

Galatians – Freedom In Faith

Dr. Edwin P. Elliott

I. Paul Had Apostolic Authority for His Teaching

A. Paul's authority for teaching came directly from God. "Paul, an apostle, (*not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus* Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)" (GALATIANS 1:1) "Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother," (1 CORINTHIANS 1:1)

B. What Paul had to say was not a product of consensus and did not reflect the magisterium of the church. "But *when it pleased God, who separated me* from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace, *To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach* him among the heathen; immediately *I conferred not with flesh and blood:* Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but *I went into Arabia*, and returned again unto Damascus. Then *after three years I went up* to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But *other of the apostles saw I none, save James* the Lord's brother." (GALATIANS 1:15-19)

C. While the leadership did not authenticate Paul's work, it did recognize what God was doing in him and particularly for the gentiles. "But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for *they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:* But contrariwise, when *they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me,* as *the gospel* of the circumcision was unto Peter;" (GALATIANS 2:6-7)

II. Paul Taught Justification by Faith Apart from Works

A. Right relationship to God comes through faith rather than works. "We *who are Jews by nature*, and not sinners of the Gentiles, *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith* of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for *by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*" (GALATIANS 2:15-16)

B. Returning to schemes which distract from grace destroys the message. "For *if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.* For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:* and the life which I now live in the flesh *I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me,* and gave himself for me." (GALATIANS 2:18-20)

C. Paul was reaffirming Abraham's testimony – salvation has always been by grace. "Even as *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* Know ye therefore that *they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.* And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying,* In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then *they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*" (GALATIANS 3:6-9)

D. Behavior never had the redeeming power of faith. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law* to do them. But that *no man is justified by the law* in the sight of God, *it is evident:* for, *The just shall live by faith.*" (GALATIANS 3:10-11)

E. The law serves to teach the exclusive necessity of grace. “Wherefore then *serveth* the law? ***It was added because of transgressions***, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a *mediator* of one, but God is one. ***Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*** But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. ***But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*** Wherefore the law was ***our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.***” (GALATIANS 3:19-24)

III. Protect the Gospel of Grace in Faith and Practice

A. Love keeps the focus on liberty in grace. “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only ***use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh***, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; ***Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.***” (GALATIANS 5:13-14)

B. The struggle torments, but the Holy Spirit prevails in those who rely on Him. “*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.* For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and ***these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*** But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” (GALATIANS 5:16-18)

C. Sinful flesh and the life of love lead in opposing directions. “Now the ***works of the flesh are manifest***, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, ***that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*** But ***the fruit of the Spirit is love***, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And ***they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*** ***If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*** Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” (GALATIANS 5:19-26)