

Daily Bible Study Sheets

Helping Christians Learn the Message of the Bible and Apply It To Their Lives

Free At Last!

We know little of being slaves. We live in one of the freest countries that have ever existed. The idea that we could be enslaved to someone or something else is repugnant to us.

As Christians the issue becomes even more crucial. When we were saved by the blood of Jesus we were set free. But, set free from what? *"But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* Romans 6:22-23.

We are free from sin's rule. And boy did it rule us! It lured us. It deceived us. It seduced us into an appealing embrace. But when Christ opened our eyes we found ourselves embracing the corpse of death itself. And it had a death grip on us but Christ broke the grip and freed us from that foul menace.

We are not free from sin's presence. 1 John 2:1-2 teaches that clearly. However, while I may still live in its presence it no longer can control me as a slave. Why?

Because I am a slave to Christ now. I serve a kind, merciful and life-giving master. He only wants good for me. He lives to deliver me from death. In fact he died to do the same thing.

We are free from any justification by the keeping of laws. After pleading with the Galatians to reject this false gospel he says, *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is required to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace."* Galatians 5:1-4.

Law keeping, while a good model for life, is a faulty model for salvation. Why? Because it only reveals that you are a sinner and therefore beyond the help of law keeping. We are free from the insecurity of such a religion whereby our salvation is constantly in doubt because of the fear that we have not done enough.

We are free and we can know we are free (1 John 5:13). That confident knowledge isn't based on our defeat of sin. Sin was killing us and the lamb God entered and utterly destroyed sin. We are free. Freed by Christ. Free at last. Thank God almighty we are free at last.



Focusing On The Word

Read the biblical text carefully making notations of verses that raise questions

Galatians 1:11-2:10

11 I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. 12 I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. 13 For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. 14 I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. 15 But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased 16 to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus. 18 Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. 19 I saw none of the other apostles--only James, the Lord's brother. 20 I assure you before God that what I am writing to you is no lie. 21 Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. 22 I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. 23 They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." 24 And they praised God because of me. "1 Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. 2

I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. 3 Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. 4 This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. 5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you. 6 As for those who seemed to be important--whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance--those men added nothing to my message. 7 On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. 8 For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. 9 James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognised the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. 10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do."

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Finding The Meaning

Studying the biblical text looking for its meaning in context.

The gospel Paul preached was not created by man. This is the constant accusation made by the Judaizers. They kept saying that Paul made up his gospel and the real gospel includes a requirement to keep the law of Moses as a condition of salvation.

He stipulates that he did not receive the gospel he preached from any man (:12). He was not taught it by others. He was not preaching a second-hand gospel. The message He preached was received by through a personal revelation from Jesus.

Paul had an intensely Jewish background (;13). His purpose was to persecute the church of God and to destroy it in the name of God. His zeal for things Jewish was beyond many of his Hebrew countrymen (:14). Paul's resume as a Jew was one of the best (See Philippians 4:4-6).

But all this changed one day on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19). God revealed Jesus to Him on that day as He had planned since Paul's birth (:15). Remember, he is recounting his history to show how he received the gospel he preached. He notes that immediately after His conversion to Christ he "did not consult with any man" (:16). He didn't even go to Jerusalem to consult with the apostles (:17). Instead he went to Arabia. This most likely refers to the kingdom of Nabatea. This included the city of Damascus which is where he ends up (:17). He spent 3 years in this area (:18). What was he doing? His whole view of the world and God been turned upside down. He had received a revelation but it certainly would take some time to study the scriptures and come to grips with the new covenant, which he had spent so much time trying to destroy.

After that he did go to Jerusalem and got to know Peter, the apostle (:18). He did see James, another apostle, but none of the rest of the twelve. This is most likely the visit mentioned in Acts 11 but it is hard to be conclusive. In fact he was not personally known to any of the churches of Judea. They did know of him by reputation and they were praising God because of his ministry for the faith he once tried to destroy (:23-24).

