

Study of Paul's Letter to the Galatians - Chapter 1 (Verse by Verse Explanation)

In Galatians 1, the apostle Paul begins his letter with a vigorous defense of his apostleship and the gospel he preached. He emphasizes that his authority did not come from men but directly from Christ, which is crucial to establishing the authenticity of the message he conveys. Paul also expresses his indignation at the rapid apostasy of the churches in Galatia, which were falling away from the truth of the gospel because of false teachers who distorted the message of Christ. The chapter is a firm call for Christians to stand firm in the faith they have received, without being influenced by teachings that deviate from the true word of God.

Galatians 1:1

"Paul, an apostle, not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead."

Explanation:

Here Paul emphatically states that his authority as an apostle did not come from men or through human ordination, but directly from Jesus Christ and God the Father. Paul felt the need to assert himself in this way, since there were questions about his apostolic legitimacy, especially in relation to false teachers who were trying to distort the gospel in Galatia.

He also affirms that God the Father raised Jesus Christ from the dead, establishing the basis of his authority: the resurrection of Christ. The emphasis on the resurrection is crucial,

because it is through the resurrection that Jesus validated his divine mission and that Paul is called to be an apostle.

Theological evidence:

- **Divine authority:** Paul is clear about his divine calling. In Acts 9:15, when Ananias hesitates to come to Paul, God says, "He is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before the Gentiles."
- **The resurrection:** The resurrection of Christ is the central point of the Christian gospel. In 1 Corinthians 15:17, Paul states, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile."

Reflection:

Paul is not an apostle because he received human approval, but because he was chosen by Christ. This reminds us that true authority in ministry comes from God, not from human recognition. God's calling of each of us is based on His sovereignty, not on human merit or validation.

Galatians 1:2

"And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:"

Explanation:

Paul also mentions his co-workers, those who were with him on his journey and ministry. He includes them to further validate his message, as he is not speaking alone but in union with other Christians who share the same faith. He is writing to several churches in Galatia, a region that comprised several Christian communities.

Theological evidence:

- **Unity in ministry:** Paul often emphasizes teamwork in ministry. In Philippians 1:5, he

speaks about "communion in the gospel." This teaches us that the gospel is lived and proclaimed in community, never in isolation.

Reflection:

Unity in ministry is essential. No Christian should think that he or she can do God's work alone. The body of Christ is made up of different members, and each one plays an essential role. This leads us to reflect on how we are connecting and cooperating with other brothers and sisters in the ministry of the gospel.

Galatians 1:3

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,"

Explanation:

Paul begins his greeting, as is typical of many of his letters, with a wish for grace and peace for the recipients. The word "grace" refers to God's unmerited favor, and "peace" refers to the harmony and reconciliation with God and with one another that comes through Jesus Christ.

Theological evidence:

- **Grace and peace:** These two words are fundamental in Christianity. God's grace is the basis for our salvation, and the peace that Christ brings is the reconciliation between God and humanity, as described in Ephesians 2:14-16.

Reflection:

These two elements—grace and peace—are fundamental to the Christian life. God's grace saves and transforms us, and this transformation leads us to live in peace with God and

with others. We must seek and live in these two realities in our daily lives.

Galatians 1:4

"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father,"

Explanation:

Paul emphasizes the sacrifice of Jesus, who gave himself for our sins. The purpose of his sacrifice was to free us from slavery to sin and the evil influences of this "present evil age." The "present age" refers to the age in which we live, marked by rebellion against God. Christ has rescued us from all this, fulfilling the will of the Father.

Theological evidence:

- **Sacrifice of Christ:** In John 3:16 we see that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for salvation. This is reaffirmed in 1 John 3:16. **Deliverance**
- **from sin:** Christ has delivered us from the dominion of sin, as is clear in Romans 6:18.

Reflection:

Christ's sacrifice is the center of our faith. He not only died for our sins, but He freed us from a life dominated by evil and sin. This calls us to live differently, seeking the freedom that Christ won for us.

Galatians 1:5

"To whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen!"

Explanation:

Here Paul exalts God, giving Him all the glory. He recognizes that the salvation and deliverance brought by Christ are works of God that deserve all honor and praise.

Theological evidence:

- **Glory to God:** The glory of God is a central theme in the Bible. In Revelation 4:11, the heavenly beings proclaim, "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power."

Reflection:

Our entire Christian life should be lived for the glory of God. When we understand that it is He who rescues and transforms us, our natural response should be worship and the surrender of our lives to His glory.

Galatians 1:6

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto a different gospel."

Explanation:

Paul expresses his surprise and sadness that the Galatian Christians were rapidly abandoning the genuine gospel of Christ and turning to "another gospel," that is, a distorted gospel that involved the addition of practices from the Jewish law.

Theological evidence:

- **The true gospel:** The gospel that Paul preached is a gospel of grace, without the need for human additions. In Ephesians 2:8-9, he teaches that salvation is by grace, not by works.

Reflection:

The gospel of Christ is simple and powerful, and we must neither add nor take anything away from it. We must be vigilant lest we be seduced by teachings that distort the truth and lead us away from the grace of Christ.

Galatians 1:7

"Which is none other: but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

Explanation:

Paul explains that the gospel the Galatians were embracing was not really a gospel at all, but a distortion. Some people were confusing and disturbing the Christians, trying to get them to follow a wrong version of Christ's message.

Theological evidence:

- **False teachers:** Paul has already warned about these false teachers in Acts 20:29-30. They corrupt the gospel by trying to add human works to salvation.

Reflection:

It is essential that we stand firm on the pure, unadulterated gospel. False teachings may arise and attempt to lead us astray, but we must always return to the truth of Christ, which is sufficient for our salvation.

Galatians 1:8

"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than the one we preached to you, let him be under God's curse!"

Explanation:

Paul is categorical: anyone, be it a human being or even a heavenly angel, who preaches a gospel different from the one he had taught, must be cursed. He emphasizes the seriousness of the message and the fidelity that Christians must have to the original gospel.

Theological evidence:

- **The condemnation of false teachings:** In 2 Corinthians 11:4, Paul warns against accepting "another Jesus" and "another gospel." The purity of the gospel is paramount.

Reflection:

The purity of the gospel is something we must jealously guard. We cannot give in to external pressures or influences that would lead us to distort the truth. Our commitment must be to the original gospel of Christ.

Galatians 1:9

"As we have said before, so I say now: If anyone preaches to you a gospel other than the one you received, let him be accursed."

Explanation:

Paul repeats his earlier statement to emphasize the gravity of the situation. He wants to ensure that the church understands the seriousness of what is at stake. The purity of the gospel is essential to the spiritual health of believers.

Theological evidence:

- **Repetition as emphasis:** Repetition serves to emphasize the importance of a message. In Philippians 3:1, Paul also repeats the same warning, reinforcing the importance of not altering the gospel.

Reflection:

Repeating the truth is an important mechanism to protect ourselves from error. We need to be diligent in listening to, learning from, and remembering the true message of Christ so that we are not easily led astray.

Galatians 1:10

"For am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ."

Explanation:

Paul questions his motivation. He is not seeking to please men, but God. Faithfulness to Christ and the gospel is more important than pleasing people, especially when they are seeking to distort the message.

Theological evidence:

- **Faithfulness to Christ:** In 1 Thessalonians 2:4, Paul says that "we do not seek to please men, but God, who tests our hearts." The servant of Christ must seek to please God above all else.

Reflection:

This is an important question for all of us: Are we seeking the approval of God or the approval of men? The true Christian must be willing to

displease men, if necessary, in order to be faithful to Christ and the gospel.

Galatians 1:11

"But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which I preached is not according to man;"

Explanation:

Paul wants to make it clear that the gospel he is preaching is not something he has learned from others or created from human ideas. The message he preaches is divine, revealed directly by God. By emphasizing this, Paul refutes the accusations of false teachers who suggested that he was preaching a modified gospel or a doctrine derived from human sources.

Theological evidence:

- **Divine revelation of the gospel:** In 1 Corinthians 2:13, Paul states that what he preaches is that which "was taught not by human wisdom, but by the Spirit." The gospel does not depend on human wisdom, but on divine revelation.

Reflection:

When Paul says that the gospel is not "according to man," he reminds us that the true message of Christ is transcendent. We must seek the gospel in its pure form, without human modifications, and be open to its divine revelation. This challenges any tendency to want to adapt or distort the message to please others.

Galatians 1:12

"For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ."

Explanation:

Paul reaffirms that his message did not come from any human being, nor was it taught by anyone in particular. The gospel he preaches was received directly through revelation from Jesus Christ. Paul had a personal experience with Christ, especially at the time of his conversion, when he was supernaturally called.

Theological evidence:

- **Direct revelation from Christ:** In Acts 9:3-6, we see the account of Paul being called by Jesus on the road to Damascus. He had a direct revelation of Christ, which became the basis of his preaching.

Reflection:

Paul reminds us that the gospel is a revelation that comes from God. This challenges us not to rely on external sources or human interpretations for our faith, but on a direct experience with the truth of Christ. We must seek this personal revelation of Jesus in our lives.

Galatians 1:13

"For you have heard of my manner of life in time past, how I persecuted the church of God and wasted it;"

Explanation:

Paul recalls his past life before his conversion, when he was a fierce persecutor of Christians. He actively participated in the attempt to eradicate the Church.

of Christ, destroyer of the Christian faith. This confession is a way for Paul to show the radical change that occurred in his life after his encounter with Christ.

Theological evidence:

- **Persecution of the Church:** In Acts 8:3, it is mentioned how Paul (Saul at the time) devastated the Church, entering homes and taking Christians to be arrested. His transformation from persecutor to preacher is a testimony to the grace of God.

Reflection:

Paul's transformation is a powerful example of what God can do in anyone's life. No matter how far someone may be from the truth, God's grace can bring about radical change. This teaches us that no one is beyond Christ's redemption.

Galatians 1:14

"And in my nation I was more advanced than many of my contemporaries, being exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."

Explanation:

Paul describes his dedication to Judaism and the traditions of his ancestors. He was a more zealous scholar and defender of the Jewish faith than many of his generation. This zeal, though genuine, was misguided, for it was in opposition to the gospel of Christ.

Theological evidence:

- **Zeal for tradition:** Paul mentions his zeal in Philippians 3:4-6, where he talks about his past as a Pharisee, following Jewish laws strictly. He

was so involved in Jewish traditions that he did not see the truth in Christ.

Reflection:

Paul's zeal for tradition is not criticized here, but rather the way he was willing to use it to persecute the church. This leads us to reflect on zeal in our own lives: we can be very zealous in our beliefs, but it is crucial that our convictions are aligned with the truth of Christ, not human traditions.

Galatians 1:15

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace,"

Explanation:

Here Paul acknowledges that his life and calling were planned by God from before he was born. The fact that he was called "by the grace" of God is a reminder that divine selection and calling to ministry are not dependent on human merit but on God's sovereign grace.

Theological evidence:

- **God's sovereign choice:** In Jeremiah 1:5, God tells the prophet that He knew and set him apart even before he was born. The idea of a predetermined calling is also seen in Romans 8:30.

Reflection:

The recognition that God calls us by His grace, not by our merits, is a humbling message. Like Paul, our lives and ministries are the result of God's sovereign choice and grace. Rather than

we pride ourselves on our accomplishments, we should live with gratitude for His goodness and mercy.

Galatians 1:16

"To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood;"

Explanation:

Paul shares that the purpose of his revelation of Christ was for him to preach the gospel among the Gentiles. He states that after being called by God, he did not seek human counsel (he did not "consult with flesh and blood"), but followed the direction God gave him directly.

Theological evidence:

- **Revelation of Christ:** Paul's calling to be an apostle to the Gentiles is highlighted in Acts 9:15 and Romans 11:13. He was commissioned directly by God, without human intervention.

Reflection:

This reminds us that when God calls, He gives us clear direction, and we don't need to seek validation from people. Obedience to God's call can be a lonely journey, but it is where we find true purpose.

Galatians 1:17

"Neither did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia, and then returned again to Damascus."

Explanation:

Paul details that after his conversion, he did not immediately go to the other apostles in Jerusalem for validation or instruction. Instead, he withdrew to Arabia, possibly for a period of reflection and direct teaching from God, before returning to Damascus.

Theological evidence:

- **Separation for God:** This period of retreat reflects the experience of other men of God, such as Moses, who withdrew for a period of preparation before beginning their mission. The emphasis is on how God prepares His chosen ones for the work.

Reflection:

Paul's retreat and seeking the Lord in a time of solitude is an important reminder: God's calling may lead us through periods of preparation that don't involve others but are essential to deepening our understanding of what He wants for us. Sometimes we need quiet moments to hear God's voice.

Galatians 1:18

"Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and stayed with him fifteen days."

Explanation:

After a period of three years, Paul finally goes to Jerusalem to meet with Peter. He does not go to seek approval, but to share his experience and ensure that he is in line with the faith that the other apostles are preaching.

Theological evidence:

- **Meeting with Pedro:** Paul had a personal encounter with Peter, as recorded in Acts 9:26-27. This meeting was important to Paul, not to validate his message, but to confirm that they were preaching the same thing.

Reflection:

This encounter between Paul and Peter reflects the importance of community and mutual confirmation in faith. Although Paul was called directly by God, he knew the importance of sharing with other leaders and ensuring they were aligned in the gospel. Unity in the body of Christ is essential, even when there is autonomy in calling.

Galatians 1:19

"But other of the apostles I saw none, save James the Lord's brother."

Explanation:

After his meeting with Peter, Paul mentions that he did not meet any other apostles except James, who

was the brother of Jesus. James here is not James the brother of John (the apostle), but James the brother of Jesus, who became an important leader in the church at Jerusalem. This meeting with James was significant, for he was also involved in the affairs of the early church.

Theological evidence:

- **James, brother of Jesus:** In Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3, James is referred to as Jesus' "brother." In Acts 15, James, the brother of Jesus, is a key leader in the church at Jerusalem. He held a position of great influence, being considered a pillar of the church.

Reflection:

The fact that Paul did not meet with any other apostles except James shows that his ministry was not a simple adaptation or approval by others, but a direct call from God. This reminds us that while the body of Christ needs to be united and in communion, God's individual calling for each person must be lived out authentically, without depending on human approval.

