

**Date:** 7 May 2023

**Scripture Passage:** Galatians 5:1-12

**Title:** Confrontation: A Christian Duty

## Introduction

- There are times in our lives when we must confront those who are perverting the truth and especially in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is our duty to protect the flock of Jesus Christ. It is our duty to protect the truth. It is a Christian duty to confront those who are in error and who are in who are propagating error, those who are troubling at the church, those who infiltrate the church and destroy the faith of God's people.
- Some background to the book of Galatians. Defense of the Gospel (Chs 1-2); Doctrine of Gospel (Chs 3-4); Demands of Gospel (Chs 5-6) .
  - **Defense of the Gospel (Chs 1-2);** We have already seen that the apostle Paul was writing to the churches in Galatia. They have been troubled by what we have called the Judaizes. The Judaizes were Jews who proclaim themselves to be Christians, claiming they have come from the church in Jerusalem, and they have now come to the churches in Galatia. They were saying that faith in Jesus Christ was not enough. But in addition to faith in Jesus Christ, you must keep to the laws of Moses. Such as keeping to special days and keeping to the dietary laws and getting circumcised. And when Paul heard of this, he was so upset because that was a perversion of the gospel. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone.
  - **Doctrine of Gospel (Chs 3-4);** We have considered the purpose of the law. Last week, In (4:21-31), Isaac & Ishmael: Hagar, Ishmael, Mt Sinai, earthly Jerusalem, bondage. Sarah, Isaac, (Mt Zion), Jerusalem above, freedom. Two covenants, works & grace. The covenant blessing was through Isaac. Christians are free (31).
  - **Demands of Gospel (Chs 5-6) .** Now we consider the demands of the gospel. So the first thing that Paul tells us is “The necessity of confronting and exposing false teaching and false teachers.” As Christians who have really understood the gospel, who want to trust in Christ and Christ alone, not relying on our own effort to be saved. The first requirement is that you must confront errors.

## I. The gospel must be defended and propagated— from the hearer’s viewpoint (1-6).

- The necessity of avoiding bondage by the law (1-4). Idea of freedom & slavery still fresh (4:31). Now, urged readers to “stand fast”, i.e. not to be moved. They were already shaken and were in danger of being moved.
- Liberty from sin, yoke of bondage, leading to death (3:10, 13). “Standfast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free” Through faith in Christ, we have liberty. Liberty, freedom from the power of sin, from the demands of the law, from having to rely on our effort. To make ourselves righteous before God, we will fail if we. Rely on our own effort. If you continue to want to rely on law keeping, if you continue to rely on your personal effort to win merits before God, you will fail. You will be led to bondage. You are constantly under the power of sin and you are weighed down with burdened with your own guilt before God. But in Christ, we have freedom. In Christ, we're set free from the need to keep God's law. Don't be entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

God is perfect. Any breaking of his law causes you to be guilty before him. And because you are guilty, you deserve to be punished. And what is the punishment due to us eternal damnation in hell? Yes, that is what we deserve.

### Two bad effects if you revert to reliance on law:

- I. **You would be entangled again by yoke of bondage (2b).** You want to be entangled in bondage to the law, and to be cast into the sufferings of eternal hell? If you rely on the law, the law will be your master. It will control you. You will be in bondage. **Read 3:10.** That was the purpose of Christ coming. He died on the cross to take the punishment that his people deserve so that we are spared to

bear the punishment ourselves. We do not have to bear the punishment anymore because Christ, our Savior, has done it for us, he bore our sins on the cross. So that we are no longer entangled by yoke of bandage.

Look at Chapter 5, verse 3. **Read 5:3**. Circumcision is part of the law of Moses. And if you rely on law keeping to be right before God, then you have to keep the law perfectly. No one can keep God's law perfectly. We lie, we steal, we lust. Let us take note that this is the first thing that will happen to you. You will be entangled by the yoke of bandage if you attempt to keep the law to gain acceptance by God.

**II. You would cease to become true Christians (2b, 4b, 4c), departing from the one way of salvation.**

Look at the end of v2, "Christ will profit you nothing". Paul is saying, if you rely on the law, if you keep to circumcision, you are not saved. Christ's death and the cross amounts to nothing. Look at v4 (**Read v4**). Salvation is by grace alone to faith in Christ alone. You see now that you will have fallen from grace. If you are attempting to be justified by keeping the law, you are moving away from justification by faith. You are relying on your effort to be safe. You're saying that Christ's death on the cross is insufficient to save a sinner. So don't think it is harmless to add some holy laws here and there. Paul is asking that Galatians not to be brought into bondage again, but rather maintain the freedom that you have in Christ. The Liberty bought by Christ for you. We cannot be accepted by God with our own righteousness. We have to rely on a righteousness that is outside of us. And that is the righteousness of Christ. The Spirit dwells in us. The spirit enables us to follow Christ, and to walk faithfully with Him.

