

POWERPOINT CONTENT FROM GALATIANS

Welcome to Didache!

Didache is the transliteration of a Greek word for teaching often used in New Testament times. In our case, we are applying this word to expository teaching and study of God's written word, with a view toward increasing our understanding of scripture and more effectively applying it to our lives, relationships, and contexts.

WEEK ONE

Over the next six weeks, we will engage in an 'in depth' interactive journey of discovery as we examine Paul's epistle to the Galatians and seek to 'live' what it teaches. May God use this journey to change us all!

Before we begin...

Let's do a spiritual and mental group 'warm-up' exercise. Read through Galatians 1:1-2:10 and answer the following questions.

1. What 2 things provoked Paul to write this letter?
2. What is Paul's 'state of mind'? Put yourself in his place. How is he feeling?
3. What is Paul's primary focus in this section of the letter?

Introduction

Galatians is one of the foundational doctrinal books in the New Testament. Confronting a false gospel based on righteousness through observance of the Mosaic Law, Paul clearly demonstrates that right relationship with God is based on faith and righteous living on a life enabled by the Holy Spirit.

AUTHOR: The Apostle Paul

Originally named Saul, Paul was born in Tarsus in Cilicia. Though Jewish, he was also a Roman citizen. Before being called by Jesus, Paul was a zealous, well-educated Pharisee who persecuted the early church and was involved in the stoning of Stephen. Called by Jesus as an apostle to the Gentiles, Paul eventually carried the gospel all the way to Iberia, planting churches all over the Roman world. Suffering intense persecution for much of his Christian life, Paul was eventually martyred under Nero in Rome about 67 A.D.

Paul's Missionary Journeys



Destination & Date

There is some debate about the destination of Paul's letter to the Galatians. The Roman province of Galatia was in modern day Turkey. If the letter was written before the Jerusalem council of Acts 15 (A.D. 49), then the letter dates to A.D. 48-49 and was addressed to churches such as Lystra, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch, and Derbe in south Galatia planted on Paul's 1st journey in A.D. 46-48. If after the council, as seems to be the case, the letter addresses either these southern Galatian churches (the most likely option), or possibly churches planted further north among immigrant Gauls on his 2nd journey. In this case, the letter could be dated as late as A.D. 56.

Structure and Issues

Paul's letter to the Galatians follows the classic structure of a speech or letter of public defense in the Graeco-Roman world. The central issue of such a defense is the *proposito*, which is most likely found in the story of Paul's confrontation of Peter in 2:15-21.

Motivation

Paul and his team had successfully proclaimed the gospel and planted churches in Galatia during his missionary journeys. Shortly after his ministry in that region, *Judaizers* arrived in the churches and began to teach the new converts that adherence to the Law of Moses and the practice of circumcision were

required. They also seem to have disputed Paul's authority because of his views about the Mosaic Law. Paul's writes these churches to defend his apostleship and correct this false gospel.

THE TEXT OF GALATIANS

Greeting (1:1-5)

¹Paul, an apostle [*apostolos*] - not *sent* from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead - [note the immediate defense of his apostleship], ²and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia: ³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue [take out, deliver] us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵to whom *be* the glory forevermore. Amen.

A 'different gospel' 1:6-9

⁶I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting [*metatithesthe* = used of military desertion or a traitor; the desertion was in process but not complete] **Him** who called [*kaleo* = called for a purpose] you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel [*heteros euaggelion* = other 'good news' of a different kind – an oxymoron]; ⁷which is not another [*allos* = of the same kind => because it is BAD NEWS!]; only there are some [Judaizers] who are disturbing [stirring up, troubling mentally] you and want [desire] to distort [twist, pervert] the gospel of Christ [not yet accomplished]. ⁸But even if we, or an angel from heaven [in Acts 14:8ff, they thought he was Hermes], should preach to you a gospel [*euaggelizomai*] contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed [*anathema* = devoted to destruction].`

Origin of Paul's gospel 1:10-2:10

¹⁰For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? [Paul was accused of making the gospel easy to win over followers. His use of *anathema* would settle that issue]. If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ. ¹¹For I would have you know, brethren [*adelphoi* = from the same womb, a tender term], that the gospel [*euaggelion* = good news] which was preached [*euaggelizo*= to announce good news] by me is not according to humankind [rather it is divine]. ¹²For I [emphasized] neither received it from man [by direct communication such as evangelism], nor was I taught [*didasko*= teach by instruction] it, but *I received it* through a revelation [*apokalupto* = uncovering] of [i.e. by or from] Jesus Christ [probably during his time in Arabia after he escaped from Damascus].

Origin of Paul's gospel 1:10-2:10

¹³For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism [this revelation clearly was not from my education or training], how I used to persecute the church of God [I wanted to exterminate this organized sect] beyond measure and tried to destroy [ravage – a very strong word] it; ¹⁴and I was advancing in Judaism [literally 'cutting a path' in knowledge, culture, and legal practice] beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions [that which is handed down].

Origin of Paul's gospel 1:10-2:10 -- Notice the sense of process and purpose!

¹⁵But when God [**thank God for 'but' moments!**], who had **set me apart** [*aphorizo* = mark off from a line, re: Jer. 1:15] *even* from my mother's womb [God had a purpose for Paul from before birth => implications?] and **called me through His grace**, was pleased ¹⁶to **reveal His Son in me** so **that I might preach Him among the Gentiles**, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia (where justification by faith and the new creation were probably revealed), and returned once more to Damascus.