Galatians 1:20

"And in what I write to you, behold, before God I lie not."

Explanation:

Paul solemnly states that what he is saying is true before God. He takes an oath to guarantee that his words are sincere and that there is no deception or lie in what he is writing. He wants to assure the Galatians that he is being completely honest.

transparent about your experience and your calling.

Theological evidence:

- **Swear before God:** In 2 Corinthians 1:23, Paul also makes a solemn statement, saying that his word is true before God. The apostle used this type of statement to emphasize the seriousness and truthfulness of his message.

Reflection:

Paul teaches us the importance of being sincere and transparent in everything we do, especially when we speak about the gospel. The truth of our life and message must be seen as something solid and faithful before God, without manipulation or half-truths.

Galatians 1:21

"Then I went on to the regions of Syria and Cilicia."

Explanation:

After his brief encounter with James, Paul then heads to the regions of Syria and Cilicia, where he would begin to preach the gospel. Cilicia was Paul's home region, and he also visited neighboring areas. This trip may have been a way to establish himself in his mission to preach to the Gentiles, away from the church's headquarters in Jerusalem.

Theological evidence:

- **Paul's Missionary Journeys:** In Acts 9:30, Paul is sent to Cilicia, where he begins to preach more actively. This reflects his commitment to the mission of reaching the Gentiles and spreading the gospel.

Reflection:

Paul, after his conversion, did not remain inactive or wait for the approval of others, but faithfully followed the call of

God. He did not seek to remain in the comfort zone of Jerusalem, but went out into new regions, preaching the gospel with courage. This is an example of how we should act boldly in the mission of Christ, going wherever necessary to fulfill the calling.

Galatians 1:22

"And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ."

Explanation:

Paul emphasizes that although he had begun to preach, he was not widely known to the churches in Judea. The churches in Judea that were in Christ did not know much about Paul personally. This is important because many may have only heard of him as the persecutor of the church, and it helps to understand why some people may have been suspicious of his authority in the gospel.

Theological evidence:

- **Lack of initial recognition:** In Acts 9:26-27, we see how the church in Jerusalem was initially hesitant to accept Paul as a true disciple because of his past persecution. This reinforces the fact that his authority did not come from human recognition, but from God.

Reflection:

This shows us how first impressions can be deceiving. Paul, with his past as a persecutor, was not recognized in the churches of Judea, but his transformed life and commitment to the gospel spoke for themselves. It also challenges us not to be too quick to judge people, but to make room for God to use them powerfully, regardless of their past.

Galatians 1:23

"But they only heard it said: He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once destroyed."

Explanation:

Here Paul highlights the testimony that the churches in Judea heard about him: instead of being a persecutor, he now preached the Christian faith that he had previously tried to destroy. The change in Paul's life was remarkable and surprising. This testimony was a reflection of the profound transformation that occurred in his life after his encounter with Christ.

Theological evidence:

- **Radical transformation:** The account in Acts 9:20-22 describes how Paul immediately began preaching about Jesus after his conversion, and his message was recognized as proof of his true transformation. The change in Paul's life is a testament to the power of God's grace.

Reflection:

Paul's transformation is an incredible example of how God can completely change a person. The one who was known as an enemy of the Church becomes one of its greatest defenders. This reminds us that no one is beyond God's power to transform. No person is so lost that God's grace cannot reach them.

Galatians 1:24

"And they glorified God in me."

Explanation:

Paul describes how, after his conversion and ministry, the churches glorified God because of him. The people did not glorify Paul, but rather God, recognizing the divine work in Paul's life. The radical transformation of a persecutor into a preacher of the gospel is a reason to praise God.

Theological evidence:

- **Glory to God:** Paul himself in 1 Corinthians 1:31 emphasizes that "let him who boasts boast in the Lord," for all glory must be given to God. The work of transformation that Paul experienced was not something he had done, but something that God did through him.

Reflection:

This last part reminds us that in our lives, we should always give glory to God for any transformation or achievement. Like Paul, people should see in us the reflection of God's grace, and it is He who should be glorified in everything we do.

Final Reflection on Galatians 1

Galatians 1 reveals the powerful transformation that God works in a person's life, and how this impacts not only their own life, but also the surrounding communities. From Paul's experience, we see clearly that God's grace has the power to radically change the course of our history, no matter what our past may have been.

When Paul speaks of the testimony that the churches in Judea heard about him, we see how spiritual transformation can be so visible that it impacts even those who initially doubted or distrusted us. This change, which once seemed impossible, becomes living proof of the power of the gospel of Christ.

Paul did not boast about himself, but he knew that his life was a reflection of God's mercy. This teaches us that true glory is not ours, but God's, who works through us to accomplish His purposes. As we look at Paul's transformation, we are challenged not to look back with a spirit of condemnation, but with the hope that God can transform any life that surrenders to Him.

Therefore, like Paul, our lives should be a testimony that God is able to make all things new. He can use each of us, no matter where we come from or what we have done, to spread His message of love and redemption. May we, as we live our faith, reflect God's transforming grace and bring glory to Him in all things.

Study of Paul's Letter to the Galatians - Chapter 2 (Verse by Verse Explanation)

In Galatians 2, Paul shares a crucial episode from his ministry, where he publicly confronts the apostle Peter. The reason for this confrontation was Peter's hypocrisy, who, although he knew that justification comes only through faith in Christ and not through works of the Law, acted differently in front of certain Jews. Paul uses this episode to reaffirm that salvation is achieved solely through God's grace, without depending on the observance of religious laws. This chapter is a call for Christians to live according to the freedom that Christ has given us, keeping the truth of the gospel intact and not being influenced by external pressures or false doctrines.

Verse 1:

"After fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus with me also."

Explanation: Paul records that 14 years after his first visit to Jerusalem, he went there again. This time he was accompanied by Barnabas, an influential Christian leader, and Titus, who was a Gentile convert. The number of years may be a way of marking the time since Paul began his ministry, and the mention of Titus shows that he was bringing a Gentile Christian to discuss with the leaders of the Jerusalem church.

Theological Proofs: The fact that Paul brought Titus, a Gentile, is significant because it bears on the question of how Gentiles should be treated in the church. Paul was arguing that salvation did not depend on keeping the Law of Moses, as some were teaching.

Reflection: This verse reminds us that Christian ministry must always be accompanied by fellowship and alliances with other servants of Christ. The presence of Titus and Barnabas illustrates how God's work is often collective rather than solitary.

Verse 2:

"I went up by revelation and explained to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to the chief ones, so that I would not run or have run in vain."

Explanation: Paul states that he went up to Jerusalem not on his own initiative, but by divine direction (revelation). He expounded the gospel he preached among the Gentiles, that is, he shared with the leaders of the church in Jerusalem the gospel he was taking to the non-Jews. He emphasizes that he did this privately, to ensure that his efforts were in line with the other church leaders and were not in vain.

Theological Proofs: This verse highlights the unity in the early church. Paul did not want to be at odds with the other apostles, but he ensured that his message was in harmony with the gospel proclaimed by the other apostles.

Reflection: Sometimes it is important to validate what we do in ministry with other spiritual authorities to ensure that our work is aligned with God's purposes, not our own ideas. Paul shows the importance of seeking confirmation from the body of Christ.

Verse 3:

“But not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.”

Explanation:Here, Paul is stating that Titus, a Gentile, was not forced to be circumcised, which was a practice required by the Law of Moses for Jews. This was significant because there was a debate in the church about whether Gentiles should follow Jewish laws, such as circumcision, in order to be accepted into the Christian community.

Theological Proofs:The refusal to require Titus' circumcision reflects Paul's central belief that salvation comes through faith in Christ, not through keeping the Law. This will be a key issue throughout Galatians.

Reflection:This verse teaches us that God's grace does not require people to conform to external or cultural practices in order to draw near to God. Faith in Christ is sufficient for salvation.

Verse 4:

“And this because of false brethren brought in unawares, who crept in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.”

Explanation:Paul reveals that some "false brothers" had infiltrated the church with the goal of subverting the freedom of Christians. These individuals wanted Gentile Christians to be subject to the bondage of Jewish laws, such as circumcision, arguing that this was necessary for salvation.

Theological Proofs:The issue of Christian freedom is central to this verse. True freedom in Christ must not be corrupted by false teachings that

impose human traditions as a requirement for salvation.

Reflection:We must be alert to false teachings that can lead us away from the true freedom we find in Christ. Faith in Jesus is all we need for salvation, and anything beyond that must be discarded.

Verse 5:

“To whom we did not yield for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”

Explanation:Paul is saying that he and his companions did not yield for a moment to the pressure to accept the teachings of the false brothers. They stood firm in defending the truth of the gospel, so that the message of Christ would not be corrupted.

Theological Proofs:Paul’s firmness here reflects the importance of maintaining the purity of the gospel. The truth of the gospel cannot be distorted by human traditions or false doctrines.

Reflection:In our Christian journey, it is vital that we remain firm in the truth of the gospel, even when we face external pressures or teachings that attempt to divert our faith. Faithfulness to God’s Word is essential.

Verse 6:

“And those who were reputed to be something (what they were before does not interest me; God does not accept the appearance of man) added nothing to me.”

Explanation:Paul refers to the leaders of the Jerusalem church, saying that their position or reputation does not

affected his message. He is stating that in God's eyes, people's appearance or status do not matter, and that he was not influenced by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem.

Theological Proofs: Paul states that people's authority and value do not come from their position or prestige, but from their obedience to God and His truth. God does not judge people as men do.

Reflection: God looks at the heart, not at appearance or status. Our true authority and worth come from our faithfulness to Him, not from who we are in the eyes of the world.

Verse 7:

"But seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel of the circumcision,"

Explanation: Paul is stating that while Peter was called to preach to the Jews (the circumcised), he was called to preach to the Gentiles (the uncircumcised). He is explaining how God had assigned distinct roles for him and Peter in the ministry.

Theological Proofs: Paul recognizes the specific role God has given him, without competing or rivaling with other apostles. Each one's mission is valuable and unique in God's plan.

Reflection: God has a unique plan for each of us. We need to understand and embrace the role He has given us, without comparing ourselves to others. Our mission is as valuable as anyone else's in the body of Christ.

Verse 8:

“(For he that wrought effectually in Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision, wrought effectually in me also toward the Gentiles:)”

Explanation:Paul is reaffirming that the same God who empowered Peter to evangelize the Jews also empowered him to preach to the Gentiles. This highlights the unity and diversity in God’s ministry.

Theological Proofs:The Holy Spirit is the one who empowers the apostles and all Christians for ministry, regardless of which group they are evangelizing. It is God who works effectively, not human ability.

Reflection:The Holy Spirit empowers us for God’s service, and this gives us confidence to carry out our mission, no matter what it is. The important thing is to be available for what God wants to do through us.

Verse 9:

“Now when James, Cephas, and John, who were reputed to be pillars, knew the grace that was given to me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcision.”

Explanation:Paul says that the leaders of the church in Jerusalem, recognizing God's grace upon him, agreed with his mission to the Gentiles and gave him the necessary support. They agreed that Paul and Barnabas would focus on the gospel to the Gentiles, while Peter, James, and John would focus on the Jews.

Theological Proofs:This verse shows the unity among the apostles and the clarity that the gospel was to be preached to both Jews and Gentiles. The mission

each was recognized and accepted by the leadership in Jerusalem.

Reflection: Cooperation and mutual support among Christians are essential to the advancement of the gospel. Instead of rivalry, there should be a spirit of unity and understanding that everyone has a role to play in the Kingdom of God.

Verse 10:

“He only recommended that we remember the poor, which I also tried to do diligently.”

Explanation: Finally, Paul mentions that in addition to his evangelistic work, the leaders of the church in Jerusalem asked him to remember the poor. He emphasizes that he was committed to caring for those in need as part of his mission.

Theological Proofs: Concern for the poor is an important hallmark of the gospel. Jesus always showed compassion for those in need, and Paul follows this example, emphasizing that social and spiritual care must go hand in hand.

Reflection: Remembering the poor is a fundamental Christian commandment. Our gospel must be lived out in both words and actions. Caring for those in need must be a priority in our lives and ministry.

Verse 11:

“But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was to be blamed.”

Explanation: Paul recounts a confrontation he had with Peter, one of the church leaders. When Peter arrived in

In Antioch, he behaved inconsistently with the gospel, and Paul rebuked him publicly. The reason for Paul's rebuke was that Peter, a Jew, was living as a Gentile among the Gentiles, but when some Jewish men came, he withdrew to avoid being criticized. This demonstrated hypocrisy.

Theological Proofs: This incident illustrates that even great church leaders need to be corrected when they are wrong. Paul courageously stood up to defend the truth of the gospel, regardless of Peter's position.

Reflection: We should not be afraid to correct even spiritual leaders when they stray from the truth. The integrity of the gospel and the unity of the church are more important than one's personal reputation or position.

Verse 12:

"For before certain men came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them of the circumcision."

Explanation: Peter acted inconsistently: while he was with the Gentiles, he lived like them, but when he saw the Jews coming, he withdrew, afraid of being criticized. This attitude of Peter's showed a failure to live according to the freedom that the gospel provides. He feared the opinion of the Jews who insisted on observing the Law of Moses, such as circumcision.

Theological Proofs: Peter's attitude here reveals the temptation to give in to social pressure and fear of human judgment, something we all face. It also shows us that even spiritual leaders can be influenced by external pressures and sin.

Reflection:The pressure to be accepted or to please others can lead us to act in ways that are inconsistent with gospel values. We should seek to live by the truth of Christ, not by the world's standards.

Verse 13:

“And the other Jews also dissembled with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their dissemble.”

Explanation:Paul notes that Peter's hypocrisy had a negative effect on other Christians, including Barnabas, who also began to distance himself from the Gentiles to avoid criticism. This shows how a leader's actions can negatively influence others, leading them to follow the wrong example.

Theological Proofs:The actions of leaders profoundly influence the church. The apostle James also teaches that faith without works is dead (James 2:14-26), and Christians' attitudes should reflect the truth of the gospel in their actions.

Reflection:Our conduct influences others around us. As Christians, we must be careful about our actions and how they may impact those who observe us, especially those younger in the faith.

Verse 14:

“But when I saw that they were not walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, ‘If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, why do you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?’”