Fourteen years later Paul went to Jerusalem with Barnabas at God's leading (2:1). He presented the gospel he had been preaching to the leaders of the church privately and was not corrected. He notes that Titus, a Greek convert to Christ, was not compelled to be circumcised (:3). This specific issue was raised by some "false brothers" (:4). Paul says that they were trying to spy on our "freedom we have in Jesus Christ" (:4). To Paul this was a fundamental freedom issue. In Christ we have freedom and these "false brothers" were trying to destroy it. On this he will not budge because it is an issue of truth (:5). Imagine how Paul felt when he heard of brothers trying to take people back to the law that he had been freed from!

The church leaders in Jerusalem (those who appear to be important :6) did nothing to change the message that Paul preached. In fact they recognised Paul's divine calling to preach the gospel to the Gentiles just as Peter had been called to preach to the Jews (:7-8). The reputed pillars of the Jerusalem church had given Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship showing their acceptance of ministry and message of Paul (:9). They only asked that Paul remember the poor which he had always been eager to do (See 6:10).

If there were going to be a church that would endorse the Judaizers it would be Jerusalem, because of its almost exclusive Jewish background. There was a council there (Acts 15:22-33) about this very issue and the apostles and elders totally rejected the perverted gospel of the Judaizers.



Applying the Message

Applying the message of the Bible to our lives in the 21st century

How do people today deny the fact that God is the author of gospel?

Why was it important for Paul to defend his apostleship? _____

What is the only reasonable explanation for Paul's conversion from such a zealous life in Judaism? _____

What do you think you think Paul was doing for 3 years in Arabia? _____

What freedom were the false brothers trying to steal? _____

In verse 6 Paul reveals a principle of how God looks at things. What is it and how is it applied in that verse? _____

How could we apply that today? _____

The purpose of DBSS is to help people to **discover** the truth of God's word for themselves and to **apply** it to their lives so that His word would **live** in them for the **glory** of God and as a **light** to the world. If you have any questions please email friends@ecbchurchofchrist.org.

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Hypocrites!

Hypocrites really irritated Jesus. Read Matthew 15:7, 22:18, 23:13,15, 23, 25, 27, 29. They are people who claim that they are concerned about truth and they even preach a version of it but in reality they do not live it. Jesus said they *"honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."* Matthew 15:8.

They look right. They work at it but they are a living contradiction to the truth of God. Paul found such hypocrisy in the last place it should be, among the apostles. He says that the problem he saw was, "that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel" (Galatians 2:14). That's the problem with hypocrisy. It does not jibe with the truth of the gospel. It is a denunciation of the very gospel we preach.

The particular hypocrisy was cultural discrimination. Some have suggested that it is racial discrimination but such is not the case. Peter was discriminating against all Gentile Christians no matter what their race was. However the principle that Paul uses here surely does destroy any attempt at racial discrimination.

Peter was being very "stand offish" with the Christians in the church who had a Gentile background. Peter's actions were doubly hypocritical. Why? Firstly because he was discriminating against

fellow members of God's family for an ungodly reason. Secondly because he was doing so because he feared "those of the circumcision group" (Galatians 2:12).

The word, "hypocrite", comes from the Greek Theater where it was used of actors who wore masks. Religiously it came to be used on those who were acting the part of an adherent but really weren't. Did you ever see the Seinfeld episode where George went through a fake conversion to get a girlfriend? It sounds silly but that is what many Christians do when they play the part of being a Christian but in their heart they are far from Jesus.

God is looking for genuine disciples. He isn't pleased with worshippers who go through the motions at church but do not bring their hearts before God's throne. The hypocritical Christian who complains that no one really loves them while not loving people. Hypocrisy says that the Bible is God's will but only picks the bits that it likes to live.

What's the end result. Firstly God is upset. Secondly, it leads other disciples of Christ astray. Look at Barnabas in 2:13. Hypocrites do more damage to the message of Christ than those who openly reject it.



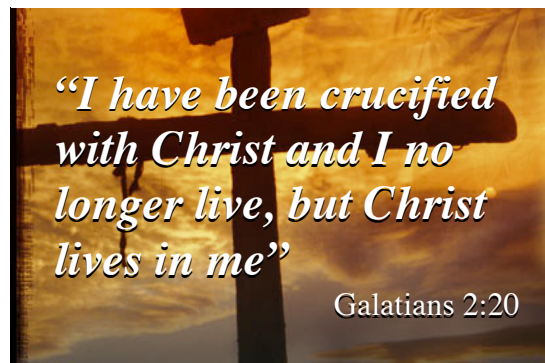
Focusing On The Word

Read the biblical text carefully making notations of verses that raise questions

Galatians 2:11-21

"11 When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. 12 Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. 13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. 14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs? 15 "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' 16 know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by

observing the law, because by observing the law no-one will be justified. 17 "If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! 18 If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a law-breaker. 19 For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"



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Finding The Meaning

Studying the biblical text looking for its meaning in context.