Paul's gospel is not from the 12

¹⁸Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas (Chaldaic word for rock = Peter), and stayed with him fifteen days (Acts 9). ¹⁹But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother [senior leader in Jerusalem church]. ²⁰Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying [as accused by the Judaizers] ²¹Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia [about 10 yrs of unrecorded ministry on his home turf]. ²²I remained unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; ²³but only, they kept [constantly] hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy [ravage]." ²⁴And they were [continually] glorifying God because of me.

Paul meets with the Jerusalem elders as a colleague 2:1-10

¹Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along [as a test case]also. ²**It was because of a revelation that I went up**; and I submitted [for consultation, consideration] to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles [the gospel of grace] , but *I did so* in private to those who were of reputation [proven leaders like Peter, John, and James], for fear that I might be running, or had run [athletics term], in vain. [This act probably led to the Jerusalem council of Acts 15] ³But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. [This signified the first real break with Judaism]

[Paul now turns the tables!] ⁴But *it was* because of the false brethren secretly brought in [conspiratorial], who had sneaked in to spy out [*kataskopeo* = to spy out with hostile intent – like spies watching a city] our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage [*katadouloo* = to reduce to abject slavery - to the Mosaic Law]. ⁵But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you. [The future of the Church was at stake!!!]

⁶But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me [i.e., they imparted/imposed nothing in the way of the gospel]. ⁷But on the contrary, **seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised**, just as Peter *had been* to the circumcised ⁸(for He who effectually worked for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles),

⁹and recognizing the grace [favor and divine enablement] that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship [granting equal recognition and status, as well as endorsement], so **that we *might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised*** [recognizing and accepting the different callings with the same gospel of grace]. ¹⁰*They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.*

Closing Challenge

Think about it. What ‘gospel’ have you received and believed? Is it good news or bad news? Have you allowed the devil or false brethren to bring you into bondage by thinking you are only accepted by God when you are good enough? Salvation is on the basis of grace and accessed through faith in His promise. Any other ‘gospel’ is anathema.

WEEK 2

Review

Galatians is one of the foundational doctrinal books in the New Testament. Confronting attacks on his authority and a false gospel based on righteousness through observance of the Mosaic Law, Paul first defends his apostleship and gospel, then demonstrates that right relationship with God (and the promise of the Spirit) is based on grace and received through faith in Jesus Christ.

Tonight’s focus

Tonight we begin by looking at Paul’s confrontation of Peter at Antioch. This serves as the springboard for the rest of Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

Antioch in Syria

Antioch was founded in the 4th c. BC by Seleucus, one of Alexander’s generals. By NT times, it was a major Roman city with a mixed population and a large Jewish quarter.

The Antioch Church

Acts 11:19ff records the birth of the church in Antioch. “...those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to... Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone. ²⁰But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and *began* speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. ²¹And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. ²²The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch.”

Barnabas experiences very fruitful ministry among the Gentiles and goes to Tarsus to seek Paul’s help (Acts 11:26). Paul joins Barnabas in Antioch, participating in the Jerusalem famine relief mission (Acts 11:30), and later being sent out by the Spirit with Barnabas on their first missionary tour (Acts 13-14). It

was during this trip that the southern Galatian churches were planted. It was after Paul and Barnabas returned that Judaizers visited the church at Antioch, facilitating the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-34).

Paul's Confrontation Of Peter 2:11-21

The sharp exchange between Paul and Peter at Antioch was a critical moment in the early church. In your groups, read through Galatians 2:11-21 and discuss the following.

¹¹But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed [*anthistemi* = to set one's self against, to withstand, resist, oppose after attack] him to his face [directly & publicly], because he stood [continually] condemned [probably by the Gentile believers]. ¹²For prior to the coming of certain men from James [NOT Judaizers, but Jewish Christian leaders who placed great importance on keeping the law], he used to eat [in intimate association] with the Gentiles [in freedom of revelation in Acts 10:1-11:18]; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw [military => gradual strategic withdrawal; also used for furling sails!] and hold himself aloof [=to mark off by boundaries] fearing [*phobeo*] the party of the circumcision. [It's likely that association between Jews and Gentiles in Antioch was harming the testimony of the church in Jerusalem]

[The price of Peter's example >] ¹³The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy [*sunupokrinomai* = play a part with], with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy [hupokrinomai = act on stage > confession negated by conduct] [This affected a split in the love feast!!!] ¹⁴But when I saw that they were not straightforward [*orthopodeo*=straight walking] about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how *is it that* you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

¹⁵"[As for us] we are Jews by nature and not 'sinners' [*hamartolos*] from among the Gentiles;

¹⁶nevertheless knowing [perceiving] that a man is not justified [declared righteous] by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since, by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

Group Discussion

Most Bible scholars consider verse 16 as the pivotal verse in the letter to the Galatians.

1. What were the full implications of this statement for the Jews and Gentiles present during this confrontation?
2. What does this statement mean for us today? What are the full theological implications?
3. In what ways do churches today still tend to preach 'law'?

This conflict opens up a much broader truth.

The Jerusalem council dealt with the Gentiles relationship to the Mosaic law. But the Spirit leads Paul to make application beyond the immediate context. Not only are Gentiles free from justification by law, but so are the Jews!

