

Galatians, Part I
Pr. Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts (Buls):

Chapters 1-2: Paul's qualifications
Chapters 3-4: The true Gospel vs. the Judaistic heresy
Chapters 5-6: Practical application

II. Another Outline Suggests (TOB):

Chapters 1-2: The Gospel of Grace Defended
Chapters 3-4: The Gospel of Grace Explained
Chapters 5-6: The Gospel of Grace Applied

III. Romans, Galatians, and James can be summarized thus (Buls):

- A. Faith alone justifies but faith is never alone.
- B. These three epistles differ in thrust:
 - 1. Romans tells us how a man is saved.
 - 2. Galatians tells us that a man is saved by faith alone.
 - 3. James tells us that faith is never alone.

IV. General Introduction (CSSB):

A. God's Grace in Galatians:

God's grace cannot be compromised. Law and gospel cannot be mingled. That is the situation that Paul encounters in Galatians. Some very sincere Jewish Christians from Judea were troubling newly founded churches by insisting that the Gentile members submit to circumcision and other aspects of the ceremonial law, for in their view faith in the gospel was not sufficient -- observance of the ceremonial law must be added.

Paul immediately and emotionally counteracts the claims of these Judaizers by sending a scorching letter, although he no doubt was aware that this specific item would soon be discussed by the council at Jerusalem. He bluntly supposes a hypothetical situation: "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (1:8) and later asserts: "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!" (2:21) False doctrine which affects God's grace, in Paul's judgment, must be "nipped in the bud."

B. Date and Destination (CSSB):

The date of Galatians depends to a great extent on the destination of the letter. There are two main views:

- 1. *The North Galatian theory.* This older view holds that the letter was addressed to churches located in north-central Asia Minor (Pessinus,

Ancyra and Tavium), where the Gauls had settled when they invaded the area in the third century B.C. It is held that Paul visited this area on his second missionary journey, though Acts contains no reference to such a visit. Galatians, it is maintained, was written between A.D. 53 and 57 from Ephesus or Macedonia.

2. *The South Galatian theory.* According to this view, Galatians was written to churches in the southern area of the Roman province of Galatia (Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe) that Paul had founded on his first missionary journey. Some believe that Galatians was written from Syrian Antioch in 48-49 after Paul's first journey and before the Jerusalem council meeting (Ac 15). Others say that Galatians was written in Syrian Antioch or Corinth between 51 and 53.

C. Occasion and Purpose (CSSB):

Judaizers were Jewish Christians who believed, among other things, that a number of the ceremonial practices of the OT were still binding on the NT church. Following Paul's successful campaign in Galatia, they insisted that Gentile converts to Christianity abide by certain OT rites, especially circumcision. They may have been motivated by a desire to avoid the persecution of Zealot Jews who objected to their fraternizing with Gentiles (see 6:12). The Judaizers argued that Paul was not an authentic apostle and that out of a desire to make the message more appealing to Gentiles he had removed from the gospel certain legal requirements.

Paul responded by clearly establishing his apostolic authority and thereby substantiating the gospel he preached. By introducing additional requirements for justification (e.g. works of the law) his adversaries had perverted the gospel of grace and, unless prevented, would bring Paul's converts into the bondage of legalism. It is by grace through faith alone that man is justified, and it is by faith alone that he is to live out his new life in the freedom of the Spirit.

V. Chapter One Detailed Outline (Buls):

- 1: 1-5: Greeting and theme
- 6-9: Danger of succumbing to a false Gospel
- 10-12: Paul is not a slave of men
- 13-24: The account of Paul's life about not receiving the Gospel from men or Apostles.

VI. Today's Section, 1-5, The Salutation (Buls); Introduction (GWN); Address, blessing, ascription of glory to God (Nicoll); The Greeting (Lenski):

A. NIV: **"Paul, an apostle -- sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead -- 2 and all the brothers with me, To the churches in Galatia: 3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."**

B. NASB: **"Paul, an apostle (not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who**

raised Him from the dead), 2 and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen."

C. GWN: "Paul, an apostle (not sent from men or by any man but by Jesus Christ and by God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), 2 and all the Christians [literally, brothers] who are with me, to the churches in Galatia -- 3 grace [God's undeserved love] and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins so that He might deliver us from this present wicked world according to the will of our God and Father. 5 To Him be glory forever and ever! Amen.

VII. Detailed Study (Nicoll, Lenski, Bultmann, Luther and my own commentary):

- A. Vs. 1: "Paul, an apostle (not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),"
1. Galatian converts had been told by false teachers that Paul was an inferior apostle, not on par with Peter, James and John.
 2. Thus, Paul desires to establish what *kind* of apostle he is.
 3. "men" and "man" Nicoll says that "men" refers to the attack that Paul's commission came from the only one congregation and suspect at that (Antioch); and "man" is a reference to the agency of Ananias [others say Barnabas, point being through some human intermediary], who had been deputed to lay his hands upon him at Damascus. *Maybe.*
 4. It's hard for us to know the specific meaning here, however, the general point is clear: Men did not send and commission him. He is not the ambassador or representative of men. What he utters is not the word and wisdom of men. The authority back of him and his message is not human.
 5. Instead, from where did his apostleship come?
 6. It came to him only through *dia* (through, indicating medium) Jesus Christ and God the Father.
 7. "By means of Jesus Christ" refers to Acts 26:16-18, Paul's original commissioning. [please read]
 8. The *kai* (and) put Father and Son on the same level.
 9. Thus, immediately in this very first first, the _____ of Christ is brought out.
 10. *Theos Pater "God Father" is a unit name exactly like "Jesus Christ"...but wasn't Paul commissioned in Antioch by the Spirit? (Acts 13:2,4)...this shows the indivisible aspect of The Holy Trinity.*
 11. Furthermore, what primary doctrine on Christ is immediately brought out at verse 1?
 12. This too, assures everyone of Paul's of his genuine apostolic commissioning; Christ made Paul a witness of his resurrection and his glory equal to that of the others...and it was the Father who raised Christ [though the Scriptures

also teach that Christ raised Himself and that the Spirit raised Christ], however, the point here is that The Father was also active in Paul's call.

