 75 miles an hour on a highway, slid down about 110 yards on my southern hemisphere, whatever, and through all of that God really worked in my life. But as a result of that there's several layers of scar tissue, because there was about ½ inch deep 64 square inch area that was removed from friction and burns and so forth. And all that scar tissue is totally insensitive. Now don't try me. Trust me.

And that's exactly what he's saying here. False teachers have lied so long so hypocritically that they're incentive any longer. "Forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from foods which God has created to be received at Thanksgiving by them who believe and know the truth." So they hinder the truth, seducing spirits, doctrines of demons and they speak lies. In 2 Timothy Chapter 3 we run into them again. And again, we find the same thing. They are again hindering the truth. Verse 7 says, "They're always learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." And in verse 8 it says, "They resist the truth. They're men of corrupt minds reprobate concerning the faith."

In 2 Peter and we'll be looking back at this passage in a minute, but it tells us about the false prophets there. And it says in verse 2...well, verse 1 says "They deny the Lord that bought them." You can always tell an apostate. Easy to tell an apostate. One, he denies the deity of Christ. Two, he denies the second-coming. But they deny the Lord that bought them and many shall follow their pernicious ways by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." So they bring error and they hinder truth.

So Paul lays it out pretty clear. He says these Judaisers are hindering the truth. They're fouling up the race. Second point, he says they're not of God, verse 8. "This persuasion comes not of him," what, "that calls you." "This persuasion comes not of him that calls you." The Galatians were not led by the Spirit into legalism. They were not. Who is the one described by the term "him that calls you?" Who is that? Who calls us? God. This is not of God, he says. You say what do you mean him that calls you? Well, you have to look at Romans Chapter 8 and you find that the use of this particular concept is very clear. It talks about the fact that God, in verse 28, becomes the subject of the sentence. "That God, verse 30, whom He did predestinate, them He also called and whom he called them He also justified and whom He justified them He also glorified."

It is God who calls. So when Paul says this persuasion comes not from Him who calls you, he is saying this kind of legalism is not of God. And the all he's talking about here is the internal effectual saving call of God. The God who called you to salvation does not propagate this truth. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13, just to give you another footnote on the subject of call, "We are bound to give always thanks to God for you brethren beloved to the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth unto which He called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And here you have the call of God tied with the gospel presentation. God's effectual saving call. And so Paul just flat out says these people have nothing to do with God. Whatever voice the Galatians were hearing, it was not God's voice. So they hinder the truth and their not of God. Third thing, they contaminate the church, verse 9. False teachers contaminate the church. Listen to this statement. "A little leaven, leavens the whole lump." You say what kind of a statement is that? That's a Proverb. That was a very familiar Proverb. In fact, it's used also in 1 Corinthians 5:6. That was just one of the Proverbs that was floating around. We don't know where it came from or where it finally ended up. In fact, it's still going on.

Leaven is yeast. And a little yeast is all you need and it causes a great result. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. False teachers contaminate. Comparing a couple of verses in Jude perhaps would be to our benefit. Jude 11, and here he's describing false teachers and he uses a phrase that we've found in the words of Jesus. "Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain." And you know what Cain's religion was? Was it the religion of divine grace? It was a religion of human what, achievement. They've gone the way of Cain. All the false teachers come the route of human achievement. "And they ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward," and the error of Balaam was you worked for whoever pays you. You're a prophet for hire. "And they perished in the gainsayings of Core."

You know what Core's problem was? He tried to play priest. He usurped the role of a priest. Remember what happened to him? The ground opened up and swallowed him, which was a very definitive no-no on the part of God. All these false teachers he says in verse 12 "are spots in your love feasts. When they feast with you feeding themselves without fear. Clouds they are without water carried about by winds. Trees who sprout withers without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, waging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame, wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." Boy Jude was some literary writer wasn't he?

Pretty clear picture. False teachers contaminate. It only took one worm to destroy Jonah's gourd remember? Cancer metastasizes. Cancer spreads from one small cell. One match starts a forest fire. Some say it was Benjamin Franklin who said, "For the want of a nail a shoe is lost. For the want of a shoe, the man is lost. For the want of the man, the horse is lost. For the want of the horse, the army was lost." And so forth and so forth and the kingdom was lost. You give in a little and the whole

thing is contaminated.

That's why we said this morning that the priorities of the leader in the church, the priority of the pastor among other things is to watch and warn against false teaching, right? Because it contaminates. A fourth thing that he says about false teachers. They will be judged, verse 10. They will be judge. "I have confidence in you through the Lord that you will be none otherwise minded, but he that troubles you shall bear his judgment whosoever he be." Now this is a kind of a hope, little, little flashing star glimmering in Paul's dark night. And he says, folks I have confidence in you through the Lord. In other words, he's saying, I know this that if you're genuine and if you're real and you're really and literally could be translated in the Lord, I have confidence in you in the Lord, is the best translation. I have confidence in you that if you're real, you're not going to foul up. That's John 8 isn't it?