Explanation:Paul publicly confronts Peter, accusing him of acting contrary to the gospel.

The point is that Peter was living as a Gentile (not following Jewish laws) when he was with the Gentiles, but when the Jews arrived, he forced the Gentiles to follow Jewish traditions, such as circumcision. This contradicted the truth of the gospel, which teaches that salvation is by faith, not by the works of the Law.

Theological Proofs: Salvation in Christ is by grace and not by observance of religious rituals. Paul explains this in Ephesians 2:8-9. Paul's teaching here is radical and fundamental to our understanding of the gospel: faith in Christ is sufficient for salvation, and external religious practices can add nothing to Christ's redemptive work.

Reflection: As Christians, we must live in a way that is consistent with the truth of the gospel. We cannot demand of others what we do not follow, and freedom in Christ calls us to live authentically, without hypocrisy.

Verse 15:

"We, Jews by birth, and not sinners among the Gentiles,"

Explanation: Paul is introducing the argument that follows, in which he presents himself as a Jew, but states that in Christ the issue is not origin or external religious practices. He uses the term "sinners among the Gentiles" to refer to the fact that the Gentiles did not follow Jewish laws, but were still being saved by faith.

Theological Proofs: Paul emphasizes that the issue of salvation is not about keeping the Law, but about faith in Christ. Salvation does not come by the works of the Law, but by the grace of God. In Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul reaffirms that it is by grace, not by works.

Reflection:Sometimes we cling to traditions or external norms as if they define our Christian identity. However, our true identity comes from faith in Christ, not from the works we do or the laws we follow.

Verse 16:

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

Explanation:Paul states that no one can be justified before God by the works of the Law (such as circumcision or other Jewish rituals), but only by faith in Jesus Christ. Justification is God's act of declaring a person righteous, and this only happens through faith in Christ, not by works.

Theological Proofs:Paul teaches the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith, which is the foundation of Christian theology. Justification is not achieved by our own efforts, but by the redemptive work of Christ. This is clearly stated in Romans 3:28.

Reflection:We must understand that salvation and justification do not depend on what we do, but on what Christ has done for us. This gives us enormous freedom and security in our relationship with God.

Verse 17:

“But if we seek to be justified in Christ, and yet appear sinners, is Christ a minister of sin? God forbid.”

Explanation: Paul asks whether, by seeking justification in Christ, we are promoting sin. He answers in the negative, arguing that justification by faith does not give us a license to sin. On the contrary, it transforms us and calls us to live according to God's will.

Theological Proofs: Justification does not give us permission to live in sin. In Romans 6:1-2, Paul states that when we are justified, we have died to sin and must live a new life. God's grace is not a license to sin, but the power to live in holiness.

Reflection: God's grace calls us to holiness. Justification in Christ is not an invitation to sin, but a liberation from it. Our life in Christ should reflect the transformation He works in us.

Verse 18:

"For if I rebuild the things I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor."

Explanation: Paul is saying that if he were to return to following the rules of the Law, he would be going against the very gospel he preached. He recognizes that justification by faith is incompatible with observing the works of the Law as a means of salvation.

Theological Proofs: The Law was fulfilled in Christ, and to return to it as a means of salvation is to deny the work of Christ. In Romans 7:4, Paul says that through Christ we have died to the Law and now live for God.

Reflection: The gospel frees us from trying to please God through rituals or works. The work of Christ is sufficient, and returning to the practices of the Law is a regression, a denial of grace.

Verse 19:

“For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God.”

Explanation:Paul explains that through Christ’s death, he has died to the Law and its demands. Now he lives for God, seeking to obey His will through faith in Christ, not by trying to keep the Law.

Theological Proofs:The death of Christ caused the Law to lose its authority over believers. In Romans 7:6, Paul says that we are freed from the Law and now live in newness of life, by the grace of God.

Reflection:In Christ, we no longer live under the condemnation of the Law, but under the freedom that grace gives us. We must live for God, seeking His will in everything we do.

Verse 20:

“I have been crucified with Christ; I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Explanation:Paul states that his old life has been crucified with Christ. Now he lives by faith in Christ, and the life he has is sustained by that faith. Christ is the center of his life, and he recognizes the great love of Christ, who gave himself for him.

Theological Proofs:This verse summarizes the believer's salvation experience: the old nature has been crucified, and the new life is lived in Christ. This is explained in Romans 6:6, where Paul says that our

old nature was crucified with Christ, and now we live a new life.

Reflection:The true Christian life is a life in Christ, where He is the center of everything. Our identity is shaped by Him, and we live by the faith that unites us to Him.

Verse 21:

“I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

Explanation:Paul concludes that justification cannot come through the Law, because if it did, Christ's death would be useless. God's grace is the only means of justification, and if we were to return to the Law, we would be disregarding the work of Christ.

Theological Proofs:Justification is by grace, and Christ died to fulfill what the Law could not do. In Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul emphasizes that salvation is a gift from God, not a human achievement.

Reflection:God's grace is the basis of our salvation, and any attempt to seek righteousness through other means nullifies the work of Christ. We must value and live according to the grace that has been given to us.

Final Reflection on Galatians 2

This chapter of Galatians presents us with an important confrontation in the history of the Church, where Paul courageously confronts even the apostle Peter. The essence of this confrontation is not only in Peter's attitude, but in the profound teaching he brings us about justification by faith.

What Paul teaches us, above all, is that salvation does not depend on our works, nor on our observances

religious, but rather of the grace of God, which is manifested through Jesus Christ. The works of the Law, however important they may have been in the Old Testament, have no power to justify a human being before God. Christ, through his death and resurrection, fulfilled the Law, and it is only through him that we have access to justification and eternal life.

Furthermore, Peter's attitude reveals a danger common to us all: the temptation to live in a way that is inconsistent with the gospel, depending on external norms or fearing human opinion. Faith in Christ frees us from this, because our identity is not found in traditions or external pressures, but in the redemptive work of Jesus.

Like Paul, we must be willing to defend the purity of the gospel, correcting one another when necessary, so that God's grace is not nullified. We must live in a way that is consistent with the truth of the gospel, where Christ is everything and salvation is entirely by faith.

Finally, Galatians 2 challenges us to live a life of freedom in Christ, without returning to the yoke of the Law or human expectations, but rather trusting fully in the grace of God who calls us to a new life in Christ, where He lives in us and through us.

Study of Paul's Letter to the Galatians - Chapter 3 (Verse by Verse Explanation)

Galatians chapter 3 deals with the importance of faith over the Law. Paul challenges the Galatians for straying from the simplicity of the gospel, reminding them that justification comes by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law. He uses the example of Abraham to show that from the beginning, God's promise was based on faith. The chapter also highlights the temporary role of the Law as a guardian until the coming of Christ, who unites us all as children of God through faith.

Verse 1

“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified?”

Explanation: Paul begins this chapter by rebuking the Galatians for having strayed from the truth of the gospel. He uses the word “fools” to express his surprise at their lack of discernment. The phrase “who bewitched you” indicates that they were deceived or influenced by false teaching, straying from the clear message of the cross of Christ that had already been presented to them.

Theological evidence: Here Paul alludes to the completed work of Christ on the cross. The crucifixion of Jesus is central to the Christian faith, for it is the means by which salvation was offered to mankind (1 Corinthians 1:18). The emphasis is on the fact that they already knew the truth, but were “bewitched” by false doctrines.

Reflection: How many times are we “fascinated” by teachings that seem good, but that

away from the central truth of the gospel? We need to stand firm in the truth of Christ crucified, not being deceived by doctrines or practices that do not align with what Jesus did for us.

Verse 2

“This is all I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”

Explanation: Paul asks the Galatians a rhetorical question, asking them to reflect on how they received the Holy Spirit. Was it through observing the works of the Law or through faith in the gospel they heard? The implied answer is that it was by faith, not by works.

Theological evidence: Paul's theology emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is given to believers as a result of faith in Jesus, not through obedience to the Law (Romans 10:17). The Law never had the power to impart the Spirit; this blessing is a direct result of faith in Christ.

Reflection: This verse reminds us that we cannot earn the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives through good works or obedience to the Law. He is a gift freely given by God to those who believe in Jesus. Our relationship with God must be based on faith, not on our human efforts.

Verse 3

“Are you so foolish? Having begun with the Spirit, are you now perfected with the flesh?”

Explanation: Paul continues his reasoning by pointing out the folly of trying to complete the Christian life through human works (flesh), after having begun in faith and the power of the Spirit. He shows that relying on one's own strength or effort, rather than trusting in the Spirit, is a mistake.

Theological evidence: In Romans 8:9, Paul states that believers are "in the Spirit," not "in the flesh." He teaches that salvation begins and is maintained by the power of the Holy Spirit, not by human efforts.

Reflection: Many times, we begin our journey of faith by depending on the Holy Spirit, but gradually we return to trusting in our own abilities. This verse reminds us that we need to depend on the Spirit in every phase of our walk with God, and not trust in our own strength or works.

Verse 4

“Was it in vain that you suffered so many things? If indeed this was also in vain.”

Explanation: Paul reminds the Galatians of the sufferings they have endured as Christians. He leads them to reflect on whether all the suffering and persecution they have endured in the name of Christ was in vain, since they are now returning to slavery to the Law. He expresses hope that their journey of faith has not been in vain.

Theological evidence: Paul frequently teaches that believers will face suffering because of their faith (Romans 8:17). Perseverance in the midst of tribulation is a mark of those who truly follow Christ, and returning to the Law would be a denial of the grace they have already received.

Reflection: When we face difficulties in our Christian walk, we must remember that our suffering is not in vain. We must not retreat into practices that do not bring us life, but remain firm in our faith in Jesus, trusting that our suffering has purpose and meaning in God.

Verse 5

“So he who supplies you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law, or by hearing with faith?”

Explanation: Paul asks a clear question: Does God perform miracles and give the Spirit through the works of the Law or through faith? He makes it clear that it is by faith. The Galatians had already experienced the power of God through the preaching of faith, not through the keeping of the Law.

Theological evidence: Hebrews 11:6 states that “without faith it is impossible to please God.” All of God’s work among His people has always been the result of faith, from the patriarchs to the New Testament Christians. The Law never had the power to perform miracles or impart the Spirit.

Reflection: Miracles and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives do not depend on how well we follow rules or how well we behave. They are a result of our faith in Jesus Christ. This challenges us to trust God more, knowing that He works powerfully in response to our faith.

Verse 6

“Just as Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Explanation: Paul uses the example of Abraham, who was justified by faith, not by his works. Abraham trusted God's promises, and because of that faith, God considered him righteous. Paul establishes that God's righteousness is given by faith, as it was with Abraham.

Theological evidence: Genesis 15:6 is the basis for this statement, where Abraham was considered righteous by his faith. Romans 4:3-5 also reinforces that justification by faith is not a new concept, but something that God did from the beginning, with Abraham being the supreme example.

Reflection: Like Abraham, we are called to believe in God's promises, even when we do not immediately see their fulfillment. Our justification, that is, being declared righteous before God, does not depend on what we do, but on our faith in Christ and His promises.

Verse 7

"Know therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."

Explanation: Paul states that those who have faith are true descendants of Abraham. This means that spiritual descent from Abraham is not based on genealogy, but on faith that imitates Abraham's trust in God.

Theological evidence: In Romans 9:6-8, Paul teaches that it is not the natural children who are considered children of God, but the children of the promise, those who have faith. He shows that Abraham's lineage is spiritual and is defined by faith in God, not by physical descent.

Reflection: The true identity of a child of God is not in his natural heritage or in his works, but in the faith we have in Christ. Being a "child of Abraham"

It means following the example of your faith, trusting God unshakably, regardless of the circumstances.

Verse 8

“Now the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you all the nations will be blessed.’”

Explanation: Paul argues that the promise made to Abraham was an anticipation of the gospel. The blessing promised to all nations through Abraham was justification by faith, which would extend to the Gentiles (non-Jews). This promise was fully fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who brought salvation to all nations.

Theological evidence: The quote here is from Genesis 12:3, where God promises Abraham that “in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” Paul sees this as a prophecy of the inclusion of the Gentiles in the plan of salvation through faith. This promise is fulfilled in Jesus, the descendant of Abraham, through whom all nations are blessed (cf. Romans 4:16-17).

Reflection: God’s plan has always been to bless all nations through faith, and that blessing culminates in Jesus. Just as Abraham was called to be a blessing, we too are called to share the message of faith with the world, knowing that salvation is open to all.

Verse 9

“So then they which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

Explanation: Paul reinforces that those who have faith share in the same blessing as Abraham. Just as Abraham was blessed for his faith, believers are also blessed, not for their works, but for their trust in God.

Theological evidence: In Romans 4:11, Paul explains that Abraham is the "father of all who believe." Faith, not works, is what brings God's blessing upon the believer. Abraham's blessing is justification by faith, a blessing that all who believe in Christ share.

Reflection: As believers, we are heirs to the same promises and blessings that Abraham received. Our faith in Christ makes us partakers of this spiritual blessing, and it is a great privilege to know that through faith we are connected to the great story of redemption that God began with Abraham.

Verse 10

"Therefore all who rely on works of the law are under a curse, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them.'"

Explanation: Paul explains that those who try to justify themselves by works of the Law are under a curse, because the Law demands total and perfect obedience. He quotes Deuteronomy 27:26, which states that any failure to obey the Law results in a curse.

Theological evidence: In Romans 3:20, Paul teaches that "by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified." The Law was given to reveal sin, not as a means of salvation. Jesus came to free us from the curse of the Law by taking the punishment we deserved (Galatians 3:13).

Reflection: Trying to achieve righteousness through works is a trap that places us under condemnation, because none of us can fulfill the Law perfectly. This leads us to recognize our need for a Savior, Jesus, who frees us from the curse of the Law and gives us the blessing of eternal life through faith.

Verse 11

“And that no one is justified before God by the law is evident: for the just shall live by faith.”

Explanation: Paul emphasizes that it is impossible to be justified by the Law, because righteousness comes through faith. He cites Habakkuk 2:4 to show that since the Old Testament, God had already revealed that the righteous would live by faith and not by the works of the Law.