13. Bultmann reminds that sooner or later every faithful preacher of the Word is attacked as an inferior preacher.
14. This verse also establishes that it is God who calls men into the ministry (today He calls all of us into the ministry through a mediated call, that is, one that comes through means, namely through men).
15. Luther rightly saw the article of justification in this first verse: "His (Paul's) purpose in this epistle is to discuss and to defend the righteousness that comes by faith, and to refute the Law and the righteousness that comes by works."

B. Vs. 2: "and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia."

1. These brethren are not identified. See Phil. 4:21 for same kind of phrase. This denotes other Christians. These are not in Paul's company, but he speaks of these brethren in the sense of supporting him, backing him up.
2. Luther: "I add all the brethren -- even though I do not have to -- who are not apostles, but comrades in arms. They are writing this epistle as well as I, and they are bearing witness with me that my doctrine is true and divine."
3. This greeting is sharp. There are no modifications to "To the churches of Galatia." No warm fuzzies. Lenski: "His displeasure is due to the treatment the Galatians had begun to bestow upon the Lord who had commissioned him and upon the gospel which formed the burden of his commission."
4. Most authorities today hold that south Galatian congregations are meant and this is the most plausible view. Note that this letter does not go directly to one congregation or city; it is sometimes referred to as "circular" in that it made rounds to several congregations in the region of Galatia.

C. Vs. 3: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

1. *charis and eirene* ("eiraynay") = grace and peace. Grace is God's unconditioned good will towards mankind which is decisively expressed in the saving work of Christ; peace is the state of life -- peace with God (read Rom. 5:1) and peace with one another (read Eph. 2:14-18) -- enjoyed by those who have effectively experienced the divine grace (5:22; 6:16) [Bruce].
2. By the way, the words must be in this order...why?
3. Luther: "For if we lose the doctrine of justification, we lose everything."
4. God can be approached only through Christ Jesus...Luther: "doesn't begin at the top, but at the bottom..." what did Luther mean?
5. We cannot call God "Our Father" [as we do in the Lord's prayer, unless we approach Him through Jesus Christ]. Consider implications here of those who "meditate" and "pray" without knowing Jesus Christ.

D. Vs. 4: "who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present

evil age, according to the will of our God and Father."

1. Active, aorist of *didomi*, and reflexive pronoun to make it abundantly clear that Jesus gave Himself _____.
2. Read 1 Tim. 2:6. What is the greatest gift from God to us?
3. Luther: Learn carefully to discern this "our"...what is Luther getting at?
4. This is the only place in which Paul uses a form of *exaireomai*. Rescue!
5. "Present" and "evil" not material world, but note that he calls it *poneros* which denotes active evil. Read Eph. 2:1-3, Acts 2:40, Eph. 5:16 and 1 John 5:19.
6. Luther: "for when it is at its best, then it is at its worst."
7. Luther: "Satan, you cantankerous saint, why do you try to make me feel holy and look for righteousness in myself, when in fact there is nothing in me but sins..."
8. Luther: "In fact, when you say that I am a sinner, you provide me with armor and weapons against yourself, so that I may slit your throat with your own sword and trample you underfoot. You yourself are preaching the glory of God to me; for you are reminding me...of the fatherly love of God..." How's that?

E. Vs. 5: "to whom be glory forevermore. Amen"

1. *doxa* in the sense of "credit"
2. What does Soli Deo Gloria mean?
3. Synergism is out!
4. "Amen" = "Verily, it is so."

Galatians, Part II
Rev. Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. Chapter One Detailed Outline:

1:	1-5:	Greeting and theme
	6-9:	Danger of succumbing to a false Gospel
	10-12:	Paul is not a slave of men
	13-24:	The account of Paul's life about not receiving the Gospel from men or Apostles.

III. Question from Part I:

In regards to vs. 3, *"Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."* at VII. C. 5 on the outline I wrote, "We cannot call God "Our Father" [as we do in the Lord's prayer, unless we approach Him through Jesus Christ]. Consider implications here of those who "meditate" and "pray" without knowing Jesus Christ."

In my commentary to this point I basically said that if one does not know the Father through Christ, then the person who "prays" is not praying to the true God.

Afterwards, I received an excellent question. First of all, let's consider some Bible passages:

1 Chronicles 28:9: *"And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with whole-hearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever."*

Psalms 34:10: *"The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing."*

Proverbs 8:17: *"I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me."*

Acts 17:27: *"God did this [gave life to all men, etc.] so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him though he is not far from each one of us."*

Hebrews 11:6: *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."*

Now the question was essentially, "What if someone is *seeking* God, but does not yet know Him as "Father" or know Christ as Lord, aren't their prayers received by the True God?"

How would you answer this question?

Consider these questions as well:

1. What is prayer a function or expression of? (see connection in Matt. 21:22)
2. In all of the above passages on seeking, is there anything presupposed?

3. How is God found?

4. What do you think of the scenario that after crusades or what have you, unbelievers will be led to “pray with” a leader and ask Christ into their hearts/to be converted?

Thus, anyone who seeks God has been _____ by God. Their ability to articulate Christian doctrine is not prerequisite. However, anyone not _____ by God, cannot have _____ (which is God’s gift to His children) and therefore cannot truly pray to God.

IV. vss. 6-9: Danger of Succumbing to a False Gospel:

NASB

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

NIV

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel --

GWN

6 I am surprised that you are so quickly leaving Him who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to another kind of gospel,

1. How does St. Paul feel and why?

2. Is the verb for “deserting” or “leaving” in the middle or passive voice? The word is translated in Greek from an apparent passive voice, as in “you are so quickly being transferred.” Luther preferred the passive. “You are removed.” As in the Galatians were duped, they were deceived, they were turned, etc. It happened to them. Others argue for a middle voice...that they knew what they were doing. To go with the apparent passive does seem to make sense. Remember that the Bible is warning us of the spiritual battle (Eph. 6) and our adversary the devil (1 Peter 5:8) who prowls around like a roaring lion seeking to devour us. Unbelief/falling from grace “can happen to us” (we can get devoured). This is not to make us paranoid, but for the Christian it does lead us to be thankful for the divine activity which stirs us to be diligent in Word and Sacrament...for another description of our action in grace read I Cor. 10:12. Perhaps this is why we receive the admonition:

Phil. 2:12: “Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed -- not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence -- continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,” BUT DON’T FORGET THE NEXT VERSE!!!