¹⁷“But if [as is the case], while seeking to be justified [declared righteous] in Christ [through grace and NOT law], we ourselves [as Jews] have also been found sinners [, like the Gentiles are], is Christ then a minister of sin? [An accusation of Judaizers because Jews had to abandon the Mosaic Law and become like Gentiles to be justified]. May it never be! ¹⁸“For if I rebuild [*oikodomeo* = build a house, i.e. revalidate] what I have *once* destroyed [*kataluo* = destroy, overthrow] [what Peter has just done regarding the Law], I prove myself to be a transgressor [different word! => *parabates* = one who violates the spirit or ethos as opposed to legal practices] [Seeking justification by law and rejecting God’s grace makes you a transgressor]

[Paul now contrasts his action with Peter’s] ¹⁹For through the Law I died to the Law [instead of bringing justification, the Law showed Paul his sin, caused his death, and forced him to abandon it as a means of justification], so that I might live to God [Living to God required trusting in God’s grace in Christ instead]. Paul explains further, based upon ***union with Christ*** ²⁰I have been crucified [= *co-crucified* – perfect passive tense, past complete action with present result] (together) with Christ [who fulfilled the Law, satisfied its requirement, AND died, paying its penalty, ALL ON OUR BEHALF] and it is no longer I who live [the old self-righteous ‘Saul’ is dead and gone], but Christ lives in me [by the Spirit, giving me His life, making me a new creation]; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh [the body] I live by faith in the Son of God [in faith based on the Son of God as opposed to faith in the Law], who loved me and gave Himself up for me ²¹“I do not nullify [frustrate] the grace of God, for ***if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.***”

Group Discussion

1. What is the significance of having been "crucified with Christ"?
2. What does this mean from God’s perspective? What does it mean to us?
3. What truths or perspectives from this passage impacted you the most today?

WEEK 3

CHAPTER 3 OVERVIEW

Paul has concluded his personal defense and now directly addresses the primary issue. The Galatians had come under the influence of Judaizers who not only attacked Paul but taught that circumcision and obedience to the Mosaic Law were necessary for salvation. In chapter 3:1-4:7, Paul challenges their thinking by appealing to their personal experience, examining justification using Abraham as an example, highlighting the true role of the Law, and reminding them of the benefits they have already received in Christ.

GROUP DISCUSSION Gal. 3:1-5

1. Paul opens this section of the letter by appealing to the experience of the Galatians with the Holy Spirit. In verses 2, 3, and 5, he highlights three key roles the Spirit plays in the life of God's people. What are they?
2. What is the main point of these 5 verses? What is Paul trying to help them understand?
3. How can we tell the difference between attitudes and actions driven by religion and those that are of faith?

Paul Challenges the Galatians 3:1-5

¹You foolish [*anoetos* = lit. 'not understanding', not reflecting, 'thick'] Galatians [this is ironic since Galatians were noted for their intellect!!!], who has bewitched [*baskaino* = a fascination that causes people not to think] you, before whose eyes [their 'eyes' have been captured by something else] Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed [*prographo* = written/posted before you like a public announcement] as crucified? [completely atoning for sin]

Paul Challenges the Galatians 3:1-5, appealing to their actual experience.

²This is the only thing [my argument stands on this] I want to find out from you [4 related questions]: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing [the message] with faith? [earning vs receiving] ³Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected [brought to maturity/ completion] by the flesh? [self-made sanctification] ⁴Did you suffer so many things in vain [rejection/persecution]—if indeed it was in vain? [i.e., surely it wasn't!] ⁵So then, does He who provides [supplies abundantly – present tense] you with the Spirit [manifestations, gifts] and works [*energeo* – present tense] miracles [*dunamis* = power] among you, do it by [resulting from] the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Paul highlights 3 critical roles of the Spirit.

- Presence
- Practice
- Power

None of these are received or experienced by being 'good enough' and keeping the rules. ALL come through grace as a result of our faith in the promise of God in Christ.

Example of Abraham 3:6-9

⁶Even so [in the same way you received the Spirit] Abraham [Paul goes back BEFORE the Law] believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

Let's look at this verse in context in Genesis 15:1-6.

Genesis 15:1-6

¹After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great [or, and I am your very great reward]." ²Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless [God had already promised 3 times to make him a great nation], and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus [Abraham's faithful steward]?" ³And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir." ⁴Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." ⁵And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶Then he believed [Heb. *aman* = confirmed, supported] in the LORD; and He reckoned [accounted] it to him as righteousness.

Example of Abraham 3:6-9

⁶Even so Abraham believed [pisteuo] God, and it was reckoned [*logizomai* = to credit to an account] to him as righteousness [*dikaiosune* = standard of uprightness fully conformable to and acceptable by God, NOT 'as if', not moral, but declared and fully credited (finished and klaar!)] [This act happened BEFORE circumcision and the Law!!!] ⁷Therefore, be sure [*ginosko* = come to know, recognize, perceive] [i.e., you get it don't you?] that it is those who are of faith [to the exclusion of others] who are (spiritual) sons of Abraham.

[Paul confronts the Judaizers' belief that it is through circumcision that we are children of Abraham].
⁸The Scripture [term used to refer to a specific passage, in this case Gen. 12:1-3], foreseeing that God would justify [present indicative - should read 'justifies'= declares righteous] the Gentiles [including the Galatians!] by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, "All the nations [peoples, nations, gentiles] will be blessed in you." [looking forward to the Messiah]⁹So then those [Gentiles] who are of faith [like Abraham, as opposed to law like the Judaizers] are blessed with [receive the same justification as] Abraham, the believer [the 'father', the one who embraced God's promise and was, thus, accepted by God].