Theological evidence: In Romans 1:17, Paul reaffirms this truth when he says, “The just shall live by faith.” The Law was not given to justify, but to reveal sin and point to the need for a Redeemer. True righteousness before God is achieved through faith in Christ.

Reflection: Our salvation does not depend on our efforts or our ability to follow rules, but on our complete trust in God. Living by faith means trusting in Christ's sacrifice as sufficient for our justification and sanctification.

Verse 12

“Now the law is not of faith, but the man who does them will live by them.”

Explanation: Paul states that the Law is not based on faith, but on works. To be justified by the Law, it would be necessary to obey all its commandments, which is impossible. Faith, on the other hand, justifies us without requiring perfect obedience.

Theological evidence: Leviticus 18:5 is quoted here, where God said, "Whoever does them will live by them." However, in Romans 8:3-4, Paul explains that what the Law was unable to do, God did by sending His Son, fulfilling the righteousness required by the Law in us through Christ.

Reflection: The way of the Law is impossible to follow perfectly, while the way of faith is accessible to all who trust in Christ. It is a call to abandon confidence in our own merits and surrender to the grace of God.

Verse 13

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'"

Explanation: Jesus freed us from the curse of the Law by taking that curse upon himself by being crucified. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 21:23, which says that anyone who hangs on a tree is cursed. Jesus suffered that curse in our place so that we could be free.

Theological evidence: In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul states that Christ "became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." By dying on the cross, He paid the price for our deliverance from sin. condemnation that the Law brought upon us.

Reflection: Christ bore the curse we deserved because of our sin, so that

that we might be blessed and live in freedom. His death on the cross offers us complete redemption, and we should live in gratitude for the perfect work He accomplished on our behalf.

Verse 14

“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

Explanation: Christ's sacrifice not only redeemed us from the curse, but also brought us the blessings of Abraham, which are now available to the Gentiles through faith. Furthermore, this faith enables us to receive the Holy Spirit, the promise of God.

Theological evidence: Acts 2:38 promises the gift of the Holy Spirit to all who believe in Christ. The blessing of Abraham, which involved justification by faith, is now extended to all people, and the Holy Spirit is the seal of that promise.

Reflection: Christ's work has opened the way for us to experience the fullness of God's blessing, including the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Through faith, we have access to these blessings and are empowered to live according to God's will.

Verse 15

“Brothers, I speak as a man: even if a man's will is established, no one disannuls it or adds anything to it.”

Explanation: Paul uses the analogy of a human will to explain that once made, it cannot be changed or added to. He is preparing the

ground to show that God's covenant with Abraham was not annulled by the Law given to Moses.

Theological evidence: In Hebrews 6:17-18, the author reinforces that God's promise is unchangeable and confirmed by an oath. Just as a testament cannot be changed, God's promise to Abraham remains firm, regardless of the Law.

Reflection: God's faithfulness is unchanging. The promises made to Abraham, based on faith, remain valid for us today. We can trust in the certainty that God will fulfill everything He has promised, for He never changes.

Verse 16

“Now to Abraham and his descendants were the promises made. He does not say, “And to descendants,” as in many; but as in one, “And to your descendants,” who is Christ.”

Explanation: Paul clarifies that God's promise to Abraham referred to a single descendant, which is Christ. This means that the promise was fulfilled in Jesus and it is through him that the blessings promised to Abraham are distributed.

Theological evidence: In Genesis 22:18, God promises that through Abraham's descendants all nations will be blessed. Paul identifies this seed as Christ, the heir of the promises.

Reflection: Christ is the fulfillment of all the promises made to Abraham. It is through Jesus that the blessings of salvation, justification, and the Holy Spirit are poured out on all who believe. He is the center of God's redemptive plan.

Verse 17

“Now this I say, that the law, having been confirmed four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate the covenant confirmed before by God, so as to nullify the promise.”

Explanation: Paul argues that the Law, which was given 430 years after the promise made to Abraham, cannot nullify or replace that promise. God's covenant with Abraham is earlier and more fundamental than the Law.

Theological evidence: In Hebrews 8:6, we read that Christ is the mediator of a better covenant based on better promises. The Law cannot change or undo God's original promise to Abraham, which was based on faith and not works.

Reflection: God's promises are unchanging, and faith is the means by which we connect to them. The Law was temporary, while the promise is eternal. Our trust must be in God's promise, which is fulfilled in Christ.

Verse 18

“For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.”

Explanation: Paul explains that if the inheritance came through the Law, then the promise would be nullified. But the inheritance was given to Abraham freely through the promise, and not as something to be earned by keeping the Law.

Theological evidence: In Romans 4:14, Paul states that "if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void." God's promise is received by faith, not by merit, and is granted as a gift of God's grace.

Reflection: Our spiritual inheritance, which includes eternal life, justification, and fellowship with God, is not something we earn through our own efforts. It is a gift we receive by faith, based on God's gracious promise.

Verse 19

"What then is the law for? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made. It was put in the hands of an intermediary by angels."

Explanation: The Law was given to reveal sin and highlight the need for a Savior. It had a temporary role "until the seed should come," which is Christ. The Law showed man's inability to save himself and pointed to the promise.

Theological evidence: In Romans 7:7, Paul explains that the Law revealed sin. Also in Hebrews 9:15, Jesus is described as the mediator of a new covenant, fulfilling what the Law could not.

Reflection: The Law had an important purpose: to show our need for Christ. It exposed our sin, but it also pointed to the solution that would come in Jesus. We should value the Law for its role, but our ultimate confidence is in the promise fulfilled in Christ.

Verse 20

“Now there is no mediator of one, but God is one.”

Explanation: Here Paul seems to indicate that the function of the mediator, like Moses, involves two parties, but God's promise to Abraham was direct, without the need for a mediator. God, in his unity, made the promise unilaterally.

Theological evidence: In 1 Timothy 2:5, Paul explains that there is "one mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ." Christ is the mediator of the new covenant, which is based on divine promise.

Reflection: God's promise is based on His faithfulness, not on our performance. Christ, the only mediator between God and men, has guaranteed the fulfillment of that promise. This gives us confidence in the covenant God has made with us.

Verse 21

“Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given which could give life, verily righteousness would have been by the law.”

Explanation: Paul refutes the idea that the Law contradicts God's promises. The Law was not given to give eternal life; if it could, righteousness would come through it. But the Law did not have the power to bring spiritual life; that power is in God's promise, fulfilled in Christ.

Theological evidence: Romans 3:20 states that "by the law is the knowledge of sin," while righteousness comes through faith in Christ (Galatians 2:16). The Law has an important role, but it cannot justify anyone.

Reflection: The Law was established to expose our need for God, but true life and righteousness come through faith in the promise fulfilled in Jesus. We must not place our trust in obedience to the Law, but in the work of Christ.

Verse 22

“But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

Explanation: Scripture (the Law) reveals that all are bound under sin, and this prepares the way for the promise of salvation through faith in Christ to be given to all who believe. It shows our inability to save ourselves.

Theological evidence: Romans 3:23 says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." The Law makes us aware of our sinful condition, but it is through faith that we receive justification.

Reflection: The Law does not condemn us to destroy us, but to bring us to the promise of Christ. Recognizing our sin is the first step toward the deliverance and eternal life that comes through faith in Jesus.

Verse 23

“But before faith came, we were held in custody by the law, kept secret from the faith which would afterwards be revealed.”

Explanation: Before the coming of Christ and the full revelation of faith, the Law functioned as a guardian. People were "shut up," protected under the Law, until true faith in Jesus was revealed.

Theological evidence: In Romans 7:7-12, Paul talks about how the Law acted as a tutor, revealing sin until Christ came to bring salvation.

Reflection: The Law had a temporary purpose, keeping humanity under its guard until the coming of Christ. Now that faith has been revealed, we can live in freedom by God's grace.

Verse 24

“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”

Explanation: The Law acted as a “schoolmaster” (tutor or guardian), leading people to Christ. Its purpose was to show our need for justification by faith. Once Christ came, the Law’s role as tutor was complete.

Theological evidence: In Romans 10:4, Paul declares, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." The Law leads us to the understanding that we need Christ to be justified.

Reflection: The role of the Law was to prepare us for the coming of Christ. Now we are justified by faith in Him, and the Law has fulfilled its purpose in leading us to the Savior.

Verse 25

“But after faith came, we are no longer under a guardian.”

Explanation: Now that faith in Christ has been revealed, we are no longer under the guardianship of the Law. The Law has fulfilled its role in leading us to faith, but now we live by faith, not under the control of the Law.

Theological evidence: In Romans 6:14, Paul declares, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace." The coming of Christ brought a new era of freedom in faith.

Reflection: The Law no longer controls us; we are led by the Spirit of God and live by faith. This does not mean that we reject God's principles, but that we follow them with a new understanding and freedom in Christ.

Verse 26

"For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus."

Explanation: Paul states that all who believe in Christ are made children of God. It is no longer the Law that determines our sonship, but faith in Christ. All who believe are now part of God's family.

Theological evidence: John 1:12 confirms this, saying, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Our new identity as children of God is based on faith in Jesus.

Reflection: The greatest blessing of faith in Christ is that we are called children of God. This gives us a new identity and unites us as brothers and sisters, all part of the divine family by faith.

Verse 27

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Explanation: Those who have been baptized into Christ have put on Him. Baptism symbolizes our union with Christ and our new identity in Him. To be put on Christ means to live according to His nature and character.

Theological evidence: Romans 6:3-4 teaches that through baptism we are buried with Christ into His death and raised to new life. Baptism marks the beginning of a new life in Christ.

Reflection: Being baptized into Christ is a public declaration of our faith and an expression that we are living according to His will. It is a sign that our old life has died, and we are now clothed with the new life of Christ.

Verse 28

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Explanation: In Christ, all social, cultural, and gender distinctions are abolished. Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, all have equality before God. All are one in Christ.

Theological evidence: Ephesians 2:14 says that Christ "is our peace, who has made both one." Christ has abolished the barriers that separated us and united us as one people, without discrimination.

Reflection: In Christ, we are all equal and united as one body. The divisions that the world establishes have no place in the family of God. In Christ, we all share the same value and dignity before Him.

Verse 29

“And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Explanation: Those who belong to Christ are considered Abraham's spiritual offspring and heirs of the promises God made to him. Faith in Christ unites us with Abraham's line of faith and makes us part of his blessings.

Theological evidence: In Romans 4:16, Paul explains that the promise is guaranteed to all of Abraham's descendants, not only to those who live under the Law, but also to those who have Abraham's faith. By faith, we are heirs of God's promises.

Reflection: By believing in Christ, we become part of a spiritual lineage that goes back to Abraham and receive the same promises God made to him. This reminds us of the richness of the blessings we inherit as children of God.

Final Reflection on Galatians 3

Galatians 3 teaches us a fundamental truth: salvation and justification before God come exclusively through faith in Jesus Christ, not through obedience to the Law. Paul explains that the Law had a temporary purpose—to serve as a tutor who led us to Christ. However, once faith was revealed, the Law fulfilled its purpose. We are now children of God by faith, and as such, we share in the promise made to Abraham,

regardless of our origin or social position.

This message is powerful because it reminds us that God is no respecter of persons. In Christ, all barriers have been broken down—Jew, Gentile, male, female, slave, and free are all united as one people. This

Union transcends all human divisions and invites us to live in true fraternity and equality as members of God's family.

The final reflection is that we must live with the full awareness that we are heirs of God's promises, and that our identity is not in the Law or any other system of works, but in faith in Christ. This challenges us to abandon any attempt to justify ourselves by our own merits and to rely entirely on God's grace and promises. As heirs of faith, we are called to live in freedom, love, and unity, reflecting the nature of Christ in our lives.

Study of Paul's Letter to the Galatians - Chapter 4 (Verse by Verse Explanation)

In Galatians chapter 4, the apostle Paul discusses the profound transformation that occurs in the lives of Christians when they become children of God through faith in Christ and no longer slaves to the Law. He uses the allegory of the children of Abraham to illustrate the difference between living under the freedom of God's promise, like Isaac, and living under the slavery of the Law, like Ishmael. Paul challenges Christians to recognize their new identity in Christ and to live in the freedom He offers, turning away from any temptation to return to the old system of rules and rituals. This chapter teaches us about the grace, freedom, and privilege of being heirs to God's promises.

Galatians 4:1

Verse:

"What do I say then? That as long as the heir is a minor, he differs in no way from a servant, though he is lord of all."

Explanation:

Paul begins his analogy by explaining that an heir, while still a minor, is subject to guardians and administrators, even though he is the rightful heir and owner of everything. This serves to illustrate the condition of humans before Christ: although God has plans of salvation and inheritance for all, as long as we are under the Law, we cannot fully enjoy them.

Theological evidence:

This concept is reaffirmed in Romans 8:17, where Paul explains that we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. The difference between being an heir and living as a lesser

it is the power to enjoy the inheritance, which can only occur when we reach spiritual "adulthood" in Christ.

Reflection:

Before Christ, we were like children, waiting for the fullness of God's plan, which would be revealed in Jesus. The Law taught us the way, but it did not give us the true freedom and inheritance that we have in Christ.

Galatians 4:2

Verse:

"But he is under guardians and curators until the time appointed by his father."

Explanation:

Paul explains that although the heir is legally the owner of everything, while he is a minor, he lives as if he were a servant, depending on tutors and guardians for his education and administration. This metaphor represents humanity under the Law, which was being prepared for something greater, the salvation brought by Christ.

Theological evidence:

In Galatians 3:24, Paul describes the Law as a "schoolmaster," someone who guides or trains a child until he or she is ready to live as an adult with full freedom. The Law served as this tutor until Christ came.

Reflection:

The Law was not an end in itself, but a means to prepare us for Christ's salvation. It taught us our dependence on God and our inability to meet His standards on our own, setting the stage for the grace that was to come.

Galatians 4:3

Verse:

"So we also, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world."

Explanation:

Here Paul refers to the condition of all humanity before Christ. He describes how people were "held in bondage" by "the elements of the world"—that is, by the laws and practices of human culture, which could not save. Humanity was under the domination of systems that offered no true freedom, but only an awareness of human failure.

Theological evidence:

The "bondage" mentioned here is slavery to sin and the Law, which Paul already addressed in Galatians 3:22 when he says that everyone was under the power of sin and needed deliverance. Jesus is the one who offers that deliverance.