"If you continue in my word, then you're my disciple for real. A true branch, an abiding branch." Philippians 1:6, tells us that "He that has begun a work in you will," what, "perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." And Paul says I have confidence in you in the Lord. That is if you belong to Him, I'm not going to worry that you will be none otherwise minded. That is that you'll adhere to the truth and this is a passing fancy.

I have confidence that if you're real, you're going to stay with grace. Because you see he knew that if they were Christ, Satan couldn't get them. Read it, it's in John 10:28-30. When you belong to Christ, you're hidden in His hand and no man's able to pluck you out of His hand. And the Father that gave you to Christ is greater than all. He holds you.

So he says you'll be all right, but verse 10, the false teachers won't be all right. "He that troubles you shall bear his judgment whosoever he be." Whoever this person is, whoever this ringleader is, whatever this group is, they're going to be judged. The word troubleth means to throw into confusion. Whoever has created this chaos and confusion is going to get it.

Remember what Jesus said as I read it earlier in Matthew 23 that there is no way that those scribes and Pharisees, those hypocritical teachers would ever escape the punishment of hell. Peter, and I want you to look with me at it, 2 Peter. The Holy Spirit, through Peter, reiterates this same kind of message to false teachers. 2 Peter 2, and you know what's amazing to me of all the times that I've taught on false teachers and I don't think it's been that many times, for some reason the Holy Spirit designed it that on this particular day we have covered false teachers both times haven't we?

Now, I'm just simple enough to assume that the Lord must know something's up. And so I say this without hesitation, take to heart what is being said. In 2 Peter 2, verse 1, let me read you some of this. "There were false prophets among the people, and there shall be false teachers among you secretly bringing in damnable or destructive heresy. They will deny the Lord that bought them, bring upon themselves swift destruction." Now there's the introduction to their judgment. Just a simple

statement. Fast, speedy destruction. At the end of verse 3 he says their destruction slumbers not. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell and delivered them the chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment. And God spared not the old world and saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorra into ashes condemning them with an overthrow making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly and delivered just Lot vexed with the filthy manner of life of the wicked." Verse 9, "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. And the chief objects of punishment, verse 10, "Chiefly them that walk after the flesh and the lust of uncleanness and despise government or rule or authority. Presumptuous are they, self-willed. Not afraid to speak evil of dignities or of people set apart unto God, holy people. Whereas angels who are greater in power and might bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord."

And there we find that the idea of dignities also can involve angels as well. "These as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed." Isn't that interesting? False teachers are like...are like monsters. The best way you could translate brute beasts in the vernacular of today would be to take the comic book and nothing to be done with it but destroyed. "They shall utterly perish in their own corruption," verse 12 says. "They shall receive the reward of unrighteousness." And then he calls them filth spots and scabs. Translated in King James, spots and blemishes. "Eyes full of an adulterous," and all down through there.

Down in verse 22, he calls them dogs return to their vomit. It's a pretty strange scene. But it's all about judgment and it's all about judgment on false teachers. You know when somebody tampers with God's people, that's the most serious offense there is. To bring that to your attention from another angle, remind yourself of Matthew 18, verse 1. And listen as I read it.

"The same time came the disciples unto Jesus saying who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And Jesus called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them. And said verily I say unto you except to be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whosoever shall receive such one little child in my name receives me." Listen, "But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones who believe in me it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

Jesus says better to drown yourself than to offend a little child who belongs to me. You see, you do not tamper with God's children. You do not tamper with God's people without judgment. So false teachers then hinder the truth, they are not of God, they contaminate the church, and they end in judgment. Fifthly, they always persecute true teachers. Verse 11, look at it. "And I brethren if I yet preach circumcision why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offense of the cross ceased?" Now that's a difficult verse to interpret at first glance. But it becomes very simple if you understand that

Paul has been accused of something.

Notice how it starts. "And I brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?" What the Judaisers had apparently said was this. They had arrived in town, they knew everybody loved Paul and so what they probably said was hey, we're not so offbeat. Did you know that Paul also preaches circumcision? And everybody probably went are you kidding? No. Why Paul is one of us. Paul preaches and teaches circumcision. And you know something they would have had an illustration. Yes, Acts 16, "There came Paul to Derbe and Lystra and behold a certain disciple was there name," remember his name, "Timothy. A son of a certain woman who was a Jewess and believed, but his father was a Greek. Timothy was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium." Listen he was a Christian.