Futility of the Law 3:10-12

¹⁰For as many as are of the works of the Law [who seek justification by their own righteousness] are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to (continually) perform them." [Deut 27:26 – from the curses and blessings at Mt. Ebal/Gerazim] ¹¹Now that no one is justified by (in) the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith." [Hab. 2:4] ¹²However, the Law is not of faith [Law and faith are mutually exclusive]; on the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them." [from Lev. 18:5 – Law requires perfect obedience]

The blessing by faith 3:13-14

¹³Christ redeemed [*exagorazo* = to buy up, to ransom, to rescue from loss or bondage -> used of buying a slave from the marketplace] us from [under] the curse of the Law [the Law brought us under a 'death' curse because we could not obey it], having become a curse for [lit. 'above', on behalf of, instead of] us [see 2 Cor. 5:21]—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” [from Deut. 21:23] [word picture -> Christ came between us and the death blow associated with the curse, becoming the curse and taking the blow, with the following 2 results] — ¹⁴in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles [justification by faith and not Mosaic law, making both Jew and Gentile the same before God] , so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith [the gift of the Spirit promised in Joel 2, and later by Jesus]

Role of the Law 3:15-25

[Judaizers may have argued that the giving of the Law at Sinai 'changed the rules'; so the Spirit leads Paul to use an illustration from everyday legal relationships] ¹⁵Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is *only* a man's covenant [*diatheke* = an act of 1 individual placing something between himself and another to which he obligates himself], yet when it has been ratified [as God Himself ratified once for all Abraham's justification by faith with the covenant], no one [personifying the Law, or even the Judaizers!] sets it aside [annuls] or adds [new] conditions to it [which would destroy the original intent]. ¹⁶Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed [Gen. 12:3, the One in whom all the nations would be blessed]. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as *referring* to many, but *rather* to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.

[Paul explains further.]¹⁷What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. ¹⁸For if the inheritance [the blessing promised to Abraham and his offspring] is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise [they are opposing principles and thus mutually exclusive]; but God has granted [*charizomai* = giving a gift in spontaneous generosity with no strings attached] it to Abraham by means of a promise. [And, like all of us, all Abraham could do with the promise is accept it as true. That's why Jesus said, 'This is work of God, that you believe in Him who He has sent' (John 6:29)].

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. From the verses we have already studied and those that follow (19-25), what is the 'downside' to seeking to live by the Law?
2. According to verses 19-25. What purpose did/does the Law serve? For the Jew? For the gentile? For the believer?
3. What is the 'upside' of the Law?

Role of the Law 3:15-25

[Paul now explains the purpose of the Law to the Galatians] ¹⁹Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions [*parabasis* = stepping beyond a fixed limit into forbidden territory; i.e., to make sin clear and promote a longing for the promised seed], having been ordained [*diatasso* = to arrange

thoroughly, to charge] through angels by the agency of a mediator [Moses], until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made [Jesus].²⁰ Now a mediator is not for one *party only* [Moses stood between God and Israel]; whereas God is *only* one. [Remember, God Himself made the covenant with Abraham while he was asleep, obligating Himself to keep the promise simply because Abraham believed Him.]

²¹Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! [BOTH have important but very different functions] For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. [However, the concept of obedience to Law as a means of justification is not an accurate reflection of God's attitude toward humankind because it brings condemnation] But the Scripture has shut up [confined, jailed] everyone [Jew and Gentile alike] under sin [all are equally guilty], so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe [like Abraham did]. [***Because all are equally shut up in sin, salvation is equally available to everyone who believes!!!***]

²³But before [the realization of] faith came [verse 22], we were kept in custody [under lock and key, jailed] under the law [making us very aware of our sin and its consequence], being shut up to [with a view toward] the faith which was later to be revealed. [In other words, our desperate plight was made very plain, motivating us toward faith!] ²⁴Therefore the Law has become our tutor [*paidagogos* = originally a household slave who served as a temporary guardian and moral supervisor of a child 6-16 years of age] *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified [declared righteous] by [on the grounds of] faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come [now that we have 'grown up' into faith], we are no longer under a tutor. [The *paidagogos* is no longer involved!!!]

Benefits of faith in Christ 3:26-29.

²⁶For you are all [fully grown] sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

CONCLUSION - GROUP SHARING

Have each group member select the ONE verse in this chapter which for him/her best sums up the 'bad news'. Now share the verse that for you is the best news! What is the biggest challenge you face as you think about the truths we have studied today?

Conclude by praying for one another.

WEEK 4

Introduction

In Galatians 3:26-4:31, Paul continues his defense of justification on the basis of faith as opposed to obedience to the Mosaic Law. In this section, the Spirit leads Paul to employ three very different approaches to his 'argument', making a very direct and even emotional appeal to these straying Gentile believers. Verse 4:31 concludes this section of the letter.

Group Exercise

As a group, read Galatians 3:26-4:31. In this section of the letter, Paul concludes his defense of justification on the basis of faith by using three different approaches or 'arguments' in 3:26-4:7, 4:8-4:20, and 4:21-4:31. See if you can identify these approaches and summarize each one in a 'one-liner'.

From slaves to sons 3:26-4:7

²⁶For you [Gentile believers] are all sons [*huios* = grown up sons] of God **through faith...** in Christ Jesus. [You no longer need a *paidagogos*; you are now grown up and free to enjoy the rights of sonship] ²⁷For all of you who were [lit. You did, by being] baptized [*baptizo* = to put, place, plunge into] into Christ have clothed [lit. clothe – aorist] yourselves with Christ [idea of the Roman *toga virilus*, the garment worn in Roman culture when one becomes a man. So why do you still want to dress like a child???

²⁸[As sons] There is neither Jew nor Greek [race], there is neither slave nor free man [social status], there is neither [lit. 'not'] male nor female [status based on gender]; for you are all one [in spiritual privilege and status] in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to [are in union with] Christ [the Seed of Abraham, the end of the earthly line & the beginning of the new 'spiritual line'], then [as those joined with Him] you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise [not the Law. [Judaizers taught that be becoming proselytes, they would be heirs].