“FOR IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN YOU TO WILL AND TO ACT ACCORDING TO HIS GOOD PURPOSE.” (VS. 13)

3. Summary: the Galatians have been deceived. they were caused to fall from the grace of God in Christ by evil forces especially expressed via a false Gospel. But appreciate the connection in the those forces against them, spiritual yes, but definitely expressed in the here and now, namely, false doctrine!

4. But we’re not finished with vs. 6! The verb for “call” is used, that is the word *kaleo*. Here the Reformed make use of a distinction:

1. vocatio interna vs.

2. vocatio externa

They use these concepts to flesh out their doctrines of irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints.

That is, to the Reformed this “call” to the Galatians wasn’t a REAL call, but only an external call. If they had been REAL believers, then they would not have fallen, because true believers who receive an internal call/a genuine call leading to salvation cannot fall.

However, we totally reject this distinction. If God calls you by the grace of Christ, it is a true call/an effective call/a genuine call leading to salvation. We are challenged by such pragmatic questions as “How many times can a person fall in and out of grace.” We can’t give numbers, but the short answer is, “We should not try to find out!” However, the call of God is sure and certain as it is attached to the grace of Christ in the Gospel!

5. Finally, what of this “different gospel,” (NASB and NIV) or “another kind of gospel” (GWN)?

We’ll discuss more below, but we can appreciate this quotation from Luther:

“In the spiritual area, where Satan emerges not black but white, in the guise of an angel or even of God Himself, there he puts himself forward with very sly pretense and amazing tricks. He peddles his deadly poison as the doctrine of grace, the Word of God, and the Gospel of Christ. This is why Paul calls the doctrine of the false apostles and ministers of Satan a ‘gospel,’ saying, ‘to a different gospel.’ But he is speaking ironically, as though he were saying: ‘Now you Galatians have different evangelists and a different gospel. You despise my Gospel now, and it has lost your respect.’...Therefore let us learn that this is one of the devil’s specialties: If he cannot do his damage by persecuting and destroying, he will do it under the guise of correcting and edifying.”

V. Verse 7:

NASB	NIV	GWN
which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ.	which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.	which is really not “gospel” [“good news”] at all. Rather, there are some men who are troubling you by wanting to change the Gospel [Good News] of Christ.

1. 7a explains 6b. There really is no other Gospel.

2. the word *tarassontes* translated as “are disturbing you,” “are throwing you,” and “are troubling you,” is an intense verb. Might also be translated as throwing you upside down, it is violent, it is saying that you’ve really been messed up (as my son would say). If you lose the Gospel, your life goes upside down!

3. Then there is the term *thelontes*, which is translated as “want to,” “trying to,” “wanting to,” means that men cannot really do what to the true Gospel????

VI. Verse 8:

NASB	NIV	GWN
But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that	But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to	But even if we or an angel from heaven would preach any other gospel than the one we preached,

which we have preached you, let him be eternally a curse be on him!
to you, let him be accursed. condemned!

1. Vs. 9 will not be listed as it repeats the thought of vs. 8, which means that we need to heed this last section all the more!!!!

2. Or course the proposition seems unthinkable! How could an angel from heaven do something like this?!

3. This is presented however to show how vital it is to know that the Gospel can never, ever (under any circumstances) be modified, changed, adjusted, etc. The Gospel never dare differ from the Word of God.

4. The phrase *par' ho*, means either “contrary to” or “along side of,” the second choice seems more subtle, but would make sense in terms of that which is false is often deliberately couched in what appears to be true. Think of the several cults which use the “trappings” of truth in their presentations!

5. *anathema esto* is in both vs. 8 and vs. 9. In the Latin, Council of Trent constantly used *anathema sit*. Is Paul actually pronouncing God’s curse on such a person? YES!!!!!! Because a person who is preaching a false Gospel is leading others to _____. We must condemn such teaching!

6. But does that seem “Christian” to you? I sure hope it does.

Galatians, Part III
Pr. Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. Chapter One Detailed Outline:

1:	1-5:	Greeting and theme
	6-9:	Danger of succumbing to a false Gospel
	10-12:	Paul is not a slave of men
	13-24:	The account of Paul's life about not receiving the Gospel from men or Apostles

III. vs. 10:

NASB	NIV	GWN
For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.	Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.	Do I say this now to win the approval of men -- or the approval of men -- or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a slave of Christ.

1. Paul asks two rhetorical questions. In order to know what the expected answers are, we must go into the background of this text again. Recall what is going on. The Galatians have been deceived; they are now hold Paul's ministry under question. Thus, with this context, how would Paul expect the questions to be answered?

2. Question #1: Am I seeking/trying for the approval/favor of men or of God? From the Galatians standpoint (in their present spiritual condition), their answer would have been, "You're trying to please MEN!" Why? What makes Paul's Gospel "pleasing," or too easy, or too conviant, or too good to be true, or catering to men, trying to please men...(you get the picture). This is quite fascinating. We might be tempted to think that less work or no work (grace alone) would be that which is truly pleasing to man ("I don't have to do anything!"), but this is not the religion human nature takes pride in...the flesh takes pride in a religion which gets to do. The Galatians have been deceived, they question Paul's preaching of grace alone, and suspect that Paul desires only to please men through an easy gospel.