Paul further distances his message from a human origin. There was a very public rebuke of Peter, the apostle, by Paul in Antioch about the very subject of keeping the customs of Moses. He doesn't pull any punches with his language. He "opposed" Peter because he was "clearly in the wrong" (:11).

What was Peter doing that deserved such a public rebuke? Peter had learned that salvation is not connected with keeping the law of Moses (Acts 10:34-35). He had also learned that the food customs of Moses were no longer to be kept (Acts 10:11-15). He now ate openly with Gentile brothers in Christ. However, table fellowship was an important issue to Jews. It was a sign of acceptance and unity in God. Some Jewish Christians continued with this table fellowship custom in the church and would not eat with Gentile Christians. When these brothers "came from James" (see Acts 15:24) Peter began to stop eating with the Gentile Christians. Others in the Jewish group joined in this and so did Barnabas (:13). They were "led astray" according to Paul.

Paul rightly viewed this behaviour as totally out of line with the truth of the Gospel. He points out firstly that it is hypocritical for Peter, who now lives like a Gentile, under the freedom he has in Christ to try to force Gentiles to act like Jews (:14).

He points out secondly that we. Peter and Paul, who are Jews by birth know that a person is not justified before God by "observing the law" (:15). That is what they know. They also know. that salvation is through faith in Christ. He further points out that when we seek salvation from Christ it means that we are sinners, just like the Gentiles (:15). The Law of Moses did not save us. We all needed Jesus.

There is contained within this situation an application for the 21st century church with regards to discrimination whether it be based on race, gender, religious tradition or nationality. We are not to treat each other in any other way than full and open acceptance. In Christ this distinctions are of no consequence with regards to our relationship with God (See 3:26-28).

Paul viewed himself as one who had "died to the law" (:19). He now lives for God. In fact he sees himself as having been "crucified with Christ" (:20). Consider the language of Romans 6:1-4 and we see that in baptism we symbolically die as Christ died. Now we "no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (:20). This death wasn't just to sin. For Jews it was a death to the law of Moses which had no power to saved anyone. The fact that we need Jesus to become righteous in the sight of God shows that the Law has no power to save. Otherwise the death of Jesus was a waste of time (:21).

The concept of self-crucifixion for the disciple of Christ is often lost on modern Christians who see their faith as a matter of convenience, success or personal benefit. Yet the message of Jesus is clear. "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24). Take up a cross? What does that mean? There is only ever one

purpose for a cross. To put in plainly, crosses are for killing people. When Christ speaks of a cross He is not speaking of jewellery, decorations or symbols. He is speaking of an execution. Christians are people who not only have become a part of the family of God. They are ones who have offered themselves on their own crosses to God so that they might now be given a new life in Christ. See Romans 12: 1-2.



Applying the Message

Applying the message of the Bible to our lives in the 21st century

Paul said that Peter began to separate himself from non-Jewish Christians because he was afraid (:12). What was he afraid of? _____

What are some ways that fear stops us doing what we know we should be doing as Christians? _____

Why was the law of Moses, a law from God, ineffective in bringing salvation? See Hebrews 10:1-4, 8:6-8 _____

Our beliefs change our behavior. This situation is a good example of it. What are some other clear examples of beliefs determining behavior? _____

Peter is said by some to be the earthly head of the church. How does his behaviour here show that he really is not a good choice for such a position, even if it existed?

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Sons of God!

Just when you think you have God sorted out, He continues to challenge your mind and your heart.

Earlier in my life in Christ, I thought that God was just tolerating me. He knew who I was and He didn't back off from telling me (Romans 3:23, 6:23). Yet, I thought, because of Christ He tolerated me. I was like that stray dog that a child brought home. The father didn't really want the dog but he tolerated it because his son loved the little loser so much. That was me. I was the little loser that God put up with because Jesus loved me.