Reflection:

Before Christ, humanity was trapped in systems that only showed us how far we were from God. It was a spiritual slavery, and only in Christ were we freed from this condition.

Galatians 4:4

Verse:

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law."

Explanation:

This verse highlights God's intervention at just the right time when He sent His Son Jesus to save humanity. Jesus, being God, took on human form (being born of a woman) and was subject to the Law, fulfilling it perfectly, so that He could redeem those who were under it.

Theological evidence:

The "fullness of time" refers to the time in history that God had determined for Christ to come. The reference to "born of a woman" is an allusion to the messianic promise of Genesis 3:15 that the Savior would come from the seed of the woman. And "born under the Law" confirms that Christ became subject to the demands of the Law in order to redeem those under it (Romans 8:3-4).

Reflection:

Jesus came at just the right time, according to God's perfect plan. He was both God and man, fulfilling everything the Law required and bringing salvation that we could not achieve on our own.

Galatians 4:5

Verse:

"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive adoption as sons."

Explanation:

The reason Christ came was to "redeem" (i.e., pay the price for our freedom) those under the Law, so that we could now be adopted as children of God. Redemption brought the freedom to be children of God, and no longer slaves to sin or the Law.

Theological evidence:

Adoption of sons is a central theme in Paul's theology, as seen in Romans 8:15-17. Christ's redemption allows us to live not just as servants, but as sons and heirs of God, enjoying a new relationship with Him.

Reflection:

Redemption in Christ gives us a new identity: we are no longer slaves to sin and the Law, but beloved children of God. This changes everything in our lives—our relationship with God, our purpose, and our eternal security.

Galatians 4:6

Verse:

"And because you are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father.'"

Explanation:

Through the work of Christ, we are now children of God, and to confirm this sonship, God has sent His Spirit to dwell in our hearts. The Spirit gives us the ability to cry out "Abba, Father," which is an intimate and affectionate expression to refer to God as our Father, similar to "daddy."

Theological evidence:

The Holy Spirit is the seal of our adoption as children of God. In Romans 8:15-16, Paul speaks of the Spirit who guarantees our sonship and enables us to relate to God in an intimate and personal way.

Reflection:

The presence of the Spirit in our lives is the confirmation that we are children of God. We can now approach God with confidence, knowing that He loves us and receives us as His own child.

Galatians 4:7

Verse:

"So then you are no longer a slave but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

Explanation:

Here Paul reminds us of our new identity. We are no longer slaves to sin or the Law, but children of God, with all the rights that this implies, including the right to inheritance. And as children, we are heirs of God's promises in Christ.

Theological evidence:

In Romans 8:17, Paul confirms that as heirs with Christ, we have a right to God's promised inheritance. And this inheritance is not based on our own righteousness, but on Christ's redemptive work.

Reflection:

Being a child of God gives us a new perspective on life. We have an eternal inheritance guaranteed, not because merit, but by grace. This calls us to live with hope and confidence in the future that God has prepared for us.

Galatians 4:8

Verse:

"But in time past, not knowing God, you served gods which by nature are not gods."

Explanation:

Paul reminds the Galatians that before they knew God through Christ, they were enslaved to false gods and religious systems that could not save. They worshiped idols, which had no real power.

Theological evidence:

In Ephesians 2:12, Paul also reminds the Gentiles of how hopeless they were before Christ. Idols and false beliefs are not real gods, but false substitutes that lead us away from God's truth.

Reflection:

Before Christ, we lived in darkness, seeking satisfaction in things that could not give us true freedom. Now, in Christ, we have access to the true God, and this transforms our lives in profound ways.

Galatians 4:9

Verse:

"But now after ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how will ye turn again to the weak and beggarly ordinances, whereunto ye desire again to serve?"

Explanation:

Paul questions the Galatians, reminding them that now that they know God in Christ, they must not return to the practices and rituals of their old religion, which are "weak and beggarly" because they cannot provide true salvation.

Theological evidence:

In Colossians 2:20-23, Paul also warns against human traditions and religious rituals that, although they may seem spiritual, have no power to change the heart or bring real deliverance.

Reflection:

Too often, we fall back into old habits and beliefs that no longer offer us anything. In Christ, we have everything we need to live in freedom and fulfillment, and we must not return to these empty practices of the past.

Galatians 4:10

Verse:

"You observe the days, the months, the seasons, and the years."

Explanation:

Here Paul criticizes the Galatians for returning to the observances of days, months, and years, which were Jewish rituals of the Law. This shows that by doing so they were returning to slavery to the Law, rather than living in the freedom that Christ brought.

Theological evidence:

The return to the rituals of the Law can be understood as a

attempting to please God through the works of the flesh rather than living by grace. In Colossians 2:16-17, Paul states that the festivals and ceremonies of the Law were shadows of the reality that is fulfilled in Christ.

Reflection:

Jesus called us to live in freedom, not in slavery to external rules. True Christian life is not measured by the fulfillment of rituals, but by the inner transformation that God's grace brings.

Galatians 4:11

Verse:

"I fear for you, lest I have done my work among you in vain."

Explanation:

Paul expresses his concern that, as he observes the attitude of the Galatians, he fears that all the effort and work he has put into the church has been in vain. He is concerned that by straying into the observances of the Law, they may have lost their understanding of the true freedom that Christ offers.

Theological evidence:

In 1 Corinthians 15:58, Paul speaks of labor in the Lord that is not in vain. Missionary and evangelistic work is always valuable, but he expresses a concern that real transformation and understanding of the gospel is not being fully absorbed.

Reflection:

Paul feels like a father who cares about his children's spiritual progress in the faith. He knows that true change comes from the heart, and when the church strays from the true message of the gospel, he feels that his mission and efforts may have been misdirected.

Galatians 4:12

Verse:

"I beg you, brothers, be as I am, for I also am as you are; none of you has done me wrong."

Explanation:

Paul implores the Galatians to return to being like him, that is, to live by grace and not by keeping the Law. He reminds them that he too was a legalistic Jew, but was transformed by the grace of Christ. He never harmed them; on the contrary, he dedicated himself to helping them and teaching them the gospel.

Theological evidence:

In 1 Corinthians 9:19-22, Paul talks about being all things to all people, that he might win some to Christ. He puts himself in the shoes of others, sharing his experience to encourage faith in Christ.

Reflection:

Paul teaches us that although we are different from each other, we can learn from each other and help each other on the path of faith. True transformation comes from grace and solidarity among brothers in Christ.

Galatians 4:13

Verse:

"But you know that it was because of a physical infirmity that I preached the gospel to you at the first."

Explanation:

Paul reminds the Galatians that he initially preached to them because of a physical illness. This shows us that despite adverse circumstances, God's plan for Paul's life was not interrupted. Even in moments of weakness, God used his situation to spread the gospel.

Theological evidence:

In 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Paul speaks of his own weakness, saying that "God's power is made perfect in weakness." God uses our weaknesses and limitations to reveal His strength and accomplish His purpose.

Reflection:

Difficulties can be opportunities for God's work to advance. When we allow ourselves to be used, even in our weaknesses, God can do incredible things, both in our lives and in the lives of others.

Galatians 4:14

Verse:

"And my infirmity that was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus."

Explanation:

Paul commends the Galatians for their receptiveness to the gospel, even in the midst of their illness. They did not reject him, but welcomed him with affection and respect, as if he were an angel or Christ Jesus. He emphasizes that their attitude was admirable and full of love.

Theological evidence:

In Matthew 10:40, Jesus talks about how receiving God's messengers is the same as receiving Him. Welcoming God's messenger reflects acceptance of God Himself and the message He brings.

Reflection:

How do we welcome others into our Christian life? Paul teaches us that we should welcome God's messengers with love and respect, because this reflects our relationship with God.

Galatians 4:15

Verse:

"Where then is your blessedness? For I testify to you that, if it were possible, you would pluck out your own eyes and give them to me."

Explanation:

Paul expresses sadness that the Galatians have lost their fervor and enthusiasm for their faith. He recalls how they were initially so willing to sacrifice themselves for him and the cause of the gospel. He uses the metaphor of giving their own eyes to emphasize the depth of their love and dedication in the past.

Theological evidence:

This verse reflects the genuine love Christians should have for one another, as seen in 1 John 3:16, where Christ's love is demonstrated through sacrifice. The Galatians' hearts were so burning with faith that they would be willing to sacrifice even something as precious as their eyes.

Reflection:

Sometimes our passion for faith and the gospel can grow cold. We should reflect on how our devotion to Christ drives us to live with zeal, and how we can restore that lost passion.

Galatians 4:16

Verse:

"Am I now your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"

Explanation:

Paul questions whether he has become an enemy of the Galatians simply because he is speaking the truth. He realizes that by confronting them with the truth of the gospel, he may be

causing discomfort and resistance, but this does not change their fidelity to the message of Christ.

Theological evidence:

In 2 Corinthians 2:15-16, Paul speaks of the aroma of Christ that is smelled by those who accept and reject the gospel. The truth, though liberating, is often difficult to accept for those who are in sin or error.

Reflection:

The truth often makes us uncomfortable, but it is the truth that sets us free. We must be willing to hear the truth, even when it challenges or corrects us, knowing that it is for our own good.

Galatians 4:17

Verse:

"These who trouble you have no concern for you, but want to exclude you, so that you will be concerned for them."

Explanation:

Paul denounces the false teachers who were influencing the Galatians. They were not seeking their own good, but were trying to manipulate them into turning to their teachings, thus creating a false devotion. Paul warns against these leaders who seek their own exaltation, not the edification of Christians.

Theological evidence:

Jesus had already warned against false teachers, as in Matthew 7:15-20. Paul also speaks about this in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, describing false apostles who disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness but have evil intentions.

Reflection:

We must always have discernment to recognize those who truly seek our spiritual good. True Christian leadership does not seek followers for itself, but points to Christ and His gospel.

Galatians 4:18

Verse:

"It is good to have zeal, when it is always in a good mind, and not only when I am present with you."

Explanation:

Paul teaches that spiritual zeal must be genuine and constant, not just when it is present. Zeal for the faith must be motivated by the pursuit of good, and not by the search for external approval or recognition.

Theological evidence:

In Philippians 2:12-13, Paul talks about working out our salvation with fear and trembling, which involves a constant dedication to the gospel regardless of the presence or influence of others.

Reflection:

True faith does not depend on the presence of leaders or external influences, but on a personal relationship with Christ that leads us to live with zeal and commitment in all circumstances.

Galatians 4:19

Verse:

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

Explanation:

Paul uses the metaphor of labor pains to express his deep concern and love for the Galatians. He desires that they grow spiritually and mature until they fully reflect Christ in their lives.

Theological evidence:

Paul sees himself as a spiritual father, as in 1 Corinthians.

4:15, where he states that he has spiritually fathered the Corinthians in Christ. Growth in Christ is the goal of all Christian preaching and ministry.

Reflection:

The formation of Christ in us is the goal of our Christian journey. We must allow the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts, molding us into the image of Christ, so that we can be a light to others.

Galatians 4:20

Verse:

"I wish I were with you now and would change my voice, for I am perplexed about you."

Explanation:

Paul expresses his desire to be with the Galatians so that he can speak to them directly and help correct their direction. He is perplexed by the way the Galatians are straying from the truth.

Theological evidence:

In 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, Paul speaks of his desire to present the church as a pure bride for Christ, but expresses concern about temptation that might lead them away from the purity of the gospel.

Reflection:

As leaders and followers of Christ, we should seek to be close to one another, to counsel, correct, and support in love, especially when we see our brothers straying from the truth.

Galatians 4:21

Verse:

"Tell me, you who want to be under the law, do you not listen to the law?"

Explanation:

Paul questions the Galatians, challenging them on why they want to follow the Law if they do not understand truly what it means. The Law cannot save, it only points to the need for Christ.

Theological evidence:

In Romans 3:20, Paul explains that through the Law comes the knowledge of sin, but it cannot justify anyone. Justification is only by faith in Christ.

Reflection:

The Law cannot save us, but it does point us to our need for Christ. We must understand that salvation comes by grace, not by following rules and rituals. True freedom comes from living in Christ, not in our own strength or merit.

Galatians 4:22

Verse:

"For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and the other by a free woman."

Explanation:

Paul begins an allegory by mentioning that Abraham had two sons: Ishmael, who was born of Hagar, the slave woman, and Isaac, who was born of Sarah, the free woman. This historical story of Abraham will be used by Paul to illustrate a spiritual truth. The relationship between Abraham's two sons symbolizes two different ways of approaching God: through the flesh (through man's attempt to attain the promise) and through faith (relying on God's promise).

Theological evidence:

In Genesis 16, we find the story of Abraham and Hagar, while in Genesis 21, Isaac, the promised son, is born. Paul refers to this story to show the difference between trying to earn God's promises through human effort (Ishmael) and receiving the promises through faith and trust in God's promises (Isaac).

Reflection:

The story of Abraham challenges us to reflect on how we are trying to reach God's promises. Are we trusting in our own efforts or are we relying on God's promises and grace? God invites us to trust in His faithfulness, just as He was faithful to the promise He made to Abraham.

Galatians 4:23

Verse:

"But he of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh; he of the freewoman through promise."

Explanation:

Paul explains the difference between Abraham's two sons. Ishmael was born as a result of Abraham's attempt to fulfill God's promise in a human and carnal way, without waiting for God's timing. Isaac was born as a result of God's promise, when Abraham and Sarah were already old, and the conception of a child was humanly impossible. This symbolizes that God's promises cannot be achieved by human means, but through faith in God's power.

Theological evidence:

The birth of Isaac was a miracle, and Paul uses it to illustrate how salvation is an act of grace and divine miracle, not something earned by our own efforts (Romans 4:19-21).

Reflection:

In our walk with God, we often try to “help” God fulfill His promises, as Abraham did with Hagar. But God teaches us that His promises will be fulfilled in the way He chooses, in His time, and not by our own efforts.

Galatians 4:24

Verse:

"These things are an allegory, for these women are two covenants: one proceeds from Mount Sinai, which gives birth to bondage, and the other is from Jerusalem, which is free."