3. Question #2: "Am I trying to please men?" Paul expects that their thought is "Yes! That is what you doing with this Gospel of grace-alone." The Judiazers were not trying to please men, they were keeping the strict Law. The Law is like a magnet to the flesh. Keep in mind that our human nature apart from Christ is very, very religious. It has a religion, it is the religion of works. The religion of works feeds the flesh, it leads us to feel good about accomplishment, our ability, our willingness...it gives us reason to boast, to say "look at me," it is a very attractive religion. The religion of grace-alone, however, does not allow us any self glory, it robs us of being able to take any credit, it suggests that I couldn't make it myself, that I needed someone else.

4. But Paul begins to make plain what is going on here. His Gospel, the true Gospel is in a class by itself. Throughout this verse, Paul has been making a contrast been "God" and "men." And again here at the conclusion of this verse, he makes a distinction between men and Christ. As opposed to

striving to please men, He is a *doulos* (*servant-slave*) of Christ. This clearly implies that Christ is not a mere _____, but that He is _____. Once again, Paul teaches Christ's divinity and furthermore, a Gospel which is not based on man's reason, but God's revelation. Paul's Gospel is the Christ Gospel; it is God's Gospel, it is beyond all human expectation or reason.

5. Notice the variants above describing Paul's relationship to Christ. Paul is a servant, a bond-servant, and a slave. To be a slave of Christ means to have no will of one's own. As servants of God, God's will becomes our will. Our will is cast aside. This point cannot be elaborated on enough. This is the greatest reason for so many of life's struggles...the resistance and struggle against and denial of God's will. Of course, this is all the flesh does on a constant basis, but keep in mind that as a child of God, He has created you anew with a heart, soul and mind which considers God's will your will. Thus we pray in the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done..."

IV. vs. 11:

NASB

For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

NIV

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up.

GWN

I want you to know, fellow Christians, that the Gospel I preached is not a human message,

1. *gnorizo* "I declare to you," is emphatic. It is really, really important that you get this! And in the process of saying this Paul -- for the first time -- calls them *adelphoi* which means "brothers" (a Greek expression here by the way which covers both men and women, that's why we don't read "brothers and sisters"). But the point is that this is a way of referring to _____. Let that soak in for a second. The Galatians have been deceived, Paul is very upset, and yet, Paul still considers himself as speaking to Christians. How can we understand this seeming contradiction (why is it really not a contradiction)?

2. "not according to man/not something man made up/not a human message": Luther: "When Paul says that his Gospel is 'not man's' he does not mean that his Gospel is not human; for that is self-evident, and the false apostles, too, bragged that their doctrine was not human but divine." But the true Gospel -- not being simply a claim that it comes from God -- is the only Gospel for humans to save all humanity (and was accomplished by the greatest human, the God-man, Jesus Christ).

V. vs. 12:

NASB

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

NIV

I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

GWN

for I did not receive it from a man nor was I taught it; rather, Jesus Christ revealed it to me.

1. Acts 9 describes Paul's reception of the Gospel by Christ. Later again in Acts 22. Let's read of Paul's reception of Christ's revelation at Acts 9:1-19 and Acts 22:1-21.

2. Some say that the details of the Gospel were taught to Paul later (e.g. F.F. Bruce), but the Scriptures do not say this. And while what we do have recorded does not record a word-for-word presentation to Paul from the Lord, we have vs. 18 which suggests that Paul had ample time with the Lord. The point is that the Holy Spirit makes it plain here at vs. 12 that Paul received the Gospel from Christ Himself.

3. Luther: "The question of justification is an elusive thing -- not in itself, for in itself it is firm and sure, but so far as we are concerned. I myself have had considerable experience of this, for I know how I sometimes struggle in the hours of darkness. I know how often I suddenly lose sight of the rays of the Gospel and of grace, which have been obscured for me by thick, dark clouds. In other words, I know how slippery the footing is even for those who are mature and seem to be firmly established in matters of faith. We have an understanding of this, because we are able to teach it; and this is a sure sign that we have it, for no one is able to teach others what he himself does not know."

VI. Begin 13-24 with 13-14. vs. 13:

NASB

For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it.

NIV

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.

GWN

You have heard what I used to do when I still lived according to the Jewish religion, how violently I persecuted God's church and tried to destroy it.

VII. vs. 14:

NASB

and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

NIV

I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

GWN

and how I advanced in the Jewish religion beyond many who were my contemporaries among my people -- so extremely zealous I had become for the traditions of my ancestors.

1. Notice the radical turning point described by Paul as a result of what God did in his life! How would you describe the "before and after."
2. But take careful note, this "before" life which Paul is describing is the life under the system of works righteousness. Paul paints a picture of what kind of reaction this false life has towards the Gospel...it seeks to destroy it. The flesh, the world and the devil hate the Gospel.
3. His former religion was not the pure religion of the O.T., but Paul had been in line with the man-made religion of the Judaizers (as he was a Pharisee). His religion was that of salvation by merit and works. Read Philippians 3:5-11.
4. The traditions of vs. 14 are the traditions of men, not *the* tradition of God (2 Thess. 2:15). (same basic word, but very different meaning).

Galatians, Part IV
Pastor Espinosa

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II. Chapter One Detailed Outline:

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III. vs. 15-17:

NASB

But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.

NIV

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.

GWN

But when God (who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace) was pleased 16 to show me His Son so that I would proclaim Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately talk it over with any human being, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before me. Rather, I went to Arabia and then came back to Damascus.

1. Note the grace orientation of vs. 15. How was St. Paul "set apart;" how was St. Paul "called"? Answer: "through [God's] grace/by [God's] grace". By the way, notice how NASB and NIV both use the translation "set apart," but that the GWN uses "separated" (and in a footnote offers "appointed"). This is an important word, in the original is *aphorizo*. Kittel: "*This compound means 'to separate,' 'to sever.'*" *It is used in the NT for the divine separation for service (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:15) which goes hand in hand with divine calling. By divine commission the Son of Man will separate the good and the bad (Mt. 25:32; cf. the angels in 13:49). Believers, then, must already separate themselves as a people of salvation (2 Cor. 6:17; cf. Is. 52:11).** *The Holy Spirit demands separation for special tasks (Acts 13:2). In Acts 19:9 Paul and his followers separate themselves from the synagogue, but Peter wrongly reverses the process by separating himself from Gentile believers (Gal. 2:12). The world for its part retaliates by excluding and reviling the followers of Christ (Lk. 6:22). In the OT separation for God and the separation of the unclean (e.g., lepers) are important models for NT separation for service or separation from the world."* (p. 728)

* 2 Cor. 6:17: "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

Isaiah 52:11: "Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the vessels of the Lord."