- The necessity of maintaining freedom by faith (5-6). Faith leads to hope, of entry into heaven, based on righteousness of Christ. When that faith in Christ is there. Hope is given to you. Hope of entering heaven. Hope of receiving the blessing promised to Abraham's descendants. Abraham was going to be a blessing to all the nations. The Covenant blessing was going to be through this particular seed of Abraham, namely Jesus Christ. And because you have faith in Jesus Christ, the blessing of salvation will come to you. The Holy Spirit comes into us live in us beginning to transform us, guide us, the spirit of God seals us. He's like a guarantee that we belong to God. We are secure. We will arrive safely in heaven. Therefore, those who are truly saved, who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, they have this certainty of arriving in heaven. And that is what is called "hope". We use the word hope in our every day life as an expression of uncertainty. But in the Bible, the Christian hope is a certainty. We are assured that we will arrive safely in heaven. No promise of his will be broken. Our trust in Christ ensures that we will arrive safely in heaven. It is because we haven't arrived yet, that is why it is called hope. Salvation is thus present and future. When we repented and have faith in Christ, we are regarded as saved. God forgives us our sins and receives us as his own children. Salvation is past, present, and future. When we repented and have faith in Christ, we are regarded as safe already. God Forgives us of our sins receives us as his own children. But we are in the process of being sanctified. Along the way there are many trials and temptations that come our way. And we who have faith in Jesus Christ will be tempted in our beliefs, in our Christian living, in our perseverance. We will be tested. But we must hold on to what is true. We must continue to abide in Christ. We must trust in him. And if we persevere in the faith, we will one day arrive safely in heaven.

Romans 8:24-25 "For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance."

- Hope is certain. Righteousness is imputed. As true Christian, we persevere on in faith. Faith then leads to love. **Read v6** While on earth we live in love, out of love from God because He first love us. He loves us perfectly,

giving us of his only begotten son. We love him so imperfectly, but the Spirit enables us to love because he first loved us. And our love for him will spill over to love for his church and for people around us. Remember the greatest commandment is to love of our God with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul, and all our strength. And the second command is to love our neighbor as ourselves. When we have the love of God in our hearts, we will love His people. We have compassion on others around us. That is a mark of the true Christian. We are full of gratitude to God. For not passing us by. For saving us, and therefore we have a genuine love for God. And we know that we can love him because he first loved us. And if we love God, we must love His people as well. Christian Love is giving off yourself for the good of others. It might involve your time. It might involve your money. It might involve your health. It might even involve your life. To give of yourself, to the good of others.

- Faith leads love, for God because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Shown in our love for the church and unconverted. Instead of fighting one another over circumcision (cf. 15), preach gospel of justification by faith to unconverted. If you love Christ and follow Him, you will love His people. You will be found in the midst of Christians often. You will want to come to church to worship together. Love for Christ will be shown for love for his church. So why is it that you are not committed to the Church of Jesus Christ? Don't look for the perfect church. Find a church that attempts to be faithful to God's world in doctrine and in life. Integrate yourself into the life of that church. Be part of that church. Serve the Lord. Show forth your love for God and for his people. In that way, we live our Christian life. In faith, in hope, and in love.
- The gospel must be defended, propagated, & valued (1:9).

We must make against stand against false teaching. The gospel must be defended. It must be propagated, it must be valued. Do you defend the gospel? You have a duty to do so and expose those who are propagating the errors. But don't just defend it, propagate it. Share the gospel with others. Have you invited anyone to church? Imagine if each person here invites one other person to church next week, we will have doubled the size. Share the gospel! And don't just defend, and propagate it, but also value the gospel.

## II. The gospel must be valued – from the preacher's viewpoint (7-12).

- The harm caused by false teachers (7-10). Three things may be said of the false teachers:
  - I. They hinder believers from obeying the truth. "Hindered" or "cut in on you", as in Roman race, "Persuasion" not to obey truth, contrary to God's will (8). **Read 7-8.** Paul is reminding the Galatians "who hindered you from your faith"? You know that God is the one who calls you through Jesus Christ. He is our Chief Shepherd, whom we follow because we are the his sheep. This perversion of being save through your own efforts of keeping the law does not come from Christ Jesus who calls you. You claim to believe this doctrine and that doctrine. But where is that conviction? Where is that persuasion? It is good for Christians to be persuaded of the truth. You're convinced you're not going to be moved. You'll act upon that truth.
  - II. False teaching has the effect of harming whole church, like leaven spreading (9). Which is more harmful, persecution or perversion of gospel? Heresy bad, but subtle errors also. **Read v9.** Just like leaven spreading. All it takes is a little bit to leaven the whole bread. You allow false stitching to enter. So imperceptible. They look so little and harmless. You may say you say don't want to cause a stir. With false teaching that is contrary to the gospel, you allow it to affect just a few people, soon it will affect the church.
  - III. They will be judged, whoever they are (10). Singular used, but actually many (cf 2:6, 12). Yes, God will preserve His people but don't allow errors to spread unchecked. There will be those who are going to be judged for it. **Read v10.** Those who trouble the church will bear God's judgement. Don't aspire to be teachers in the wrong way. All of us should aspire to be teachers of the word in some ways. At the home in in the home, we must be teachers of our children. You must be the head of the family. Lead the family in family worship and therefore you have to open the Bible. You have to lead