Explanation:

Paul explains that the story of Abraham and his sons is an allegory of the two covenants: the covenant of Law and the covenant of grace. The covenant of Law, represented by Hagar (the slave woman), refers to the attempt to achieve salvation through obedience to the Law (Mount Sinai is where the Law was given). The covenant of grace, represented by Sarah (the free woman), refers to the salvation offered freely by God, not based on human works, but through faith in Christ.

Theological evidence:

The covenant of Law is described in Exodus 19, when God gave the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. The covenant of grace is exemplified by Jesus Christ, who brought salvation through His death and resurrection, as Paul explains in Ephesians 2:8-9, that salvation comes by grace, not by works.

Reflection:

What leads us to seek salvation? Obedience to the Law or faith in the grace of Christ? The story of Abraham and his sons teaches us that true freedom and salvation come from trusting in God's promise, not in our own efforts to keep the Law.

Galatians 4:25

Verse:

"For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, which is in bondage with her children."

Explanation:

Paul refers to contemporary Jerusalem, which was under the oppression of the Roman Empire and was still subject to the Old Testament system of laws and sacrifices. He compares Jerusalem and the law system to Hagar and slavery, indicating that trying to achieve righteousness through the Law leads to bondage, not freedom.

Theological evidence:

In Acts 15, the church discussed the question of how the Law should be treated by Gentile converts to Christianity. The answer was clear: salvation does not depend on the Law, but on the grace of Christ. Paul, in Romans 7, talks about how the Law is good, but it cannot save us; it only reveals our sin.

Reflection:

When we live our lives trying to earn God's approval through our own actions and efforts, we place ourselves in a position of bondage. Christ, however, offers us freedom, inviting us to live by grace and not by the Law. True freedom is found in Christ.

Galatians 4:26

Verse:

"But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother."

Explanation:

Paul makes a distinction between the earthly Jerusalem, which is under the Law and oppression, and the heavenly Jerusalem, which is free. He refers to the heavenly Jerusalem as "our mother" because it represents the church of Christ, which is free from the condemnation of the Law and is made up of those who are children of the promise through faith in Christ.

Theological evidence:

In Hebrews 12:22-24, a distinction is made between the earthly Jerusalem and the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the city of God. The church is seen as the community of believers who, by faith, already belong to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Reflection:

As children of promise, we have a place in the heavenly Jerusalem, which is free from the bondage of the Law and sin. We are to live in response to this freedom, as members of the Body of Christ, and no longer under the burden of the Law.

Galatians 4:27

Verse:

"For it is written, Rejoice, O barren one, who bears no child; break forth into joy, you who have no labor pains. For the children of the desolate woman are more than those of her who has a husband."

Explanation:

Paul quotes Isaiah 54:1, a promise from God to His people, that although they have been barren in the past (representing the difficulty of bearing spiritual children), they will be filled with spiritual children due to the grace of God. He makes a reference to the Church, which is the "barren woman" who, through the grace of God, will bear many children (believers), more than those who were under the Law.

Theological evidence:

Isaiah 54 is a promise of Israel's restoration, but

Paul applies this promise to the Church, showing that, in the new covenant, the children of God will be more numerous than in the old covenant.

Reflection:

God always has the power to transform situations of barrenness into situations of abundance. The Church, even when it seemed insignificant, was called to generate many spiritual children, by the grace of God. We must trust that, in Christ, our limitations can be overcome.

Galatians 4:28

Verse:

"But you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise."

Explanation:

Paul reminds the Galatians that just as Isaac was a child of promise, they too are children of God's promise, receiving their inheritance through faith, not by obedience to the Law. He reaffirms their identity as children of God, not by their own merit, but by the promise made to Abraham.

Theological evidence:

In Romans 9:8, Paul states that "it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise," reinforcing the idea that our sonship to God is based on grace and faith, not obedience to the Law.

Reflection:

Being a child of promise is an immense privilege. This means that our salvation does not depend on our works, but on God's faithfulness to His promises. As children of promise, we have the assurance that our inheritance is eternal, guaranteed by Christ.

Galatians 4:29

Verse:

"But as then he that was after the flesh persecuted him that was after the Spirit, even so it is now."

Explanation:

Paul refers to the persecution that Ishmael, Hagar's son, brought against Isaac, the son of promise. He applies this persecution to the situation of the Galatians, who were being persecuted by the Judaizers, who insisted that Gentiles must follow the Law in order to be saved. Those who try to live by the Law persecute those who live by the grace of God.

Theological evidence:

In 1 Peter 4:4, we see how Christians, who live according to the Spirit, are often persecuted by those who still live according to the flesh and the works of the Law.

Reflection:

The persecution that Christians face, especially those who live by grace, has been a reality since the time of Isaac. We must be prepared for resistance and persecution, but remember that our hope is in Christ, who has already overcome the world.

Galatians 4:30

Verse:

"But what does the Scripture say? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman."

Explanation:

Paul quotes the Scripture from Genesis 21:10, when Sarah asked Abraham to cast out Hagar and Ishmael, because Isaac, the son of promise, was to be the heir. Paul applies this to the context of the Galatians, saying that those who live

under the Law (like Ishmael) have no part in the inheritance promised to the children of grace (like Isaac).

Theological evidence:

In Hebrews 12:16-17, Scripture teaches how immorality and lack of repentance can lead to the loss of blessings. Here, Paul uses the expulsion of Ishmael as a symbol of the separation between righteousness by the Law and righteousness by faith.

Reflection:

The salvation and inheritance that God promises are for the children of the promise, those who live by faith, not by trying to keep the Law. We must choose to live by the grace of God, because only in it do we find the true inheritance of God.

Galatians 4:31

Verse:

"Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman but of the free woman."

Explanation:

Paul concludes his argument by stating that Christians are not children of slavery to the Law, but children of the freedom that comes by the grace of God. He calls them to live according to their true identity in Christ.

Theological evidence:

In John 8:36, Jesus says, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." The freedom Paul speaks of is spiritual freedom in Christ, not through obedience to the Law.

Reflection:

As children of freedom, we are to live in a way that reflects our identity in Christ. The freedom He offers us calls us to live for Him, not to follow rules, but to live in gratitude and obedience to Him.

Final Reflection on Galatians 4:

Galatians 4 is a profound and powerful allegory about spiritual freedom and slavery, illustrated by the story of Abraham's children. Paul reminds us that as children of God, we are called to live in the freedom of the promise, not in slavery to the Law. He invites us to reflect on how we are approaching God: Are we trying to earn His blessing through our own efforts and rules, as Ishmael did, or are we trusting fully in God's grace and promises, as Isaac did?

This chapter also teaches us that our identity in Christ is not determined by our works or by the fulfillment of religious rituals, but by faith in the work of Christ on the cross. Salvation does not come through the Law, but through the grace of God, which makes us children and heirs of the promise.

The story of Abraham and his sons challenges us to choose the true freedom that God offers. We can often be tempted to return to systems of rules and control that give us a false sense of security, but true freedom comes in living by faith, resting in the work of Christ.

Finally, Paul's invitation is clear: as children of promise, we are called to live no longer under the bondage of the Law, but in the freedom that comes from living as heirs of God's grace. We are to look to the cross of Christ, which has set us free, and live in gratitude, knowing that our identity is in Christ and that our inheritance is guaranteed by Him.

We must reflect on this truth: we are called to live in the freedom that Christ has given us, not just as a theological idea, but as a practical reality in our daily lives. May our journey be marked by this freedom, and may we, in Christ, live with joy, faith, and

and hope, knowing that we are truly children of God.

Study of Paul's Letter to the Galatians - Chapter 5 (Verse by Verse Explanation)

In Galatians chapter 5, Paul makes a strong appeal to the freedom that Christ has won for us. He teaches us that true Christian freedom is not licentiousness, but a freedom to live according to the Spirit, leaving behind the works of the flesh. Paul contrasts life under the Law, which cannot justify anyone, with life in the Spirit, which produces fruits of transformation and holiness. He exhorts us to maintain our freedom in Christ and to live in fellowship, without falling into the trap of the flesh or rivalry, but reflecting the character of Christ in our actions. This chapter challenges us to live a life that honors God,

demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit and cultivating a practical and transformative faith.

Verse 1

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."

Explanation:

Paul begins this passage by reminding Christians that Christ has freed them from slavery to sin and the law. The "freedom" here is not the freedom to do whatever one wants, but the freedom to live according to God's will, without the bondage of the law, which cannot save anyone. Christ paid the price for our freedom with His death on the cross.

Theological Proofs:

- In John 8:36, Jesus states, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Christ's freedom is total, a freedom that allows us to live in

conformity to the will of God, no longer under the condemnation of the law.

- In Romans 8:2, Paul teaches that the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" sets us free from the "law of sin and death," showing that true freedom comes through the action of the Holy Spirit.

Reflection:

Jesus has set us free to live purposefully, in a freedom marked by His grace. But this freedom is not an invitation to live without limits; rather, it calls us to live according to the principles of Christ, which guide us toward abundant life.

Verse 2

"Behold, I Paul say unto you, That if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."

Explanation:

Paul is here confronting the idea that circumcision (one of the Jewish rituals) was necessary for salvation. He argues that if anyone chooses to return to these practices, they are nullifying the value of Christ's sacrifice. Salvation does not come by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ. Therefore, if anyone clings to the law, they are departing from grace.

Theological Proofs:

- In Philippians 3:3, Paul states that Christians are "the circumcision," that is, they are those who worship God in spirit and glory in Christ Jesus, putting no confidence in the flesh.
- In Romans 3:28, Paul declares that "a man is justified by faith without the works of the law," reinforcing the idea that salvation comes through faith, not through obedience to the law.

Reflection:

Sometimes we may be tempted to seek security in our own efforts, in rituals or rules, but true security and confidence come only in Christ. He is sufficient for our salvation. We cannot add anything to His perfect work.

Verse 3

"Again I testify to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to keep the whole law."

Explanation:

Paul is saying here that if someone decides to follow the law in one aspect (such as circumcision), then he must follow all the requirements of the law. Jewish law is a totality and cannot be divided. If a person decides to submit to it, he must obey all its precepts, which is impossible for any human being.

Theological Proofs:

- In James 2:10, James says, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point is guilty of breaking all of it." This shows that the law demands complete and perfect obedience, something that only Christ achieved.
- In Galatians 3:10, Paul writes, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do all things written in the Book of the Law." In other words, no one can be justified by the law, because no one is able to keep it perfectly.

Reflection:

Living under the law is like being under a heavy burden, trying to achieve something impossible. Christ has freed us from this burden, calling us to live by grace and faith, not by human rules and demands.

Verse 4

"You who are justified by the law have put off Christ; you have fallen from grace."

Explanation:

Here Paul declares that by trying to justify oneself by the law, one is turning away from the grace of Christ. Justification by the law means trying to save oneself through one's own works, without the need for divine grace. This is a serious error, because no one can be justified in this way. God's grace is the only thing that can save us.

Theological Proofs:

- In Romans 11:6, Paul teaches, "If it is by grace, then it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace." God's grace is the only means of salvation, and trying to mix it with works of the law is a mistake.
- In Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul states, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." Salvation is entirely by grace.

Reflection:

When we try to achieve salvation by our own strength, we are saying that the grace of Christ is not enough. We must remember that God's grace is what saves us, and it is through it that we can live fully.

Verse 5

"For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness which is by faith."

Explanation:

Here Paul reminds us that our hope is in Christ and not in the law. The "righteousness" mentioned here refers to justification before God, which is something that comes through faith in Christ, and not through works. This justification brings a

future hope, when we will be completely transformed and glorified.

Theological Proofs:

- In Romans 8:23, Paul speaks of "the redemption of our bodies," which will be accomplished at the return of Christ, where God's righteousness will be fully displayed. In Titus
- 2:13, Paul writes of "the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." Our hope is the return of Christ and full redemption.

Reflection:

Our hope is not vague or uncertain. It is firmly anchored in the promise of Christ, who will complete the work he began in us. Therefore, we can live with confidence, waiting for the day when God's righteousness will be fully revealed.

Verse 6

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value, but faith working through love."

Explanation:

Paul teaches that what really matters is not external rituals like circumcision, but true faith, which manifests itself in actions of love. True faith in Christ is not a matter of appearances or rituals, but of inner transformation that is reflected in our

behavior and attitudes.

Theological Proofs:

- In 1 Corinthians 13:2, Paul talks about the importance of love: "If I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge...but do not have love, I am nothing."

- In 1 John 4:7-8, John reminds us that "God is love," and that true faith in Christ is expressed in loving God and loving our neighbor.

Reflection:

True faith is that which transforms us and leads us to act in love. It is not our external works that justify us, but faith in Christ that translates into attitudes of genuine love.

Verse 7

"You were running well; who hindered you from following the truth?"

Explanation:

Paul expresses his frustration with the Galatians, who were starting out well but were now being led astray by the false doctrine of justification by law. The "truth" here is the gospel of Christ, and Paul questions who or what has drawn them to another view, a wrong view.

Theological Proofs:

- In John 8:32, Jesus says, "And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." Truth is the gospel message that frees us from the bondage of sin. In Ephesians 4:14,
- Paul warns about "the winds of doctrine" that can lead Christians astray from the truth.

Reflection:

We must be careful not to be distracted from our walk with Christ. The gospel is clear and needs no adjustment. Our faithfulness to the truth of the gospel is what keeps us steadfast in Christ.

Verse 8

"This persuasion does not come from him who calls you."

Explanation:

Paul reminds us that the confusion the Galatians were experiencing does not come from God. God does not call us to confusion or to live under the bondage of the law, but to live in freedom through Christ.

Theological Proofs:

- In 1 Corinthians 14:33, Paul states, "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace." Confusion comes when we stray from the truth of the gospel. In James 1:17, James says,
- "Every good and perfect gift is from above." God's calling to us is always clear and good, bringing no confusion.

Reflection:

When we feel confused or disoriented, we need to return to the source of our faith: Christ. He is the truth, and He calls us to live in peace, not in confusion.

Verse 9

"A little yeast leavens the whole lump."

Explanation:

Paul uses the metaphor of leaven to warn that a small piece of error can contaminate the whole faith. If we accept a small error in doctrine, it can grow and affect our entire Christian life.