2. This is the effective call of the Gospel. This is what the Gospel does. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Good News of God reconciling the world to Himself through His Son's sacrificial life and death and justifying resurrection applied to sinners, is that sinners are separated, appointed and severed from life apart from God to God's service. This does not mean we enter monasteries, but that God Himself creates a separation while putting us in new relationship with Him and the world.

3. But notice *when* this took place????? When? Now, soak in the monergistic implication!!! If Paul was set apart before he was even born, then what did Paul contribute to this call and separation???? Luther: "All this God had predestined even before I was born, when I could not think, wish, or do anything good but was a shapeless embryo. Therefore this gift came to me by the mere predestination and merciful grace of God before I was born." No room for synergism here!

4. vs. 16 "His Son" is divine title. Jesus is God. Again, He's not the "Jesus" of the higher critics presented in ABC's "In Search of Jesus" last week. He is not a "political figure," but the very Son of God, God made flesh.

5. Both NASB and NIV translate the Greek as it is typically translated, "in me." However, we ought not make this weird and mysterious. The simple point is that Paul received God's revelation. This (en emoi or "in me") is a simple "dative." (a case for Greek nouns) which is used to express the person(s) for whom (i.e. for whose benefit) something is done. In this case, the GWN keeps it simple this way, "to show me." Paul is saying that God revealed Christ to him. However, even the strict translation "in me," appreciates that the revelation was actually and personally received, and by the power of the Holy Spirit it was now in Paul's heart, soul and mind, not dissimilar from the fact that Christ has created faith in you.

6. This though is followed by a purpose clause (the little word *hina* (translated as "that," as in "that I would preach...") is the signal in Greek for the purpose being made known. Why did God do all of this for/to Paul [please answer].

7. We can pause here for a moment and appreciate how the Great Commission is intuitively of the Gospel (that is for salvation for *all...*"all nations," "all *ethnos*"). The legalists (Judaizers) insisted on what once marked a particular people, but now the mark of the true Apostle of God is that Paul is going to those once considered to be outsiders (they don't have to be circumcised). The Gospel breaks down barriers. The Judaizers wanted to create barriers.

8. vs. 17. This provides a strong case for saying that Paul's revelation (all His teaching which equipped him for apostleship) was from God. He didn't go to the other apostles for consultation, but went to a far away place for three years. We do not know exactly where this "Arabia" is and we do not know from Scripture exactly what Paul did during this time. However, upon returning he is evidently fully equipped as an apostle. The only difference between Paul and the other apostles is that the others were apostles for a little longer than he.

IV: vs. 18-24:

NASB

Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. 19 But I did not see any the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. 20

NIV

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 of other apostles -- only James, the Lord's brother. 20 I assure you before God

GWN

Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter, and I stayed with him fifteen days. 19 But I did not see any of the other apostles, except James the Lord's brother. 20 (And I declare before

(Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)
21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.
22 And I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; 23 but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy."
24 And they were glorifying God because of me.

that what I am writing 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.

God that I am not lying in what I am writing.) 21 Then I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22 The churches of Christ in Judea were not acquainted with me personally. 23 The only thing they continued to hear was this: "The man who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith that he once tried to destroy," 24 and they praised God for what had happened to me.

1. Here at verse 18, and at 21 and then finally 2:1, we have these three (3) "Then's". Paul is singling out three big highlights in regards to his contact with the Jerusalem church. They are the following:

vs. 18: He first goes to Jerusalem to become acquainted with the great apostle Peter (note that "Cephas" is Aramaic for "Peter")

Isn't it fascinating that these two great apostles did not even begin to get to know each other for over three years?!

vs. 21: Here, Paul travels the areas surrounding Jerusalem, including regions North of Jerusalem (Syria and Cilicia) and the major region around and South of Jerusalem (Judea).

2:1: Then 14 years later, he returns to Jerusalem.

2. As for his first contact, there is fair consensus that it corresponds to the account in Acts 9:26-30: *"When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord has spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus."* (note: this is consistent with the above geography as Caesarea is in the region of Judea and Tarsus is actually between Syria and Cilicia).

3. How would you describe Paul's experience in Jerusalem and her surrounding area? What strikes you about the description of his travels there?

4. Now the whole point of this section is this: The Galatians doubted Paul's apostolic authority. Accusations had been perpetuated: Paul got his Gospel second-hand, not directly from the Lord, but he learned it from the other apostles. So what does Paul do for the Galatians? He retraces his steps. Fact is is that Paul was not taught by any of the apostles. Some want to say that Paul's 15 days with Peter was for "teaching," but where does the text say this? It doesn't. In fact, the previous verses militate against this claim. Paul went to "see" Peter, to get to know him, not to go to seminary under him! And besides that, Paul say no apostles.

5. Now of course vs. 19 is interesting. Who is James? Paul says it is James, "the Lord's brother."

Problem is is that the Lord's brother was not among the original 12 (there were two James's, but neither of them were the Lord's brother). However, he is still mentioned in the same breath here because he is an important leader. This is James, the bishop of the church in Jerusalem, he is a mighty servant of God, a devout disciple and in concord with the apostolic ministry. Paul meeting him is significant, so he mentions it.

6. vs. 20. Is Paul breaking what the Lord taught at Matthew 5:33-36? Why or why not? He is not. This is the Scriptural way of indicating an oath. Pastors take oaths, other public officials take oaths, and Paul is here re-establishing his apostolic ministry for the sake of the Galatians, so for them, he is making an oath.