Because of this I was hesitant to talk to God much in prayer except for rehearsed prayers. I had very little confidence to approach Him because I thought He was angry at me. Worship of Him just seem to reinforce this detached feeling I had towards God because He was shown to be so holy and I was shown to be so lowly.

Now, this does reflect the intense love that Christ has for me but it totally misses the good news. Why I didn't get all of the good news is beyond me. I am not the sharpest knife in the drawer. Whatever the reason, it is patently obvious now, as I read the scripture for myself, that I was totally wrong about God.

He is not the angry God that Jesus is pacifying. Certain truths began to change my thinking. God and Jesus are one. Besides that, it was God who sent the Holy Spirit not only to minister to me but to live within me. God wasn't tolerating me, He was drawing very near to me.

And then the truth hit me. God has brought me into His family. I am a son of God. I am not the barely tolerated black sheep. I am an adopted son (Romans 8:15-17). I am the renegade son who has been welcomed back into the family AS a son, not as hired help (Luke 15:21-24). I am a son of God. "Father" is not just a title for God, it is who He actually is to me. He is a loving, merciful Father who is only looking out for my best interests.

And how did I get to such an exalted position? Because THE Son of God paid the penalty for my sins with his very body (Romans 3:23-26). I live now as fully fledged member of the family of God, not a half brother or a step brother. There is no second class tier in God's family.

"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Galatians 3:26, 27,



Focusing On The Word

Read the biblical text carefully making notations of verses that raise questions

Galatians 3:1-25

"1 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. 2 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? 4 Have you suffered so much for nothing--if it really was for nothing? 5 Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? 6 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." 7 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. 8 The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." 9 So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. 10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." 11 Clearly no-one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. 15 Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no-one can set aside or

add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. 16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds", meaning many people, but "and to your seed", meaning one person, who is Christ. 17 What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. 18 For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. 19 What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. 20 A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one. 21 Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. 22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. 23 Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. 24 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. 25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law."

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Finding The Meaning

Studying the biblical text looking for its meaning in context.

OBSERVING THE LAW- What did it do for you? Paul asks the Galatians to consider their own experience. He challenges them with their reception of the crucified Christ (:1). He challenges them with the question about how they received the Spirit (:2). In verse five he would define this reception of the Holy Spirit as the visible activity of miracles through the Spirit's power. There are two choices in this discussion. You received the Spirit through the observing of law or you received Him by believing what you heard ie. by law or by faith. Paul would often abbreviate these two choices this way.

They have to acknowledge that the transformation in their lives has come through faith. It is a matter of historical fact. He then further turns up the fire on them by challenging them with the absurdity of beginning by faith and then continuing by human effort to "attain your goal" (:3). Paul is not holding back. He now challenges them with the fact that they had "suffered so much" (:4) for the Christ they had received through faith. Was that all for nothing? They have to make a decision. Did all this happen through faith or through law?

Paul shifts his attack on the foolishness (:1, :3) of the Galatians. He appeals to Abraham. All the players in this controversy respect Abraham and the record of his life. He quotes Genesis 15:6 to show that even Abraham was saved by faith, not law keeping (:6). Besides that, God tells Abraham of time when the Gentiles would be saved (Genesis 12:3). They would be saved the same way as Abraham was (:9). These Gentiles are the very people that the Judaizers are now trying to compel to be saved by observing the law. See :14. Such a position is foolish.

Using the observing of law as a basis for being justified before God only works for people with one characteristic, perfection. Deuteronomy 27:26 pronounces a curse on all who do not keep "everything in the Book of the Law". No one has ever kept everything. Everyone has sinned. The keeping of law only leaves you cursed. The scripture has always revealed to us that the righteous (the saved) live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4) not by law.

Paul furthers the image of the curse by showing that Christ became a curse for us to redeem us from the curse of the law (:13). He quotes from Deuteronomy 21:23. He has quoted extensively in this section and will do so again in later sections to show that the very law that the Judaizers claim to be zealous for is the one that pronounces the need for something beyond it.