Theological Proofs:

- In 1 Corinthians 5:6-7, Paul also uses the image of leaven to warn against sin that can spread and contaminate the church.
- In Galatians 5:7, he had already mentioned that the Galatians were running well, but were now being led astray, which reflects the idea that a small mistake can lead many astray.

Reflection:

We must be vigilant about the doctrines we accept, because even a small error can grow and harm our Christian walk. Standing firm in the truth is essential to living in Christ.

Verse 10

"I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will not be advised otherwise; but he who troubles you will bear the judgment, whoever he is."

Explanation:

Paul expresses confidence that the Galatians, under Christ's guidance, will remain in the truth. He also warns that those who disturb their faith by promoting false doctrines will be condemned by God.

Theological Proofs:

- In 2 John 1:10-11, John also warns against those who spread heresies and teaches that whoever receives such a person shares in his guilt.
- In Matthew 18:6, Jesus speaks of judgment for those who cause offense to "one of these little ones who believe in me."

Reflection:

We must trust that God will guide us through the truth. And at the same time, we must be alert and steadfast so as not to be influenced by erroneous doctrines, knowing that God condemns those who lead His children astray from the truth.

Verse 11

"And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I persecuted? Then the offense of the cross has been abolished."

Explanation:

Paul questions why he would still be persecuted if he were preaching circumcision, because if he preached this, there would be no reason for him to be opposed. The message of the cross was a scandal to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, but Paul stood firm in preaching the gospel, which did not include the need for rituals such as circumcision. He makes it clear that the true message of Christ does not involve the imposition of rituals, but salvation by grace.

Theological Proofs:

- In 1 Corinthians 1:23, Paul says, "But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles." This shows that the gospel of the cross was a topic of great controversy.
- In Galatians 6:12, Paul also speaks about those who want to force circumcision, warning against false doctrine that leads Christians away from the grace of Christ.

Reflection:

The true message of Christ often confronts human expectations and challenges traditional belief systems. The cross is a scandal because it calls us to abandon our own efforts and trust in Christ alone for salvation.

Verse 12

"Whoever disturbs you, you would even wish he were cut off."

Explanation:

Paul here expresses his indignation against the false teachers who were trying to lead Christians away from the true faith. He uses a strong term, saying that it would be better for them to "be cut off," which could be interpreted as a form of excommunication or even an ironic dig at those who hold to circumcision. He is saying that these

preachers of the law are causing harm to the faith of the Galatians and this is extremely serious.

Theological Proofs:

- In Philippians 3:2, Paul also warns against "dogs," referring to false teachers who preached the necessity of circumcision for salvation.
- In 1 Corinthians 5:5, Paul mentions excommunication as a form of correction for those who were causing harm to the faith of the church.

Reflection:

There are doctrines that may seem harmless, but in fact, can lead people away from true salvation. Paul warns against these influences and calls us to stand firm in the freedom that Christ has given us.

Verse 13

"For you, brethren, were called to freedom; but do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."

Explanation:

Paul reminds us that we are called to freedom in Christ, but this freedom should not be used as an excuse to act selfishly or sinfully. Instead, the freedom Christ gives us should lead us to serve others in love. True Christian freedom is not about doing whatever we want, but about living for God and others.

Theological Proofs:

- In 1 Peter 2:16, Peter teaches us, "As free, and not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but as servants of God." Freedom is not to be used to justify sin, but to live godly lives.

- In 1 Corinthians 9:19, Paul says, "Though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more." Christian freedom calls us to serve and love our neighbor.

Reflection:

True freedom in Christ is not freedom to do evil, but freedom to love and serve others, reflecting the character of Christ in our actions. We are called to live selflessly, helping others in their needs and spreading the love of Christ.

Verse 14

"For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Explanation:

Paul summarizes the entire law in one commandment: to love your neighbor as yourself. This reflects the teaching of Jesus, who in Matthew 22:37-40 said that the greatest commandment is to love God, and the second, like it, is to love your neighbor. Love is the fulfillment of the law, and by living in accordance with love, we fulfill all the other commandments.

Theological Proofs:

- In Matthew 22:40, Jesus says, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Love for God and our neighbor sums up God's will for us.
- In Romans 13:10, Paul writes, "Love is the fulfillment of the law." When we truly love, we are living according to God's will.

Reflection:

Love is the essence of the Christian life. When we truly love, we fulfill God's commandments, for love leads us to act in accordance with His will.

Our attitude toward others must be shaped by love, and this is what truly pleases God.

Verse 15

"But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you are not consumed by one another."

Explanation:

Paul warns against discord and conflict within the Christian community. He uses the metaphor of "biting" and "devouring" to describe the destructive conflicts and arguments that can arise among believers. If the church is not vigilant, internal conflicts can become so severe that they will lead the community to self-destruction. He warns that instead of fighting among themselves, Christians should come together in love.

Theological Proofs:

- In James 3:16, James says, "Where envy and selfish ambition exist, there is confusion and every evil thing." Strife among believers can lead to destruction and sin.
- In Ephesians 4:31-32, Paul instructs the church to "get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, and slander," and to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving to one another.

Reflection:

Rather than allowing divisions to grow, we must work to promote peace and unity within the church. Harmony among Christians is essential for us to be effective in fulfilling Christ's mission. Love must prevail over any dispute.

Verse 16

"But I say, Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Explanation:

Paul teaches that by living in the Spirit, we will not give in to the desires of the flesh. To “walk in the Spirit” means to live under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to live in a way that pleases God. If we try to live according to the flesh (that is, our selfish, sinful desires), we will be far from God. But when we live led by the Spirit, we resist temptation.

Theological Proofs:

- In Romans 8:4, Paul says that "those who walk according to the Spirit do not walk according to the flesh." Walking in the Spirit is the key to a life victorious over sin.
- In Galatians 5:25, Paul states, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." The Holy Spirit guides us to live according to God's will.

Reflection:

Living in the Spirit is a daily choice. We cannot walk in the flesh and at the same time expect to please God. Living in the Spirit enables us to resist selfish desires and live in a way that honors God.

Verse 17

"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: for these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

Explanation:

Paul describes the inner conflict that every Christian faces: the flesh (our sinful nature) wars against the Spirit (the spiritual nature given to us by Christ). These two are in constant opposition, and the Christian must make choices to follow the Spirit's leading. This conflict is a reality in the life of the believer.

Theological Proofs:

- In Romans 7:23, Paul talks about the "law of sin" operating in our members, causing this internal conflict.
- In 1 Peter 2:11, Peter also speaks of the "fleshly desires that war against the soul," acknowledging this constant struggle between the flesh and the Spirit.

Reflection:

Each of us experiences this internal struggle. When we feel this battle within us, we must remember that victory is in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our strength to overcome temptation and live in holiness.

Verse 18

"But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."

Explanation:

Paul emphasizes that those who are led by the Spirit are not under the condemnation of the law. The law was given to reveal sin, but the Spirit guides us to live according to God's will. We are no longer enslaved by the law, for grace and the Spirit set us free and enable us to live righteously.

Theological Proofs:

- In Romans 8:2, Paul explains, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."
- In 2 Corinthians 3:6, he teaches that "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life," referring to the liberating role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Reflection:

True Christian freedom comes from the Spirit, not from trying to keep the law. Obedience to God is not a matter of legalism, but of being guided and empowered by the Spirit.

Verse 19

"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,"

Explanation:

Paul begins by listing the works of the flesh, which are evident and manifest in sinful attitudes and behaviors. He mentions immoral sexual behavior, impurity, and lust, which are among the most visible manifestations of the sinful nature.

Theological Proofs:

- In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Paul makes a similar list, warning that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.
- In Ephesians 5:3-5, he also speaks out against sexual immorality and exhorts us to live in holiness.

Reflection:

We must be alert to the "works of the flesh" in our lives and avoid them. Holiness requires that we turn away from these behaviors and seek to live in a pure and dignified manner before God.

Verse 20

"Idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, dissensions, factions,"

Explanation:

Paul continues his list of works of the flesh, now mentioning idolatry and witchcraft, which involve the worship of false gods and occult practices. He also mentions divisive attitudes, such as enmity, jealousy, anger, and factions, which undermine the unity of the body of Christ.

Theological Proofs:

- In Colossians 3:5, Paul instructs us to "put to death" idolatry and the works of the flesh, such as impurity and wickedness.
- In Titus 3:9, he warns against "disputes" and "discussions" that create divisions in the church.

Reflection:

Division in the church is one of the enemy's greatest weapons. We must seek to live in unity, moving away from behaviors that cause destruction and division within the body of Christ.

Verse 21

"Envy, murder, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Explanation:

Paul concludes his list of the works of the flesh, including serious sins such as envy, murder, drunkenness, and orgies. He emphasizes that those who live according to these practices will not inherit the Kingdom of God, that is, they will not have a part in salvation. This is a serious warning about the path of sin, which can separate a person from communion with God.

Theological Proofs:

- In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Paul makes a similar statement: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals..."
- In Ephesians 5:5, he also warns that "no fornicator, impure person or covetous person...has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

Reflection:

Living according to the works of the flesh can distance us from God. Salvation, although a free gift, requires a commitment to a transformed life, free from the sinful desires that separate us from God's presence.

Verse 22

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,"

Explanation:

In contrast to the works of the flesh, Paul now presents the fruit of the Spirit, which are characteristics that the Holy Spirit develops in the life of the believer. The fruit of the Spirit is not something we can produce through our own efforts, but is a divine transformation that occurs as we yield to the Spirit's action in our lives. Love, joy, and peace are first on the list, followed by virtues such as patience, kindness, and faithfulness.

Theological Proofs:

- In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Paul describes love as patient, kind, unenvious, and unprovoked, reflecting the character of God's love. Love is the foundation of all other virtues.
- In Colossians 3:12-14, Paul speaks of Christian virtues, which include "patience, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience."

Reflection:

The fruit of the Spirit is a reflection of God's presence in our lives. When we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, these virtues become visible in our attitudes and relationships, evidencing the transformation that Christ has accomplished in us.

Verse 23

"Meekness, self-control; against such there is no law."

Explanation:

Gentleness and self-control complete the list of the fruit of the Spirit. Gentleness is not weakness, but strength under control, and self-control is the ability to resist temptation and control one's impulses. Paul states that there is no law against these qualities, that is, the Spirit guides us to live in a way that pleases God, and there is no divine command or restriction against these virtues.

Theological Proofs:

- In 2 Timothy 2:24-25, Paul teaches that the Lord's servant must be "gentle toward all, able to teach." Gentleness is a reflection of the patience and humility we should have in our relationships.
- In 1 Corinthians 9:27, Paul talks about self-control: "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified."

Reflection:

Gentleness and self-control are qualities that help us live in peace with others and maintain self-control in the face of temptation. They are a reflection of our spiritual maturity as we become more like Christ.

Verse 24

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

Explanation:

Paul teaches that true Christians are those who,

with Christ, they crucified the flesh, that is, their sinful passions and desires. The cross of Christ represents death to sin, and those who belong to Christ must live according to this new reality, denying the desires of the flesh and living for God. The crucifixion of the flesh is a continuous process of mortifying sin in our lives.

Theological Proofs:

- In Romans 6:6-7, Paul speaks of our death to sin in Christ: "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed."
- In Colossians 3:5, Paul instructs Christians to "put to death" the works of the flesh, such as immorality and impurity.

Reflection:

The crucifixion of the flesh is a call to live in holiness. As Christians, we must constantly deny our sinful impulses and live in a way that reflects the death of the old man and the resurrection to new life in Christ.

Verse 25

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Explanation:

Paul exhorts us to not only live in the Spirit, but to walk in the Spirit. Living in the Spirit means having our lives transformed by the Holy Spirit, but walking in the Spirit is acting and living under His guidance each day. The Christian life is not a passive life, but involves a continual walk of obedience and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Theological Proofs:

- In Romans 8:4, Paul speaks of those who "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," showing

that the Christian life involves a daily action of walking in accordance with the Spirit.

- In Ephesians 5:18-19, Paul says, "Be filled with the Spirit," an invitation to live in a Spirit-led way.

Reflection:

Walking in the Spirit is a daily commitment to seek God's will and be guided by Him in every area of our lives. This involves a life of obedience, prayer, and sanctification, where we always seek to please God.

Verse 26

"Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another."

Explanation:

Paul concludes this chapter by exhorting Christians to avoid vainglory, which is a desire to show off and place oneself above others. He also warns against provocation and envy, attitudes that can cause division and disharmony in the church. Instead, believers are to live humbly and lovingly, reflecting the character of Christ.

Theological Proofs:

- In Philippians 2:3, Paul instructs us, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility of mind let each esteem others better than his own self."
- In James 3:14-16, James teaches that where envy and self-interest exist, there is confusion and every evil thing.

Reflection:

Humility is a fundamental virtue for the Christian life. We should not seek recognition or rivalry, but live in harmony, serving one another with love. True greatness in the Kingdom of God comes from humble service and the pursuit of unity.

Final Reflection on Galatians 5

Galatians 5 can be a profound invitation to reflect on our Christian walk and the daily choice between living according to the flesh or according to the Spirit. In this chapter, Paul offers us a clear contrast: a life dominated by the flesh, which leads to destruction, and a life guided by the Spirit, which bears fruit of eternal life and a visible transformation in our attitudes and relationships.

When we look at the list of the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit, we are confronted with the reality of our daily choices. The flesh does not only refer to major sins, but also to those subtle behaviors, such as envy, rivalry, and vainglory, that we often cultivate without realizing it. On the other hand, the fruit of the Spirit calls us to reflect the character of Christ: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These virtues are not just idealizations, but practices that can be cultivated, because they are the fruit of the Spirit's action in us.

Paul's plea is clear: if we live in the Spirit, we must also walk in the Spirit. This is not a one-off human endeavor, but a life of constant surrender to the Spirit, allowing Him to transform us from the inside out. Every step of our Christian journey should be a reflection of this transformation, with our minds, hearts, and actions aligned with God's will.

Furthermore, Paul calls us to humility, unity, and love. There is no room for boasting, rivalry, or envy in the body of Christ. True greatness in the Kingdom of God is found in service, genuine love, and the pursuit of unity. As we look at our communities, family relationships, and friendships, we can ask: Are we living in ways that reflect these fruits of the Spirit? Are we growing closer to Christ each day, or are we allowing the works of the flesh to distance us from the life He offers us?