7. But think about what Paul is going through here. This strong language is used: "I am not lying," because many were rejecting Paul, calling him and his ministry to question, he was under fire...he had to defend his ministry. The Lord's servants are attacked and accused...that is what will happen to His servants in the world.

8. vs. 22: "in Christ": The true nature of faithful churches.

9. vs. 23: What was Paul trying to destroy? "The doctrine," the objective Christian faith, the foundation of eternal life in Christ. Paul was now preaching this faith which he once tried to destroy!

10. vs. 24: As a result of his preaching, *edoxazon*, imperfect of continued action. From DOXA to give glory and to praise (literally, to have a high opinion of). As a result of Paul's preaching and the dramatic change it represented in Paul, people were now praising God and holding a high opinion of God. This is what all workers for Christ ought desire that through their work one thing would result: CHRIST would be glorified, that people would more and more hold the LORD in higher esteem and glorify GOD! This is the point to the preaching ministry. But how much more is this glory given when we witness how the Lord changes lives! So much for the resistance that some would offer: "I could never serve God in this way...just look at my past!" Forget it, the Lord won't buy that excuse...just look at St. Paul!

11. Imagine Paul submitting an application to be your pastor...what kinds of things would you read on his profile?

Galatians, Part V
Pastor Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. Chapter Two Detailed Outline (Buls):

- 2: 1-10: At the second visit in Jerusalem Paul was acknowledged as Apostle to the Gentiles and His Gospel was considered genuine inasmuch as Titus was not compelled to be circumcised.
- 11-14: Paul scolds Peter for hypocrisy. This establishes freedom from Ceremonial Law and shows that Paul is not beneath Peter.
- 15-21: The theme: Not through works of the law but through faith in Christ. And thereby we live the new life in Christ.

III. vss. 1-5:

NASB

Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. 2 And it was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain. 3 But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. 4 But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. 5 But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

NIV

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.

GWN

Then fourteen years later I went up to Jerusalem again, this time with Barnabas, and I also took Titus with me. 2 As a result of a revelation from God, I went up and laid before them the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, that is, I laid it privately before those who were recognized as leaders; I did so because I did not in any way want to be running or to have run in vain. 3 Titus was with me. Although he was a Greek, no one forced him to be circumcised. 4 Also, there were false Christians who had come in secretly. They sneaked in to spy out the freedom that we have in Christ Jesus so that they might make us slaves. 5 But not for a moment did we let them dictate to us, so that you might always have the true Gospel.

1. vs. 2:1: The third major "then" (after 1:18 and 1:21) as Paul gives this important accounting of his apostolic background. Last time, we connected his first Jerusalem visit to Acts 9:26-30, but in

regards to Paul's Jerusalem visit mentioned here, there is some question as to where we connect it to the account in Acts. It may be the same as that mentioned at Acts 11:30 [please read Acts 11:25-30]. That is, this occasion of delivering the gift from Antioch leads to Paul's second Jerusalem visit. The other possibility is that it is in connection to the account recorded in Acts 15:2 [now read Acts 15:1-2].

2. vs. 2:1 continued. CSSB note: "Those who hold that Gal. 2:1-10 refers to the famine visit of 11:27-30; 12:25 argue that since Gal. 2:2 says that the visit mentioned there was occasioned by a revelation, it must refer to Agabus's prediction of the coming famine (11:27-28). Those who believe that Gal. 2:1-10 refers to the Jerusalem council visit of 15:1-22 assert that the famine visit occurred at the time of Herod Agrippa's death in A.D. 44 (11:27-30; 12:25). Thus Saul's conversion, which was 14 years earlier (Gal. 2:1), would have occurred in 30 [A.D.], the probable year of Christ's crucifixion -- which obviously seems too early."

3. vs. 2:1 continued. Here, I would offer the following for connecting Galatians 2 with Acts 15 and not Acts 11.

1. The delivery of the gift from Antioch was an important mission in itself and not necessarily requiring occasion for a prolonged visit.
2. Acts 11 and 12 says that Paul and Barnabas take John Mark [Mark] with them, but Galatians 2 does not mention Mark, but Titus.
3. Acts 15 is concerned with the same theological issue as Galatians 2, that is, God's grace apart from the works of the Law (esp. the Mosaic, ceremonial law).

3b. vs. 2:1 continued. Either way, Paul is traveling with Barnabas ["one who encourages," his given name was Joseph and was a Levite from the island of Cyprus (Acts 4:36)]. He was Paul's companion in his first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-14:28). Titus was a Gentile Christian who served as Paul's delegate to Corinth and later was left in Crete to oversee the church there (Titus 1:5). CSSB, page 1794.

4. vs. 2:1 continued. At any rate, Galatians 2 sets forth a different aspect of Paul's relationship to the other apostles. In chapter 1, Paul makes it clear that Paul has theological independence from the other apostles (1:18-24). Paul did not need them to train him or approve of him for his apostolic ministry to be legitimate. However, here in chapter 2 we see that theological concurrence is important and Paul wants to verify this. That is, all true apostles of Christ teach the same Gospel, serve the same Lord, are of the same body of Christ. Their teaching must concur. The other apostles taught him nothing but agreed with him totally.

5. vs. 2:1 continued. This is a reminder of the importance of our catholicity as a church. Our common confession is crucial. "Confession" from the Greek word which means "one word," a common, single confession of faith. There are not multiple confessions, but one confession, and all faithful pastors will teach and preach this common confession and all faithful disciples will confess and share this common confession. We do not have two or three confessions of the Lord's Supper, or two or three confessions on the person of Christ or salvation, etc., but one. This oneness was important for Paul to put forward here. He and the other apostles were one.

6. vs. 2:2: Luther does not consider Agabus's prophecy about the famine to be the revelation Paul responded to. I agree with Luther as there is nothing in the Galatians text to suggest this. Luther is straight-forward in saying, "But he went because God warned him by a special revelation and commanded him to go." (p. 81) This is consistent with the several examples we have of God's miraculous work in and through the apostles. Recall that the Lord once commanded Abram to leave his home land, in many cases, the Lord directed Paul in special ways (see for example Acts 16:6-7).