Paul now turns to an historical argument. The promise of salvation for all came to Abraham who lived 430 years before the Law of Moses. That Law did not invalidate the previous promise. The law had a purpose, but it was not to bring salvation. Rather it was added because of sin (:19). Its conclusion is that the world is a "prisoner of sin" (:22,23). The law was then a means to lead us to Jesus (by convicting us of sin) that we might be saved through faith. Now we have received such salvation no one is under the Law (:25). Why would they want to be? It didn't impart life or righteousness (:21).

All people who are sons or God have received that precious relationship through faith in Christ. All the sons of God were baptized and this was symbolic of the fact that we were being clothed by Christ. There is no distinction in Christ with respect to salvation. No matter what your gender, race, or legal status is God has made us "one in Christ" (:29). If you are Christ's then you are the true descendants of Abraham and the heirs of the promise made by God to Him to bless all the nations.



Applying the Message

Applying the message of the Bible to our lives in the 21st century

Paul quotes extensively from the Old Testament in this chapter. Why?

What was the ultimate purpose of the Law of Moses? _____

The promise to Abraham is claimed by Paul to be pivotal in understanding how God is dealing with His children. Why is it so important? See :8, Genesis 12:7, 13-15, 24:7

What is the fundamental flaw of trying to be saved by law keeping? See :10-12

Paul wasn't teaching on baptism but he does reveal a clear connection between salvation by faith and our baptism (:26-27_). What is it? _____

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Redeemed!

"Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it" goes the old hymn. We sing of redemption but has the full impact of it hit us?

Today in the African country of Sudan slave trade is flourishing. It is hard to think that such could still occur in the 21st century but it is real and very common in the Sudan. (See http://www.frontline.org.za/news/slave_redemption_sudan.htm).

Some Christians are purchasing these slaves for the specific purpose of setting them free. They are called the American Anti-Slavery Group (AASG), It is out of desperation that they are resorting to such extreme methods. Some fellow Christians criticize them for putting money into the hands of the slave traders.

Whatever our opinion of this practice we need to realize that God took the word that describes this, **redemption**, and applied it to what Jesus did for us when He allowed Himself to be sacrificed on the cross.

*"and are justified freely by his grace through the **redemption** that came by Christ Jesus." Romans 3:24*

*"Christ **redeemed** us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He **redeemed** us*

in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." Galatians 3:13, 14

*"In him we have **redemption** through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace" Ephesians 1:7*

*"who gave himself for us to **redeem** us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good." Titus 2:14*

*"He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal **redemption**." Hebrews 9:12.*

We were the slaves. We had the problem. We couldn't buy our freedom. For most of us we didn't even realize we were slaves. It's all we knew. But Jesus knew better. He knew there was life of freedom for us and at just the right time He fronted up and paid the price for every single slave. Once for all (Romans 6:10).

We are freed slaves. The impact of Christ on our lives goes a lot deeper than the church we attend. Ah! Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it! Slaves sing of liberation. Let's sing!



Focusing On The Word

Read the biblical text carefully making notations of verses that raise questions

Galatians 4:1-31

"1 What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. 2 He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3 So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. 4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. 6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. 8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. 9 But now that you know God-- or rather are known by God-- how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? 10 You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! 11 I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you. 12 I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong. 13 As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. 14 Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. 15 What has happened to all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? 17 Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to

alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them. 18 It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you. 19 My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, 20 how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you! 21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. 23 His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. 24 These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. 25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. 26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. 27 For it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labour pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband." 28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. 30 But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." 31 Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman."

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Finding The Meaning

Studying the biblical text looking for its meaning in context.

BEFORE AND AFTER. Paul continues to challenge these Christians with the comparison between their life before Christ saved them and their life in Christ. Sonship before Christ did not realize fully the benefits of sonship (:3). At the time of maturity the potential of sonship kicks in. This happened when we turned to Jesus. In the case of Christ we were redeemed (:5). Redeemed is a powerful word full of imagery. It is used of a person buying a slave for the purpose of freeing him. The Galatians had been bought to be freed. His point is clear. They were once under slavery to a Law that they could not keep and then Christ set them free from that Law through the cross. Why would they voluntarily go back to that slavery?