Oh but verse 3, "Him would Paul have to go forth with him." He wanted Timothy to go along on the missionary team. "He took and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those quarters. For they all knew that his father was a Greek." You say Paul circumcised Timothy? Why did he do that? Well, I'll tell you one thing, he certainly didn't do it to save Timothy. Do you know why he did it? He did it because Timothy was half Jewish and half Gentile. And everybody around knew that he was a Greek in terms of half of him. His father was a Greek. And Paul knew that if Timothy would follow the right of circumcision that everybody who knew him would know that he purposely, personally, and willfully and willingly identified with Judaism.

You say so what? So that made him all the more able to reach into the Jewish community and be accepted. Paul did it for expedience of ministry, not for justification. Not for salvation. He wanted him to be a more effective missionary to Jews and where was it that Paul went every time he came to a new town? What's the first building he went into? Synagogue. The synagogue, the second one was the jail.

And he knew well that were to he to go into synagogues for Timothy to be one who had accepted the sign of Judaism and it was no intrusion on his life, he was half Jew, he had the right to that. When Paul is writing to the Galatians here, he's not talking to Jews. He's talking to Gentiles. For them to assume circumcision as a right making up part of the process of salvation would have been to violate the doctrine of salvation. For Timothy to do it was just to identify with a symbol that he had the right to identify with because he was half Jewish anyway. Now, again I say when there was no biblical principle involved, Paul allowed it for a lot of things. Why you'll find out if you keep coming here on Sunday mornings in Acts 21 that when Paul came to Jerusalem he even performed so Jewish vows. We saw him do that in Cenchrea, didn't we? And Paul made the statement that "When I was with Jews I became a Jew. When I was with Gentiles I became as they were. I became all things to all men that by any means I might win some." When you weren't talking about biblical principle he would accommodate the situation.

But apparently the Judaisers had grabbed that deal with Timothy and they had said you see Paul preaches circumcision. Now watch, Paul's argument is really good. He says, "Brethren if I yet preach circumcision why do they keep persecuting me?" Pretty good argument. If I'm on their team, why are they hitting me? It doesn't make sense. They were after Paul. He was persecuted from pillar to post all over, all over Asia Minor, all over Galatia Phrygia, not so much there as he was later on in the area of Corinth and Athens and Philippi and those pressure points in his ministry. All those areas of Macedonia and Achaia, he was persecuted constantly.

And if the Judaisers claimed he was one of them what were they doing persecuting him? If he had been preaching salvation by circumcision, they wouldn't be persecuting him. But they were and they were doing it everywhere. Why wouldn't they persecute him anymore? Because if he preached circumcision, the offense of the cross would have, what, ceased. You know what the offense of the cross was to the Jew? The offense of the cross was not just a crucified Messiah, that was part of it. They couldn't handle a dead Messiah on the cross.

But the real offense of the cross to the Jew was this that the cross absolutely obliterated the entire mosaic economy. And to the Jew cross was an impossibility because the cross obliterated Judaism. It obliterated the mosaic law and that's what offended them. They had to spend all their lives with ever little jot and tittle of the law. All of sudden Christ dies on the cross, Paul comes and says you can forget the law just believe in Christ and His work on the cross and they all grabbed their ears and started screaming. Can't be.

The offense of the cross was that the cross replaced all of the mosaic law. It made the entire legal system extinct. Cristum said this and I quote, "For even the cross which was a stumbling block to the Jews was not so much so as the failure to require obedience to the ancestral laws. For when they attacked Stephen they said not that he was worshipping the crucified but that he was speaking against the law and the holy place." Do you see? They weren't nearly so offended by the crucified as they were by the obliteration of the mosaic economy. And incidentally, Saul himself, Paul, persecuted the church for that very reason, very reason.

Verse 13 of Galatians 1. He said, "You remember my former life. I persecuted the church of God." Verse 14. "I profited in the Jews religion above many my equals and my own nation being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." That was the hang up. They could not let go of the mosaic economy, the mosaic law. So the cross was an offense to them because it set aside that system.

So Paul is saying this, look if I was preaching circumcision, if I was still allowing for the mosaic economy, the cross wouldn't be such an offense and I wouldn't be getting persecuted, but I'm still getting persecuted and the cross is still a scandal, a scandal, an offense. And beloved it's true

today I think the cross still offends. Do you know why? The cross offends for the same reason, because it obliterates all religion of human achievement and it strips every man naked in his own sin doesn't it? And people don't like to face the fact that they're naked before God in sinfulness and they have no recourse.

Do you know what offends? Peter stood before the little inner circle after he was taken captive and they brought him in to the Sanhedrin and he stood in front of all of them and said I just have one thing to say gentlemen. "Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." And they didn't like that. And there aren't too many people who do like that, because you see that just destroys all human achievement.