7. vs. 2:2 continued: Luther: "This does not mean that Paul was in doubt whether or not he had been, or was, running in vain. For he had been preaching the Gospel for eighteen years now, and the text goes on to say immediately that he had stood firm and sure all this time and had prevailed. It means rather that there were many who supposed that Paul had preached the Gospel for so many years in vain because he had given the Gentiles freedom from the Law. In addition, the idea was continually gaining ground that the Law was necessary for justification. When he went up to Jerusalem by revelation, his purpose was to remedy this condition. This conference was to make it clear to everyone that his Gospel was not contrary in any way to the doctrine of the other apostles, so that in this way he could silence his opponents, who might otherwise be able to say that he was running, or had run, in vain." (p. 83)

8. vs. 2:2 continued. Comment on Paul's use of the figure of speech: "...be running, or had run, in vain." See 1 Cor. 15:58 and Php. 2:16. Why this imagery of labor/service to Christ? Paul will pick-up this imagery again here in Galatians via the word "race." Why is our Christian "walk" described as a "run," a "race"??? Connect your considerations with the theme of Galatians and the problem facing the Jerusalem Christians.

9. vs. 2:3: Paul's meetings in private with the faithful apostles was one thing, the other public meetings were another matter. There were problems met in this other realm. Paul mentions now for the first time "circumcision." This was what the Judaizers were requiring. Paul says that not even Titus -- who because of his Greek background was not circumcised -- was compelled to be circumcised. They were, however, receiving pressure. This was the problem. False brethren were insisting that something had to be added to the Gospel. Now it seems like a simple issue for us when we read Galatians. Here is Paul describing this problem of 2000 years ago. We might think it archaic and no longer an issue. Who argues about circumcision in regards to the Christian faith anymore? However, this is still the fundamental problem facing the church, because the sinful flesh just changes the outward issues:

A. For Paul, it was the outward issue of circumcision, but it was still synergism (to work with God) vs. grace alone.

B. For Luther, it was the outward issue fasting and rituals, but it was still synergism vs. grace alone.

C. For us, it might be the outward issue of charismatic gifts, or...????? (name it), but it is still synergism vs. grace alone.

Bottom line is this question: Is the Law necessary for justification or is it not?

Text yourself (T or F):

1. We are saved by living in the greatest commandment which Christ Himself gave, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind."

2. We are justified by (because of) faith leading us to pray and worship God on a regular basis.

3. We are declared righteous because we perform real deeds of righteousness put forth in God's Word.

10. vs. 2:4: "free" and "freedom" are key words occurring 11 times in Galatians. To know the Gospel of justification by grace through faith in Christ alone apart from works is to be "free" from the bondage of the Law, that anything else is necessary for your salvation in Christ other than the Gospel. However, to live in such freedom is offensive to anyone who claims to be a Christian but who

believes that something else is required. You will threaten their occasion for pride. However, isn't fascinating the terminology used here. They are false "brethren" or "Christians." Why even refer to them this way? Because per public reputation, they were considered Christians. They bore the name and were known as such; they were associated with the Church and attended the public services in God's house. But how we are warned by all of this. Our comfort is never to be in externals, but through faith in Christ alone!

11. 2:4 continued. Didn't these Judaizers have anything better to do than to spy?! Again, the truth threatens anyone who claims the truth but lives a different version of it. You may threaten someone else's security, identify, establishment, etc., thus, it becomes worthwhile for them to spy on you and disrupt your faith.

12. 2:5: Notice the immediate, decisive attitude Paul expresses here. He not give in to them "for a moment." Our faith AND practice must be consistent, otherwise we compromise and enter into hypocrisy. Keep in mind that none of this says that circumcision in itself was/is wrong. It is an adiaphoron. But when it became a requirement in addition to faith and grace, then it became wrong. We apply this principle to all adiaphoron.

Galatians, Part VI
Pastor Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
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- 11-14: Paul scolds Peter for hypocrisy. This establishes freedom from Ceremonial Law and shows that Paul is not beneath Peter.
- 15-21: The theme: Not through works of the law but through faith in Christ. And thereby we live the new life in Christ.

III. vss. 6-10:

NASB

But 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. 7 But 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 effectively worked for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), 9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas

NIV

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 given the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been given the task of preaching the gospel 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

GWN

Also, the respected leaders -- what sort of people they once were really makes no difference to me, since *a person's position in life does not matter to God* -- indeed, these leaders did not teach me anything new. 7 On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with bringing the Gospel to the uncircumcised [Gentiles] as Peter was to bring it to the circumcised [Jews]. 8 For He who had worked in Peter to make him an apostle to the circumcised [Jews] had also worked in me to make me an apostle to the Gentiles. 9 When James, Peter, and John, who were considered pillars, saw what God's

NASB

the right hand of fellowship, that we *might go* to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. 10 *They* only *asked us* to remember the poor -- the very thing I also was eager to do.

NIV

hand of fellowship when they recognized 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 con-

GWN

grace had given me, they gave Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship with the understanding that we would work among the Gentiles and and they among the cir-

tinue to remember the
poor, the very thing I was
eager to do.

cumcised [Jews]. 10 All
they asked was that we
keep remembering the
poor, the very thing which
I was eager to do.

1. vs. 6: Recall that this is a continuation of vss. 1-5; Paul is speaking of his latest visit to Jerusalem (most likely in connection to Acts 15, be it precisely his second or third visit). He is dealing with the Judiazers who were spying on his freedom in Christ and not giving into them even for a moment. His mission is to clarify that nothing is added to the Gospel of grace, not even the Mosaic Law and furthermore, that his fellow apostles would concur with (not approve of) his apostolic ministry and as a result, confirm their catholicity. That those viewing the apostolic ministry in toto would not question the one holy catholic church; that the ministry to the Jews and to the Gentiles through the Gospel of Jesus Christ is one ministry through a united apostolic ministry.