Jesus was born of a Jewish woman and therefore born under the Law of Moses. However, rather than keep them under that Law, He came to redeem those under the Law (:4) so that they could receive their "full rights" as God's children. Paul again returns to the Holy Spirit's presence in the life of the Christian (:6). Because we are sons, which he had just shown to be the result of being liberated from the Law, God sent the Spirit into our hearts. See Romans 8:15-17. Because we are sons we are also heirs to the family fortune (:7). When God is your Father that inheritance is beyond imagination.

Before: did not know God and worshipped fake gods. *After:* You know God and God knows you (:8-9). Paul's logic is powerful. Why do they want to go back to those "weak and miserable principles?" Why would a slave want to choose to go back to slavery? He notes their law-keeping practices of observing special Jewish festivals and wonders if he has wasted his efforts on them (:10-11). It wasn't their observation of these festivals that disturbed Paul. It was that they felt that these were saving them.

The Galatians had truly loved Paul even when he was ill and it was a burden to them (:12-14). They had shared with him in such great joy. Where had that gone (:15)? Paul's statement that they would have torn out their own eyes to help Paul has been quoted by many to show that his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7) was eye disease. It's about the closest clue we have as to Paul's malady and seems to fit with other hints. Paul's appeal continues to get more and more personal and emotional (:16-20). He appeals to their hearts after appealing to their minds for a couple of chapters.

In :17 Paul accuses the false teachers of only wanting to win over the Galatians so that they might be "zealous for them". Their aim was to alienate them from Paul. Often this is the case in church conflicts. Personalities and politics. The key issue should be Christ not the human participants. What does Jesus say? What does He want?

He now returns to a biblical argument. Basically it asks the question, "Are they children of the slave woman, Hagar, or of the free woman, Sarah?" Obviously, the first century Jews were children of the free woman and in fact the children of the slave woman were now their enemies. His argument is figurative (:24) but it is still powerful to the Jewish mind even though it doesn't have as big an impact on our western minds. The conclusion is that they were children of the free woman (:31). As children of the free woman why are they now choosing slavery? This would be the basis of his next plea for freedom in Christ (chapter 5).



Applying the Message

Applying the message of the Bible to our lives in the 21st century

The relationship of the Christian to God is one of family. We are His children. What impact does that have our lives in Christ? _____

Why was returning to the law of Moses a matter of returning to slavery? _____

What does Paul mean when he says they were slaves to those who are by nature are not gods (:8) _____

What sort of special days and months is Paul referring to (:10) and what's the problem with them? _____

Zeal is good but only in what circumstance (:18)? _____

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Daily Bible Study Sheets

Helping Christians Learn the Message of the Bible and Apply It To Their Lives

Saving Grace

Paul, in Galatians, is writing to Christians who had forgotten that their relationship to God was based on His grace. It horrified Paul. He is astonished by the Galatians quick action (1:6). He fears for them (4:11).

Paul's astonishment and exasperation with them is only truly understand when you and I understand what it means to be saved by grace.

Songwriters pen the songs and we sing of this amazing grace. Preachers preach this grace (like Paul did) and the ungodly become the newly adopted children of God (3:26-27) through faith. What is it about this grace that Paul so values?

Grace is God's choice to bestow favor on you and me. The favor He bestows is the forgiveness of our sins (Romans 6:23). The basis for such a gift to us is not our works of righteousness but the work of Christ on the cross (Titus 2:5).

But why not base it on our works of righteousness? Surely God wants us to be doing His will? Oh yes, He does want our obedience. He desires our obedience in everything. You see that is the problem. And the problem is not God's, it is ours. Paul directly refers to this problem (2:10, 5:3). If you are going to be saved by your good works of obedience

to God's law then you have to keep the whole law. You can't get by with a 90% grade. You have to get 100% mark and you have to get it every day of your life.

God knows you can't that. That's what the whole Jesus thing is about. God was in Christ saying that he knows we can't do it and that he chooses to do it for us out of His love for us.

What was Jesus doing living among the abomination? Living a perfect life. What was Jesus doing preaching for 3 years? He was pointing us to God and to His plan for us.

What was God's plan? *"This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him." Acts 2:23, 24. That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:19.*

Oh what a gift! What amazing grace! God has given it all to us. Why would we receive such grace and then try to earn it? That's what Paul couldn't understand about the Galatians.