in the Bible reading. But don't aspire to be teachers in the wrong way. This often arises from the attitude of the heart. If you want to be somebody, if you want to be somebody, and if you want to be influential and have a following, if you are seeking only your own glory instead of the glory of God. You are such a one being warned against in **James 3:1**, "let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment." But do not be too quick to teach as you will receive a stricter judgement. Be very careful. There must be more teachers of the truth. But we don't want people who think too highly of themselves, who just want popularity, who are seeking their own glory. We don't want that and here. The false teachers are warned, "whoever troubles you shall bear the judgment, whoever he is". When you mishandle God's word, when you pervert the truth, you harm the faith of believers, and you hinder the work of the gospel, you will be severely judged by God.

- The hurt sustained by true teachers (11-12). Three things may be said, exemplified in Paul:
  - I. He will be persecuted for teaching & obeying the truth. All true believers will be persecuted, those committed to follow truth (John 15:20; 2 Tim. 3:12).

Paul is saying that if he one still needs to keep to the law of circumcision, then why does he still need to suffer persecution? Christ has already fulfilled the law, so if you are going back to the law, is his suffering therefore in vain? Paul is persecuted for his teaching and for obeying the truth. All true believers will be persecuted, those committed to follow truth (John 15:20; **2 Tim. 3:12**). Just because you believe in the truth and you want to put it into practice, you will suffer persecution. What more if you are a teacher of the word.

- II. He will preach the gospel, whatever the cost. There is such a thing as "the offense of the cross". Message itself offensive. Risks in preaching.

Paul then implies that He will preach the gospel, whatever the cost. There is such a thing as "the offense of the cross". The gospel message itself offensive. When you preach the cross, when you preach the death of Christ. When you preach that the son of God laid down his life on the cross to save sinners. People will get offended. They will laugh. They will ridicule you. And in some cases, they will persecute you.

People don't like to hear that they need to turn from their sins and trust in Christ alone for their salvation. What would have happened to us if not for Martin Luther preaching, despite the fact that his life was in danger, despite the fact that he was being hounded throughout the whole Roman empire. Often it is that fear cripples us. When we do outreach, do we fear? We need to proclaim the truth. We must not be fearful.

- III. He will be provoked in spirit, being concerned for God's people (3:1; 4:19), deep concern for the churches (2 Cor. 11:28), anger at sin, ungodliness, sufferings. Paul says false teachers who advocate circumcision might as well castrate themselves as pagan priest did. Our spirit will be provoked, and that is the third thing that happens to the apostle Paul. He tells us "I would wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off". Here Paul is saying that those Judaizers who are perverting the gospel might as well castrate themselves off. If they want to rely on the gospel, they might as well be like the pagans who castrate themselves thinking that by living a celibate life they are therefore more holy. Paul shows his deep concern for God's people and the church in Galatia. He was showed forth his anger towards those who twist the gospel. Faithfulness to God requires that we teach the truth & warns against error.

## Summary & Application

- **Avoid false teaching. Defend the truth. Expose & warn against errors. Support such preachers.** How does this passage apply to us today? You must avoid false teaching. And in order to avoid false teaching, you have to know the true teaching and when you know the true teaching, you must defend the truth from error. You must expose and warn against errors. Is anyone here caught up in error of one kind or another? Have been influenced by your friends? Have read this book and that book? Know the truth. Study scripture.
- **Anyone caught up in error? Who hasn't come to Christ? Repent! Justification is by faith alone.** There are those whom God has been speaking. We live in a world that is plagued by sin. We know that error is spreading everywhere. The devil is attacking us. No wonder all this while, I've been tossed around. From today's message, I understand better. And now I make up my mind. There is safety only in Jesus Christ, the "Rock of Ages cleft for me, Let Me Hide Myself In Thee, To him alone I will flee". I will not go to any other but to Jesus Christ. We thank God that you are brought here. How painful it has been serving the Lord, how difficult it has been living a faithful life for the Lord. Thank God that you have brought here. Thank God you're such an encouragement. May God lead you safely home today. May you come to Jesus Christ and cling to him and trust in him and him alone for your acceptance before God. May God deal mercifully with us all.