[Picking up from his earlier argument, and using an illustration from daily life] ¹Now I say, as long as the heir is a child [*nepios* = a non-speaking small child, under age; used of a simpleton!!], he does not differ [in apparent status & freedom] at all from a slave although he is owner [*kurios*] of everything, ²but he is under guardians [*epitropos* = guardian of a minor person] and managers [*oikonomos* = steward of property] until the date [Athenian legal term -> a time defined by law] set by the father. ³So also we, while we were "children", were held in bondage under the elemental things [lit. the ABCs] of the world [the rudimentary human perspectives of the world system]

⁴But when the fullness of the time came [when time elapsed and the preset alarm went off], God sent forth [*exapostello* = to send forth from oneself on a mission as a credentialed representative] **His** [emphatic, 'His own'] Son [the eternal Logos], born of a woman [human], born under the Law [made subject to Law as a Jew], ⁵so that [indicating purpose =>] [1st] He might redeem [*exagorazo* = to buy out of the slave market] those who were under the Law [the Jews], [2nd] that we might receive [as that which is due] the adoption as sons [lit. the adult 'son-placing']. ⁶Because you are sons, God has sent forth [] the Spirit of His Son [the SAME Spirit Jesus 'had' as God's Son] into our hearts, crying

[loud & earnest], “Abba! [Daddy] Father!”⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. **[You are in the Father’s house as a son, not a servant!]**

Group Exercise

Galatians 3:26-4:7 is one of the richest passages in the whole letter.

1. In the context of this letter, what is the significance of this passage for the Galatians. What does it tell us about what they had come to believe?
2. What is the difference between the position and benefits of the ‘child/slave’ and the ‘son’? What do we receive as ‘sons’? With which ‘position’ do you honestly identify?

Paul’s great concern 4:8-20

⁸However at that time, when you did not know [*oida* = perceive] God [before they heard the good news], you were slaves [*doulos*] to those which by nature [essence] are no gods [i.e. false gods, demons].⁹ But now that you have come to know [= to know intimately, on a personal level] God, or rather to be known [] by God, how is it [possible] [GK *pos* implies incredulity] that you turn back [present tense -> it was happening as he wrote] again to the weak [no power to justify] and worthless [*ptochos* = cowering in a beggarly manner, a term of contrast] elemental things [the ABCs of useless religion], to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? [why do you want to be a ‘child’ again? The evidence??? ->]¹⁰ You observe days and months and seasons and years.¹¹ I fear for you [fear on behalf of another], that perhaps I have labored [*kekopiaka* = labor to the point of exhaustion; perfect tense -> the work was complete] over you in vain.

Group Exercise

1. What is Paul’s great fear, and why do you think he so openly expresses it?
2. Read verses 12-20. This is a very emotional passage. How would you describe what Paul is feeling? How had the attitude of the Galatians changed toward Paul? What is his chief concern about the motives of the Judaizers?

Paul’s great concern 4:8-20

¹²I beg of you, brethren, become as I *am*, for I also *have become* as you *are* [Become like me, not trusting law as a means of justification, even as I became like you – a Gentile]. You have [had] done me no wrong [when I lived among you, even though I was a Jew and ill];¹³ but you know that it was because of a bodily illness [*astheneia* = weakness, frailty - some suggest ophthalmia – injury related or bacterial, which was common in the region] that I preached the gospel to you the first time;¹⁴ and that which was a trial [*peirasmos* = an experiment, a trial, temptation] to you in my bodily condition you did not despise [*exoutheneo* = to despise, treat with contempt as of no account] or loathe [*ekptuo* = to spit out, to reject, to spurn, to loathe], but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus *Himself*.¹⁵ Where

then is that sense of blessing [*makarios* = prosperity] you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out [lit. dug out] your eyes and given them to me.

¹⁶So have I become your enemy [an active, hostile enemy in your eyes] by telling you the truth? [regarding their trust in law] ¹⁷They [Judaizers] eagerly seek [*zeloo* = to strive after jealously, to earnestly desire, to court] you, not commendably [unlike Paul, whose motives were pure], but they wish to shut you out [*ekkleo* - exclude] so that you will seek them. [The real motive!] ¹⁸But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you.

¹⁹My [little] children [*teknon* = small children, Paul expresses deep affection as a father, NOT someone 'courting' a following!], with whom I am again in labor [like a mother struggling to give birth to the same child twice] until Christ is formed in you [from *morphoo* = outwardly expressed from your inner nature] — ²⁰but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed [*aporeo* = stuck, without a way forward] about you.

Conclusion

1. Can you share a story from your own life in which you experienced the same kind of perplexity with someone that Paul feels?
2. What stood out to you the most in today's study?
3. What warnings or admonitions should we take to heart as we read this section of Paul's letter?
4. How should our thinking about God and ourselves change?

Conclude by praying for one another.

Whose children are we? 4:21-31

²¹Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? ²²For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman [Hagar, Sarah's maidservant] and one by the free woman [Sarah]. ²³But the son [Ishmael] by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh [human effort, human conniving], and the son by the free woman through the promise [the obedience of faith]. ²⁴This is allegorically speaking, for these *women* are two covenants: one *proceeding* from Mount Sinai [the Mosaic Law] bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. ²⁵Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.

²⁷For it is written, "Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor; For more numerous are the children of the desolate Than of the one who has a husband." [from Isaiah 54:1 in the Septuagint - the Koine Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, translated between the 3rd and 2nd Centuries BC in Alexandria.] ²⁸And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.

²⁹But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, so it is now also. [from Gen 21:9. A characteristic now repeated in the Judaizers' persecution of those who believe the promise] ³⁰But what does the Scripture say?

“Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.” [Paul cites this as a prophetic indicator of what is to come]

³¹So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman [the Mosaic Law], but of the free woman [grace and faith].