Galatians 5:1-26

"1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. 2 Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. 3 Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is required to obey the whole law. 4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. 5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. 7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? 8 That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. 9 "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." 10 I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be. 11 Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offence of the cross has been abolished. 12 As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves! 13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. 14 The entire law is summed up in a

single command: "Love your neighbour as yourself." 15 If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. 16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. 19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other."

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FREEDOM IN CHRIST. Paul's statement here seems a little simplistic but it has to be stated to the Galatians who had used their freedom to once again enslave themselves (:1). Remember the context here is about which system of salvation is actually effective. Is it Law where we seek to be saved by our efforts? Or is it through faith in Christ that we are saved through His efforts? Paul gets very black and white here and challenges with a few shocking realities.

- Christ is of no value to you if you seek to be saved by law keeping (circumcision) (:2).
- If you choose law keeping you must keep all the law (:3, 3:10).
- If you choose law keeping you have separated yourself from Christ. You have fallen from grace (:4)

This is not a discussion of grey areas or an academic study of a doctrine. This is serious. He is warning them that what they are doing is threatening their very salvation.

“The only thing that counts” (:6). Where you are circumcised or uncircumcised is of no consequence in Christ. Faith expressing itself through love. That's what matters. This is the total sum of God's revealed law (;14). Jesus had taught this definitively (Matthew 22:39). Yet how were these Judaizing teachers loving their brethren by their divisive actions? That's the point. They weren't. They were agitators (:12) and the ones who were “throwing them into confusion”. They weren't really fulfilling this basic command of the law. Rather their behaviour was destructive and leads to “biting and devouring each other” (:15).

“Live by the Spirit” (:16). This is the life God has called us to. The difference between life in the spirit and life in the sinful nature are obvious (:19). However that does not mean that there isn't a battle (:17) going on between the Spirit and the sinful nature (literally, flesh). How do you know which side of the battle you are on? It's easy. Look at the acts of the sinful nature and the acts of the Spirit and see where your behaviour usually falls. No matter what they claim, those who do the acts of the sinful nature will not inherit the kingdom of God. There is never any justification for any of these acts.

God, very rarely explains the rationale behind his moral code. He is God and what He says is sin is sin. Our world tells us there is no sin and even if there are some wrongs they are certainly not defined by the Bible. Sexual immorality has been reduced to a lifestyle preference but God says it is wrong. Among the list of sins that characterize the sinful life he includes such sins as discord, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions and factions (:20). These are not minor infractions. They will keep people out of the kingdom and need to be taken seriously.

The fruits of the Spirit in your life are always right. There is never any law against them (:23). Living in the Spirit is not forced on us by the Spirit. We must do all we can to stay “in step with the Spirit” (:25). The specific application of this for the Galatians was for them to not conceitedly provoke and envy each other (:26). This is what Paul believes the Judaizers were doing (4:17).

We are called to freedom (:1,:13). How are we free? _____

Paul's key problem with the behaviour of the Galatians was that they were "trying to be justified by law" (:4) What does that mean and why is that a serious problem?

How is the old law "summed up" in the command to love our neighbor (:14)?

How do we keep in step with the Spirit (:25)? _____

Some teach that it is impossible for a Christian to fall from grace. What does :4 say about this and what does it mean? _____

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Daily Bible Study Sheets

What's That Burden You Are Carrying?

We are all carrying around baggage. Some of it is the normal baggage that we can handle on our own (Galatians 6:5). In fact we are expected to do so.

But some of it is "excess baggage". Unlike airline excess baggage, we can't carry it by paying some fee. We can't smile nicely at the attendant and hope they will choose to overlook.

This excessive baggage is a killer. It is a sin that has overtaken us. We have been taught to "throw off everything that hinders us and the sin that so easily entangles" (Hebrews 12:1). But we didn't listen and now we are trying to run the 100 meter dash with a tangle of ropes around our legs.

Are you carrying some excess baggage? No one else can answer that question. Only you know the sin that is overtaking you. You do a great job of covering it up. You hide the bottles. You keep your stash in a secret place. No one knows where you go late during those lost times in your schedule. No one knows what you are thinking. They don't know whether you are admiring or lusting.

No one knows but you and God. You can try to block out that truth but your self delusion doesn't stop God being able to see through you like so much glass.