The cross is still unpopular because the cross un.masks sin and leaves no room for pride and no room for human achievement and the human ego really finds it tough to swallow that. To preach Christ is to invite persecution because to preach Christ is to be offensive because you must declare every man a sinner. It's much less offensive to preach circumcision. You know, a few years ago people say you're a nice guy if you just do 13 more nice things you'll go to heaven.

Oh how nice, I can handle that. As opposed to that we go, we say you are a vial sinner condemned to Hell and not one thing you've ever done means anything to God. Oh yeah? Who says? Now if you think Paul's been strong, you haven't heard anything yet. He closes the polemic on false doctrine and false teachers with one of the most shocking statements that ever came from his lips. And at this point, he is really winging.

In verse 12, "I would they were even cut off who trouble you." Now friends, what he literally says in the term cut off is castrated. You know those people who are teaching circumcision? I wish they were castrated. Hmmm. There's something about that that's...that's fearful, but there's something about that I like and it's not the fact of it, it's the attitude of Paul. The passion in his heart against false teachers. He wasn't afraid to say it the way he wanted to express it.

Now Galatia was near Phrygia and in Phrygia there was great worship of the god sebil and there were all kinds of sebilin priests. And it was the practice of all of the priests of sebil and all of the devout worshippers to be castrated. All of the sebilin priests were Eunuchs. And so Paul says look if you're going to go the route of human achievement and get yourself circumcised, then you false teachers might as well go the whole route and castrate yourselves and become a full fledged pagan.

Now friends all I can say is I can't add anything to that except to say that you can't mix law with grace. Paul says if you're going to mix it a little bit, you might as well become an absolute total pagan Eunuch. People come along and say well it's nice to believe in Jesus Christ to be saved, but you've got to be able to add to that baptism. No. No, because if you're going to add baptism, you might as well become a pagan. That's what Paul's saying. If you're going to add anything to grace. And

believe me when the Galatians read that as they gathered together and someone was reading through the passage and all of sudden came and read that verse, you can believe that they begin to rock and reel under the shock because they live right next door to the sebilin situation. They new exactly what he was talking about.

If you add one thing to Jesus Christ, then you've got nothing but paganism, paganism. There's only two choices people. The religion of divine grace, the religion of human achievement, the choice is yours. I close with an illustration. Two men, Luke 18. They illustrate it very graphically. In Luke 18 of verse 9 we read this.

"He spoke a parable unto them." Oh listen to this. "He spoke a parable unto them who trusted in themselves." Can you imagine that? They trusted in themselves that they were righteous and they looked down the nose at others. Here's the parable. "Two men went up into the temple to pray. The one was a Pharisee, the other tax collector. The most holy man was a Pharisee, the most unholy character was the tax collector because he worked for a pagan government and he exacted taxation from Israel and they hated the people who were bought off my Rome to be tax collectors." They hated them. "The Pharisees stood and prayed thus with himself. God I thank thee that I am not as other men are extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice in the week." Oh you know that hits close to home. "I give tithes of all that I possess." You know we love to talk about things like that and we border on Phariseeism.

You know it's like when you finally get your devotions down and you've managed to say today I'm going to pray for a half an hour. And you get down on your knees and you try hard and you think of everything you can think of 14 times. You've got this little list and you prayed for half an hour and you come out of there and the first guy you meet says hi how are you? Fine did you know I prayed a half an hour today?

"I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess." That's the religion of human achievement isn't it? I don't know what he was talking to God for. He didn't need anything from God. He was just reporting in. Verse 13, "On the other hand, and the tax collector standing afar off would not lift so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his chest saying God be merciful to me a sinner." That's not the religion of human achievement. That's the religion of what? Divine grace. And what happened in verse 14? "I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other for every one that exalts himself should be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

The message of Galatians is very simple. The message of Galatians is the message of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and apart from Him there is no other. No man ever comes to God on his own merit. God's arms are open. Salvation's available by faith through grace, no other way. Let's bow in prayer.

We acknowledge our Lord, that all our righteousness is as Isaiah said filthy rags. And we feel like David when he said "my sin is ever before me." Father, we only can come and apply for the mercy of a loving God. The grace of Your loving kindness and the free salvation offered in Jesus Christ. And we offer no merit, for we have none.

We're exhausted with our sin. We cannot stand and we fall on Your grace. Thank You for holding us and not letting us go. And Father, we would pray for some dear ones, beloved ones of us and of thee who may be gathered in our midst tonight who are counting on human achievement. Who are endeavoring to earn salvation. Who perhaps believe in all of the truth of the gospel, but are adding to it the hope that they can save themselves by some work. God we pray that You would strip them of that. That they would find themselves in the corner afar off with the tax collector smiting their chest and saying God be merciful to me a sinner.

We know Lord that salvation is for such and for no others. May it be tonight that no one leaves this place who has not fallen upon thy mercy offering nothing of his own, but only receiving what thou hast freely given in Christ. We pray in His blessed name. Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).