WEEK 5

Introduction 5:1-26

In Galatians 4, Paul completed his defense of justification on the basis of faith (as opposed to the Mosaic Law). In chapter 5, he begins to address the practicalities of life under grace, admonishing the Galatian saints to live in freedom from Jewish legalism, relying instead on the supernatural enablement of the Holy Spirit.

Walk in freedom! 5:1-15

1 It was for freedom [*eleutheros* = liberty, freedom, not in slavery or under restraint] that Christ set us free [Gk -> exempted from liability, Gk construction is used to show advantage]; therefore keep (on) standing firm and not be subject [Gk held, ensnared, like in a net or a legal dilemma] again to a yoke of slavery [seeking justification through self-effort via the Law].

Group Exercise

1. Paul cautions us not to be burdened again by the yoke of slavery, seeking justification through the Law. In what subtle ways can we find ourselves subject again to the yoke of bondage? What are some of the indicators?
2. Read verses 2-5. Verse 4 is one of the most controversial verses in the New Testament. Bearing in mind the context of this letter, what do you think Paul really means by verse 4?

Walk in freedom! 5:1-15

2 Behold [Pay attention!] I, Paul [this is coming straight from me!], say to you that if you receive circumcision [persist in an effort to be justified by Law; hypothetical clause], Christ will be of no benefit to you. [a play on concepts – you cut yourself, you cut off yourself, you derive no benefit] ³ And I testify [affirm by protest] again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation [lit. a debtor, bound by expectations] to keep the whole Law. [if you choose Law, then Law it is!] ⁴ You have been severed [*katargeo* = rendered inoperative, without effectual relationship, no longer operating in the sphere of, 'unplugged'] from Christ [and by implication the Spirit], you who are seeking to be

justified by (in) law; you have fallen [*ekpipto* = to lose hold of, drop away; fig. used of something no longer efficient] from grace.

5 For we [emphatic – as opposed to those seeking justification by Law] through [the agency of] the Spirit [enablement], by faith [means of access], are waiting [*apekdechomai* = to await eagerly] for the hope [assured expectation] of righteousness [complete righteousness, being like Jesus] 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything [*ischuo* = to have, exert, or wield power] , but faith working [*energeo* = working, coming to effective expression, manifesting a working out] through love [agape - the same love Jesus has, and the fulfillment of the Law].

7 You were running [Greek athletic term] well [*kalos* – implies honorably, bravely] ; who hindered you [*enkopto* =to cut in, to make an incision, used of hindering a runner or breaking up a road] from obeying [*peitho* = to persuade, have confidence] the truth? 8 This persuasion [inducement by words in which you express confidence, which you have obeyed, play on previous word] did not come from Him who calls you [It's not of God, but from the enemy!]. 9 A little leaven [used of false teaching, e.g. Mtt. 16:12] leavens the whole lump of dough. 10 I have confidence [*peitho* once again] in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing [*turasso* = disturbing the faith of] you will bear [*bastazo* = to bear a grievous burden] his judgment [*krima*], whoever he is. [a specific individual]

11 But I, brethren, if I still preach [*kerusso* = herald, proclaim] circumcision [like I used to in the old days, and like these Judaizers do] why am I still persecuted? [*dioko* = put to flight] [The fact that I am persecuted tells everyone I am not] Then the stumbling block [*skandalon*] of the cross has been abolished [= to render inoperative, same word as verse 4]. 12 I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.[= cut off, emasculate; like the priests of Cybele (tsee-beh-leh) at Pessinus. Paul argues that if they think it is so important, why don't they show their devotion by going all the way like these heathen priests!!]

Group Exercise

1. Why did the Holy Spirit lead Paul to write verses 13-15?
2. What accusations do you think Paul was addressing?
3. How must we use our freedom in Christ? Practically, what does this look like?
4. How must we NOT use this freedom?

Walk in freedom! 5:1-15

[Paul now addresses the danger of abuse.] ¹³For you [emphatic] were called to freedom [*eleutheria* = liberty, freedom – as a platform], brethren; only *do* not *turn* your freedom into an opportunity [*aphorme* = starting point, a military base of operation, a launching pad] for the flesh, but through love [*agape*] serve [be slaves/servants of] one another. [We are free from Law, but bound by love!!!] ¹⁴For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word [the whole law stands fully obeyed], in the *statement*, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” [i.e., if you want to do the Law, then serving one another in love will fulfill it!]

¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

Walk in the Spirit! 5:17-26

[Paul now counters the Judaizers' claim that the Law is needed to avoid sin] 16 But I say, walk [*peripateo* = conduct yourself daily] by (the instrumentality of) the Spirit, and you will not carry out [*telese* = complete, fulfill, bring to fruition] the desire [*epithumia* = lust, strong desire] of the flesh. 17 For the flesh [the corrupt nature of natural man] sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition [lie opposite] to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. 18 But if you are led [*ago* = led, brought, carried] by the Spirit [and thus not depending upon self effort], you are not under the Law. [AND not under condemnation; these two are mutually exclusive]

[Following on from verse 13] ¹⁹Now the deeds [*ergon* = work] of the flesh are evident [visible, manifest], which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice [*prasso* is durative, habitually practice] such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The Deeds of the Flesh

Immorality = *porneia*, illicit sexual practice

Impurity = *akatharsia* moral uncleanness in thought, word, and deed

Sensuality = *aselgeia*, shameless, brazen, unrestrained wantonness

Idolatry = worship of other gods, participation in their rites

Sorcery = *pharmakeia*, use of drugs, spells, etc to engage/manipulate the spirit/natural world

Enmities = from *echthos* (hatred); group hostility

Strife = *eris*, strife, discord, quarreling

Jealousy = *zelos*, jealousy, gaining advantage

Outbursts of anger = *thumos*, passionate outbursts

Disputes = *eritheia*; from *erithos* (day-laborer); petty rivalry, ambition

Dissensions = from _____, to stand apart

Factions = *hairesis*; choice, opinion, heresies

Envying = *phthonos*; envy, evil and often destructive craving for what others have

Drunkenness = _____; drunkenness

Carousing = *komos*, reveling, partying, orgies

And things like these [that leaves it open!]