What do you do? Get some help. This is an excessive weight and you have already shown that you can't deal with it on your own.

Look out for a gentile spirit in your life. They are there. Brothers or sisters in Christ who God has sent to help you. That's one of the purposes of the church. Building each other up.

What is the burden you are carrying? Many a person has lost their family because they wouldn't answer that question. Many a father's spirit has been so corrupted that he has never spoken again to his children. Many a mother has abandoned her children because of the excessive burden.

"But I would do that!", you protest. Do you actually think that these people plan to do this? No. They keep on hiding themselves in sin until the point when the sin kills their heart.

What sin has overtaken you? Will you honestly answer the question. Or will you let the shame lead you into deeper into your own secret world? Will you let the fear of embarrassment drag you into a world that doesn't exist?

*"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."
Galatians 6:7*



Focusing On The Word

Read the biblical text carefully making notations of verses that raise questions

Galatians 6:1-18

"1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, 5 for each one should carry his own load. 6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

11 See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand! 12 Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh. 14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.

16 Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God. 17 Finally, let no-one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen."

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Finding The Meaning

Studying the biblical text looking for its meaning in context.

LIVE THE FREEDOM. For 5 chapters now Paul has been exhorting the Galatians to return to a dependence on Christ through faith. He now shares how we should use this freedom that faith in Christ gives us.

HELP OTHERS. If a brother or sister in Christ is caught in a sin, help them (:1). In you spirituality and maturity you have the responsibility to gently minister to those entangled in sin. I can't help but feel that the emphasis is on the word, "gently". The word, "restore" here means to "make fit". It is used in Matthew 4:21 where it refers to mending nets. You are not the police. You are the paramedic. See 1 Corinthians 4:21. In working at the coal face of life every Christian needs to watch out for themselves. Sin can corrupt anyone. You are working with fire, so be careful (:1). See also 1 Corinthians 9:27 where Paul applies this same principle to himself. He doesn't say for them to stay away from the fire, just that they should be careful.

FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST. Yes, it is a law but it is not a law system of salvation. What is the central focus of this law? How do we fulfil it? "Carry each others burdens" (:2). The word for "burdens" has the meaning of an excessive weight. It is a burden that is too heavy. This is our purpose. Help others in the family to live despite their excessive burdens.

GET A GRIP ON WHO YOU ARE. We often make two mistakes in regards to our self image. 1. Having a self serving estimation of our talents and assets (:3). 2. Determining who we are by comparing ourselves with others (:4). Both lead to self delusion. We are to be pitied when others fool us but we become truly pathetic when we delude ourselves. See Romans 12:3-8 for a detailed teaching on how to come to a true and healthy self image. Each of us should be our own burden. This is not the same word in the original as in :2. and describes common freight that we should be able to carry alone.

SUPPORT THOSE WHO PREACH AND TEACH. There is a bond of responsibility between those who teach and those who are taught. In 1 Corinthians 9:11, 12a Paul puts it this way, *"If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? 12 If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?"* The one who preaches (like Paul) has a work to do that is deserving if not more deserving of financial support than all other jobs because the result of his work is eternal.

A PRINCIPLE OF LIFE. Some will try to deceive us but we need to understand that there is a direct correlation between what we sow and what we reap. What we get out of life has to do with how much we put in. If you sow a sinful life you will reap destruction (:8). If you sow a life that follows the Spirit then you will reap eternal life. God is no easy dupe who isn't aware of what is going on and hands out eternal life without reference to the life lived. We must sow the helping of others (especially those in the church). It is easy to grow weary in doing good but hang in there God sees all and we will reap a great harvest (;10). There are always those who need help. Don't give up. Keep on helping. It has a great payoff for everyone involved. You will reap what you sow. If we want prosperity we must learn to be generous with what we already have.



Applying the Message

Applying the message of the Bible to our lives in the 21st century

How can a Christian gently help someone overtaken in a sin? _____

It is the spiritual who need to take a lead in this. What are some of the signs of maturity?

Give an example of how a person can carry the excessive burden of another?

How is this a fulfillment of the law of Christ? _____

What is an example of the sowing and reaping principle you have seen?

A ministry of



2528 El Cajon Blvd, San Diego, CA 92104
(619) 299 6812. www.ecbchurchofchrist.org

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