The invitation, then, is for us to live as people transformed by the Spirit, leaving behind the works of the flesh and seeking, with all our hearts, to produce the fruit of the Spirit in all areas of our lives. May we be living witnesses of Christ, evidencing the love and grace that He has poured out upon us.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

(Galatians 5:25)

This is our journey: a continual walk of obedience, surrender, and transformation in Christ.

Study of Paul's Letter to the Galatians - Chapter 6 (Verse by Verse Explanation)

In Galatians 6, the apostle Paul teaches us to live out the freedom we have received in Christ in a practical way. He exhorts us to bear one another's burdens, restore with gentleness those who fall into sin, and sow to the Spirit, reflecting the true Christian life in attitudes of love and service. Paul also challenges us to live an authentic faith, focused on the cross of Christ, and not to seek glory for ourselves. This chapter is a call to Christian maturity, where our faith is evidenced by our commitment to the well-being and restoration of others, especially within the community of faith.

Galatians 6:1

Verse: "Brothers and sisters, if anyone is caught in a mistake, you who are spiritual restore such an one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted."

Explanation: Paul instructs us to deal with the mistakes of others with care and compassion. When someone in the Christian community falls into sin or fails, those who are spiritually mature should help them to be restored. The word "restore" here is like the action of fixing something broken, restoring it to its original state. The word "gentleness" implies humility and patience in correcting, without harsh judgment.

Theological evidence: In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus teaches how to treat a brother who sins against us, emphasizing reconciliation and forgiveness. Paul, in speaking of restoring someone, is aligned with the same idea of mercy and restoration found in Christ's teaching.

Reflection:When we see someone doing wrong, our tendency may be to criticize or turn away. However, as Christians, we are called to restore with love and care. Restoration is more than correction; it is restoring relationship and communion, reflecting God's grace.

Galatians 6:2

Verse:"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Explanation:Here Paul reminds us that as we help one another in their difficulties, we are fulfilling the "law of Christ," which is the command to love one another as Christ has loved us (John 13:34-35). To "bear burdens" means to help carry the difficulties, the emotional, spiritual, or material burdens that others face.

Theological evidence:Jesus spoke of the light burden in Matthew 11:28-30, where He invites the weary and heavy-laden to come to Him. The idea of bearing one another's burdens reflects Christ's character of being available to help those in need.

Reflection:In a world where many are quick to criticize or judge, being someone who helps carry the burdens of others is a powerful way to live out the gospel. It demonstrates true Christian fellowship, where everyone cares for one another.

Galatians 6:3

Verse:"For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself."

Explanation:Paul warns against pride and self-sufficiency. Those who think they are superior to others, judging themselves as more spiritual or more

important, are just fooling themselves. He reminds us that our true identity and worth come from God, not from our own achievements or comparisons with others.

Theological evidence:In Romans 12:3, Paul also exhorts Christians not to think too highly of themselves. True humility comes from recognizing that everything we have comes from God.

Reflection:When we start comparing ourselves to others or thinking we are better, we run the risk of falling into the trap of vanity. We need to understand that without God, we are nothing. Only through Christ can we do anything.

Galatians 6:4

Verse:"But each one proves his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in himself alone and not in someone else."

Explanation:Paul is saying that we should focus on our own actions and accomplishments, and not compare ourselves to others. This does not mean pride, but rather confidence in the work we do in Christ. Each of us has a personal responsibility before God, and when we do good, we should take satisfaction in what we have accomplished, without comparing ourselves to others.

Theological evidence:In 2 Corinthians 10:12, Paul makes a similar argument, stating that we should not compare ourselves to others, but rather look at our own works and evaluate our faith and effort.

Reflection:God has called us to be faithful in small and large things. Instead of measuring our worth by others, we should look at our own walk with God and seek to be faithful to Him in everything we do.

Galatians 6:5

Verse:"For each one will carry his own burden."

Explanation:Here Paul reminds us that while we are called to help others, each of us also has a personal responsibility. "Burden" here refers to our own responsibilities, choices, and actions, which we each must bear. We cannot transfer the responsibility for our spiritual lives to others.

Theological evidence:In 2 Corinthians 5:10, Paul states that we must all appear before Christ to be judged according to what we have done, which reinforces the idea that each person has their own responsibility before God.

Reflection:While we can help and support one another, we must remember that our faith is a personal thing. We need to take responsibility for our spiritual lives and walk responsibly before God.

Galatians 6:6

Verse:"But let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches."

Explanation:Paul instructs believers to honor those who teach God's Word by sharing material blessings with them. Teaching the Word is hard work and deserves support. This shows the importance of supporting financially and in other ways those who help us grow spiritually.

Theological evidence:In 1 Timothy 5:17-18, Paul speaks of the importance of honoring elders who labor in the Word and teaching. The principle of helping those who teach us is rooted in the Christian practice of mutual support.

Reflection:When we are spiritually fed, it is our responsibility to care for those who help us grow in faith. Showing gratitude through actions such as financial support or prayer is one way we honor ministers of the Word.

Galatians 6:7

Verse:"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."

Explanation:Paul teaches the law of sowing and reaping. What we sow, whether in our actions, words, or thoughts, is what we will reap. If we sow good, we will reap blessings; if we sow evil, we will reap negative consequences. We cannot deceive God; He knows the intentions of our hearts.

Theological evidence:In 2 Corinthians 9:6, Paul also talks about the harvest in relation to generosity, reinforcing that what we sow is what we will reap. This is a universal principle throughout Scripture.

Reflection:Our life is a seedbed. If we sow goodness, truth, and justice, we will reap spiritual fruits. But if we sow selfishness, impurity, and pride, we will reap negative consequences. Every choice we make has an impact on our spiritual future.

Galatians 6:8

Verse:"For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap eternal life."

Explanation:Paul reinforces the idea that our choices have consequences. If we focus only on fleshly desires (selfishness, pride, sin), we will reap corruption.

(spiritual death). But if we sow to the Spirit (obey God, live according to His Word), we will reap eternal life.

Theological evidence:Romans 8:6 talks about the difference between living according to the flesh and living according to the Spirit. Paul reminds us that living according to the flesh results in death, but living in the Spirit brings life and peace.

Reflection:We are constantly making choices that sow for our good or for our harm. Sowing to the Spirit leads us to a full life in Christ and the promise of eternal life, while the flesh leads us to temporary and destructive results.

Galatians 6:9

Verse:"And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Explanation:Paul encourages us to persist in doing good, even when the results are not immediate. There is a promise of eternal reward for those who persevere in living righteously, but it is necessary to continue, even in the face of difficulties.

Theological evidence:In 1 Corinthians 15:58, Paul talks about perseverance in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain. Perseverance in doing good is essential to achieving God's promises.

Reflection:The Christian walk is not easy, and the rewards often seem to take a long time to arrive. However, God promises that if we persevere, we will reap the fruits of righteousness and spiritual blessings. We cannot be discouraged by difficulties.

Galatians 6:10

Verse:"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."

Explanation:Paul urges us to seize opportunities to do good, especially to our fellow believers. A Christian's priority should be to care for the members of the Christian community, but that does not mean we should ignore others. We should always seek to do good to everyone.

Theological evidence:In 1 John 3:17-18, John teaches that if we have the resources and can help, we should do so, especially within the Christian community. This reflects the practice of genuine Christian love.

Reflection:God calls us to be channels of blessing. As we help and love those in our faith community, we show the world the love of Christ. Let's seize opportunities to do good and positively impact the lives of others.

Galatians 6:11

Verse:"See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand."

Explanation:Here Paul draws attention to the fact that he is personally writing the letter, in contrast to his previous letters, which might have been dictated to a scribe. The use of "large letters" may be a reference to his attempt to show the importance and weight of the words he is writing, emphasizing that this part of the letter is personal and direct, with great seriousness.

Theological evidence:This verse reflects Paul's practice of personally writing parts of his letters, especially when he wanted to emphasize something.

important. This can also be seen in 1 Corinthians 16:21 and Colossians 4:18.

Reflection:The intensity and importance of what Paul is saying is clear. When he writes with his own hand, he wants his readers to understand that his message is personal, and that he is communicating something fundamental to the Christian life. Sometimes we need to take God's words with the same seriousness in our lives.

Galatians 6:12

Verse:"All who want to please the flesh compel you to be circumcised, only so that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ."

Explanation:Paul is denouncing those who impose circumcision (the Jewish ritual) as a way to please others and avoid persecution. They prefer to submit to the law of Moses to avoid the opposition that would arise from identifying themselves with the cross of Christ. In other words, they seek approval from men, not from God.

Theological evidence:In Philippians 3:2-3, Paul also criticizes those who insist on Jewish practices in order to gain approval, emphasizing that true circumcision is that which takes place in the heart, through the Spirit. The issue of the cross is central: some want to avoid the offense of the cross, preferring to align themselves with the social and religious norms of their time.

Reflection:We are often tempted to follow established social or religious standards to avoid conflict, but the message of the gospel can be confronting. Following Christ may bring us rejection, but God's approval is more important than pleasing men.

Galatians 6:13

Verse:"For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they want you to be circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh."

Explanation:Paul reveals the hypocrisy of the false teachers: they insist on circumcision, but they themselves do not practice it sincerely, because they do not follow the whole law. Their motivation is simply to glory in the fact that others are submitting to this rite, using it as a trophy of "success."

Theological evidence:In Romans 2:17-29, Paul argues that external circumcision is worthless if a person does not live according to God's law. True obedience to God comes from a transformed heart.

Reflection:This criticism from Paul reminds us that outward appearances are not enough. True transformation comes from within, not from rituals or outward appearances. We must examine our motivations: Are we doing something to please God or to be recognized by others?

Galatians 6:14

Verse:"But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Explanation:Paul rejects any reason for boasting other than the cross of Christ. He claims that by the cross both he and the world have been crucified. The cross, to him, represents the death of self, sin, and the former life. There is nothing in the world he desires more than to boast in the sacrifice of Christ, for that is what brings true salvation.

Theological evidence:In 1 Corinthians 1:18, Paul speaks of the cross as “foolishness” to those who are perishing, but to us who are saved, it is the power of God. The cross is central to the Christian faith, and Paul places it as the sole source of glory and reason for life-changing change.

Reflection:Our Christian life must be centered on the cross of Christ. When we look at the cross, we see the depth of God’s love for us, and our very identity is shaped by it. The world and its offerings pale into insignificance in light of the cross.

Galatians 6:15

Verse:"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value, but the new creation."

Explanation:Paul makes a radical statement: rituals such as circumcision or uncircumcision have no value for salvation. What truly matters is the transformation that occurs through Christ – the new creation. To be a "new creation" means to be renewed by Christ, with a transformed heart, independent of external rituals.

Theological evidence:In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul speaks of the new creation in Christ: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, new things have become." Salvation does not depend on rituals, but on a life transformed in Christ.

Reflection:It doesn’t matter what we have done or failed to do in the past, or what rituals we have followed. What really matters is the transformation that Christ brings into our lives. The new creation is the evidence of God’s work in us.

Galatians 6:16

Verse:"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

Explanation:Paul blesses those who live according to the "rule" of the new creation, which is life in Christ. He wishes peace and mercy upon all who follow this truth, and mentions "the Israel of God"—a reference to the true community of faith, which is no longer restricted to Jews but to all who have faith in Christ.

Theological evidence:In Philippians 3:3, Paul also describes the true "circumcised," those who worship God in spirit and have confidence in Christ. The "Israel of God" represents all who belong to Christ, whether Jew or Gentile.

Reflection:True peace and mercy can only be experienced by those who walk in faith in Christ, in the new creation. We must live according to this truth, for it is the basis of our true identity in God.

Galatians 6:17

Verse:"From now on let no one trouble me, because I bear on my body the marks of Jesus."

Explanation:Paul is saying that from this moment on, he no longer wants to be disturbed, because his own physical marks (such as scars and sufferings because of his faithfulness to Christ) are already proof of his authenticity as an apostle. He bears in his body the signs of suffering because of Christ.

Theological evidence:In 2 Corinthians 11:23-27, Paul speaks of the numerous persecutions and sufferings he faced because of his faith. His "marks" are a testimony of his faithfulness to Christ and true preaching of the gospel.

Reflection: Paul didn't care about his appearance or what others thought of him. The marks on his body were a reflection of his love and commitment to Christ. What kind of marks are we leaving in our lives to testify to our faithfulness to Him?

Galatians 6:18

Verse: "Brothers, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

Explanation: Paul ends the letter with a final blessing. He prays that the grace of Jesus Christ will be with the Galatians, touching their spirit. Grace is the force that sustains and transforms the Christian life, and Paul desires that this grace will be powerfully manifested in their hearts.

Theological evidence: In 2 Corinthians 13:14, Paul also makes a similar blessing, asking that the grace of Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all Christians.

Reflection: The grace of Christ is our source of power, transformation, and communion with God. May this grace enable us to live faithfully as the new creation that we are in Christ.

Final Reflection on Galatians 6

Galatians 6 calls us to live according to the new creation that we are in Christ, with a deep focus on the grace, mercy, and love that reflect our true identity. Paul closes his letter with a call for authenticity and Christian integrity, rejecting external religious practices that do not lead to the transformation of the heart. He emphasizes that true Christian living is not measured by the observance of rituals, but by the work of Christ in us, making us a new creation.

In this chapter, we see a strong exhortation to bear one another's burdens, helping and restoring brothers who fall into sin in a spirit of gentleness. Paul teaches us that our freedom in Christ is not a freedom to do whatever we want, but to serve others in love, seeking the good of all, especially those who belong to the household of faith.

As we glory in the cross of Christ, we must remember that we are called to live a life of self-denial, commitment, and faithfulness. The "marks of Christ" that Paul bears on his body are a testimony to his total commitment to the gospel, and this challenges us to consider how much we are willing to sacrifice for the sake of faith.

In short, Galatians 6 invites us to a Christian life that is practical, transformative, and others-oriented. We are called to live in such a way that the grace of Christ is evident in our attitudes, in our manner of service, and in our willingness to restore those who have fallen. May we be instruments of peace and mercy, reflecting the true freedom that Christ has won for us.