Fruit of the Spirit!

²²But [contrasting the deeds of the flesh] the fruit [singular] of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

When we consciously yield to the Holy Spirit and live in active dependence upon Him, He manifests in and through us the very character of Christ, fulfilling the Law!

Love = agape, seeks highest good of others

Joy = chara, inner gladness

, joined, settledness, welfare

Patience = makrothumia, long-suffering

, benevolence

, concern for others

Faithfulness = pistis, faithfulness, fidelity

Gentleness = prautes, teachable, considerate

Self-control = egkrateia, self-mastery

Walk in the Spirit! 5:17-26

²⁴Now tho [stauroo = crucify, to fence off with stakes; indicative aorist -> crucified 'once for all' with the lasting result that it is still crucified] the flesh with its passions [*pathema* = disposition, passion, propensity – innate] and desires [*epithumos* = a strong desire, a craving, a longing - willful and active]. ²⁵If [seeing that] we live [*zao*] by the Spirit [If it is in and by the Spirit we access grace and have life], let us also walk [*stoicheo* = to walk in line or in step with] by the Spirit [then let's conduct our daily lives in and by the Spirit]. ²⁶Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

Group Exercise

1. What is the real danger of trying to live under the Law?
2. What is the secret to upright living?
3. In what practical ways can we manage the conflict between the desires of the flesh and the Spirit?

Personal Application : Take a moment to evaluate your walk in the Spirit. How 'authentic' is your fruit? Take a moment to evaluate your walk in the Spirit. How 'authentic' is your fruit?

Love - I seek the highest good of others. I see all people through the eyes of Christ and treat them accordingly.

Joy - I rejoice continually in God's love and grace. I have inner gladness, even when facing challenges.

Peace - Because of God's grace, I enjoy a tranquil state of soul which contributes to harmony with others.

Patience - I am patient with people and slow to anger, even when others provoke me through irresponsible actions.

Kindness - I have a morally pure, benevolent, conciliatory manner which makes others at ease in my presence.

Goodness - I am characterized by a genuine concern for the well-being of others.

Faithfulness - I am trustworthy and reliable in my stewardship of Kingdom responsibilities.

Gentleness (Meekness) - I am teachable, modeling an attitude of mutual submission to one another in Christ.

Self Control - I exercise mastery over desires which are contrary to Christ's character and purposes.

WEEK SIX

Introduction 6:1-18

After emphasizing the importance of walking in the Spirit, Paul gives several guidelines which illustrate what this looks like in practical terms. Undoubtedly, these guidelines address specific situations in the Galatian church. Paul coaches the saints on dealing with sin in the context of the Body of Christ, emphasizes the importance of supporting those in ministry, and admonishes them to persevere in doing good, even though the results may not be immediately apparent. Paul concludes the letter by contrasting his own motives with those of the Judaizers and reminding the Galatians of his proven credibility.

Group Exercise

Read through verses 1-10.

1. Why do you believe the Holy Spirit led Paul to write these verses?
2. Endeavour to identify some of the specific problems that Paul is addressing.
3. Freedom and Body Life 6:1-10

Freedom and Body Life 6:1-10

[Following on, Paul asks the brethren to restore those who have sinned during this crisis] 1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught [*prolambano* = to take beforehand, overtake, come upon unexpectedly, take

unawares] in any trespass [*paraptoma* = a fall beside, a false step, a blunder, a failure to achieve (nonintentional) -> antithesis of *stoicheo* (5:25) – to walk in line or in step], you who are spiritual [*pneumatikos*] [who did not fall for the lie], restore [*katartizo* = repair, restore to previous good condition, to set right, also to complete or equip - A great word used for reconciling groups, setting dislocated bones, mending nets, equipping armies] such a one in a spirit of gentleness (meekness); *each one* looking [*skopeo* = to look at attentively in order to form a right judgment] to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

Group Interaction : In verse 1, Paul urges the spiritual brethren to restore those who had been overtaken in this crisis. What kind(s) of restoration did they need?

2 Bear [*bastazo* = take up, carry] one another's burdens [*baros* = a heavy weight; every rabbi, including the Judaizers, had a 'burden' for disciples to carry; Paul says carry each other instead!], and thereby fulfill [= fill up to full measure, satisfy fully] the law of (the) Christ [the 'law' of agape love]. 3 For if anyone thinks he is something [has some spiritual preeminence and is thereby too important to carry others] when he is nothing [Gk is subjective -> "being, if he looks at the facts, nothing"], he (mentally) deceives himself. 4 But each one must examine [*dokimazo* = test with a view toward approving] his own work, and then he will have *reason for* boasting [= self-glorifying, self-congratulation] in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another [i.e., no comparing!!!]. 5 For each one will bear his own load [*phortion* = cargo, load, a soldier's pack!!! – i.e., take responsibility for himself].

Group Exercise: Read verses 6-10. The 'law' of sowing and reaping is often cited from church pulpits. What is the context for this principle in Galatians? How is this principle misapplied in contemporary theology? How should we understand and embrace sowing and reaping as God's people?

Freedom and Body Life 6:1-10 continued

6 (Gk, But – in contrast to bearing only your own load) The one who is taught the word is to share [= partake together with, partner with, share] all good things [things of this life; i.e. what one needs to live] with the one who teaches [from = teach by word of mouth]. [They had neglected their teachers/ leaders during the crisis] 7 Do not be deceived [lit. 'stop deceiving yourselves!'], God is not mocked [*mukterizo* = to turn up the nose, sneer; also the idea of outwitting through externally pleasing behaviour while seeking something else]; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap [an idiom understood by every Greek; you determine your own harvest later by what you plant now].

[Though a general biblical principle, Paul here primarily discusses how we use our finances and resources]. 8 For the one who sows to [*eis* = with a view toward] his own flesh [self-centred, to please fleshly cravings] will from the flesh [as a source] reap corruption [*phthora* = corruption, destruction, spoil] [not as a punishment, but as a natural consequence], but the one who sows to [with a view toward] the Spirit [life in the Spirit, including caring for their teachers] will from the Spirit [as a source] reap eternal life.

9 Let us not lose heart [*egkakeo* – used when workers in the vineyard slacked off due to prolonged efforts] in (habitually) doing good, for in due time [when the season is right] we will reap if we do not grow weary [*ekluo* = lit. become relaxed, usually used of tired reapers]. 10 So then, while we have opportunity [*kairos* = time, season] [While the season is opportune], let us do [*ergazomai* = labour, perform; a ‘work’ word; “continually be doing”] good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household [*oikeios* = in or of the house] of the faith. [We especially need to make sure that those of the Faith are cared for!]

Concluding Comments 6:11-18

¹¹See with what large letters I am writing [aorist – have written and am still writing] to you with my own hand. [Shows authenticity of the letter. Some think it may indicate that Paul’s eyes were not very good or that his hands had been damaged through persecution. NT Gk scholars, however, believe this indicates that Paul wrote the whole letter in uncial (capital) text as opposed to cursive and is using the courteous reflective overview from a reader’s perspective often found at the end of letters from this period] ¹²Those [Judaizers] who desire to make a good showing in the flesh [as opposed to the Spirit!] try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

¹³For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. [Their motives were for self-glory; they were not even sincere about the Law] ¹⁴But may it never be that I would boast [glory in self], except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. [Paul was dead to the old way of self-effort]

[Why Paul can boast in Christ] ¹⁵For neither is circumcision anything [to the Jew], nor uncircumcision [for the Gentile] [these are now irrelevant], but a new creation [in which Jew and Gentile alike are joined to God and one another through faith in Jesus Christ]. ¹⁶And those who will walk by [*stoicheo* = walk in line, in step with;] this rule [*kanon* = rule, principle, standard; from *kanna* = a straight rod , peace and mercy *be* upon them [the Gentile believers], and upon the Israel of God [the Jews who embrace Jesus and salvation by grace]. ¹⁷From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear [*bastazo* = take up or carry] on my body the brand-marks [*stigma* = tattoo, branding, marks of ownership; Paul’s scars from persecution] of Jesus. [My scars show I am the real deal!] ¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

A CHOICE OF LEARNING TASKS -- *Select one of the challenges below and, as a group, compose a response based upon Paul’s letter to the Galatians. The response must fit into the space below, and you must be prepared to share it with the group.*

1. A very religious co-worker overhears you discussing this class during your lunch break. She attends meetings at her church at least twice a week and is involved in several programmes in the community. She talks a lot about the Ten Commandments, holiness, going to church, and how people dress and behave. She carries her Bible everywhere, dresses plainly (so as not to be a temptation to men), always wears a skirt, and never wears makeup. The butt of jokes, staff members tease her by saying things like, “If I smoke this cigarette, am I going to Hell?”, or “We would invite to our braai, but we don’t want to be

responsible for you going to Hell.” Though she is very devoted, there seems to be little joy in her life. One day, when you get home after work, there is a somewhat confrontational email in your box questioning your salvation and commitment to holiness after she saw a group of young adults from Maranatha at a local restaurant. Two of the girls were wearing shorts and tops with bare shoulders. One of the young men had a beer. You know these young people personally. Though they are new Christians, you are certain they are born again. She finishes the email by referring to Deuteronomy 22:25 and quoting Lev. 20: 7-8, which says, “You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. You shall keep My statutes and practice them; I am the LORD who sanctifies you”. She invites you to email her back and explain how these young people could possibly be real Christians. You have been praying for a long time for an opportunity to address her. What will you write?

2. Your new neighbour invites you for tea. In the course of the conversation, you discover that he is a practicing Muslim. When he finds out you are a Christian, he engages you immediately on the differences between Islam and Christianity. In particular, he is very concerned that Christians think that what they believe makes them right with God. “Islam”, he says, “is superior. In Islam our focus is on practice, upon what we DO and not just what we believe. Your apostle Paul threw out the Law that Jesus taught, so you Christians can live however you want and think that because you believe a certain way, you are right with God. We Muslims know what Allah expects of us. He has made it clear through the prophet. As long as we practice what he expects of us, we can have a hope for eternal bliss.” Tea time ends and it is time to go. In spite of his apparent confidence, your neighbour invites a response from you. “Please email me”, he says, “and explain why you think you are saved and I am not.” This is an open door from the Lord. How will you explain biblical salvation in a way that applies to the Muslim worldview?

Concluding Comment:

God has given us a great opportunity. In the power of the Holy Spirit, let’s make it count!

Resources

- The Greek New Testament
- Wuest's Word Studies – Galatians
- Vincent's Word Study
- Jamieson-Faussett-Brown Commentary on the Whole Bible
- The Bible Knowledge Commentary – New Testament
- New American Standard Bible
- Mark Copeland's Online Study of Galatians
(http://www.ccel.org/contrib/exec_outlines/ga/ga_00.htm)
- N.T. Wright's Exegesis and Theology of Galatians
(http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Galatians_Exegesis_Theology.htm)