2. vs. 6 continued: Paul does not now desire to show disrespect towards his fellow apostles. On the other hand, he returns to a previous theme. Recall in chapter one when Paul makes it clear that if we (apostles) or an angel from heaven should preach a different Gospel? The point is that Paul will not play the name game with the Judiazers or anyone else (the Judiazers suggested that Paul was inferior to the other apostles). Yes, the original apostles did travel with Christ during the three years of His public ministry; yes, they did hear His sermons and see His miracles; and yes, Paul was converted and called into the apostolic ministry years later. Paul's apostolic ministry, however, was established by Christ Himself. And what is ultimately important -- regardless of the apostle -- is not their name, how others view them, etc., but the ministry entrusted to them and the Gospel of Christ they now proclaim. So Paul says in effect, "Yes, these other apostles are of high reputation -- and I too would acknowledge that -- but so what? All that counts is that the Gospel of God's free grace in Christ is preached apart from observing the law!"

3. vs. 6 continued: The icing on the cake for the point above is this statement: God shows no partiality. The translations are diverse here:

NASB:	"God shows no partiality."
NIV:	"God does not judge by external appearance."
GWN:	"A person's position in life does not matter to God."

* How would you summarize the main point in context of the Paul's defense of the Gospel and apostolic ministry?

* Read I Samuel 16:1-13, esp. vs. 7.

4. vs. 6 continued: Luther is simply exceptional here:

"[God] is not swayed by the office of an apostle, a bishop, or a prince. He does not look at the honor or the authority of men.' As a sign of this, God permitted the apostasy and the damnation of Judas, one of the most important of the apostles, and of Saul, one of the greatest of the kings and the first among them. He rejected both Ishmael and Esau, though both of them were the first-born. Thus you will find throughout the Scriptures that God often rejected the very men who, according to external appearances, were the best and the saintliest. In these instances God sometimes seems cruel, but these dreadful deeds had to be manifested and described. For we are inclined by nature...the innate fault that we show great respect for the position of men and pay more attention to it than to the Word. God, however, wants us to cling and be attached only to the Word itself. He wants us to choose the kernel rather than the shell, to care for the householder more than for the house. He does not want us to admire and adore the apostolate in the persons of Peter and Paul, but the Christ who speaks in them and the Word of God itself that proceeds from their mouth.

It is not given to the secular and unregenerate man to see this, but only to the spiritual man. He alone can distinguish the position from the Word, the divine mask from God Himself and the work of God. Until now we have dealt only with the veiled God, for in this life we cannot deal with God face to face. Now the whole creation is a face or mask of God. But here we need the wisdom that distinguishes God from His mask. The world does not have this wisdom. Therefore it cannot distinguish God from His mask. When a greedy man, who worships his belly, hears that ‘man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God’ (Matt. 4:4), he eats the bread but fails to see God in the bread; for he sees, admires, and adores only the mask. He does the same with gold and with other creatures. He puts his trust in them as long as he has them; but when they forsake him, he despairs.

I am saying this to keep anyone from supposing that Paul simply condemns these external masks or social positions. He does not say that there should not be such social position, but that God shows no partiality to certain positions. There must be masks or social positions; for God has given them, and they are His creatures. The point is that we are not to worship and adore them. The emphasis is not on the things themselves but on our use of them...” (pgs. 94-95)

* Your comments on Dr. Luther’s analysis.

5. vs. 7: The CSSB makes this important observation: “Paul’s ministry was not exclusively to the Gentiles. In fact, he regularly went first to the synagogue when arriving in a new location...He did, however, consider himself to be foremost an apostle to the Gentiles.”

6. vs. 7 continued: Paul is still referring to “they” (those of high reputation) and later he refers to the pillars, James, Peter and John. Evidently, they are important to refer to here because the Judaizers were probably suggesting that these “original” apostles were also teaching circumcision. Perhaps because of their own background not only were they all circumcised, but enjoyed the freedom of the Gospel which allowed for the human tradition (but not out of any requirement of the Gospel, not for legalism). However, the Judaizers had a different understanding. And now they see Paul and his companion Titus who will not be compelled to be circumcised (because the Judaizers were presenting it as requirement). At any rate, in this verse, Paul is treating the two ministries (to the Gentiles and to the Jews) as one and will not allow the suggestion that his ministry is less apostolic. Luther: “This is clear proof that all the apostles had the same calling, the same commission, and the same Gospel.” (p. 102)

7. vs. 8: As Buls says, “Not only did the Apostles concur but God also concurred and energized.”

8. vs. 9: Not difficult to see why these would be considered “pillars,” given their exceptional experiences such as witnessing the transfiguration, etc. These give to Paul and Barnabas “the right hand of fellowship.” As I’ve said many times, “fellowship” is grossly misunderstood, but vs. 9 helps us to keep it straight. When the right hand of fellowship was extended what was recognized? What was connected to this physical gesture? Per this charis “Paul had been fitted out with the powers and capabilities requisite for this office from the same source. Rom. 1:15; 12:3; 15:15; I Cor. 3:10; 15:10a; II Cor. 12:9; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 3:2,7f.; Phil. 1:7.” (BAG)

9. vs. 10: Whether vs. 10 denotes a request or a point of agreement, “remembering” the poor (providing for their needs) is not on the same level as preaching the Gospel. However, it seems here a mark which follows the Gospel. Luther says, “Most of the time they are the only true disciples of the Gospel, as Christ says (Matt. 11:5): ‘The poor have the Gospel preached to them.’” (p. 105)

Galatians, Part VII
Pastor Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. Chapter Two Detailed Outline (Buls):

- 2: 1-10: At the second visit [or later visit] in Jerusalem Paul was acknowledged as Apostle to the Gentiles and His Gospel was considered genuine inasmuch as Titus was not compelled to be circumcised.
- 11-14: Paul scolds Peter for hypocrisy. This establishes freedom from Ceremonial Law and shows that Paul is not beneath Peter.
- 15-21: The theme: Not through works of the law but through faith in Christ. And thereby we live the new life in Christ.

III. vss. 11-14:

NASB

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result the even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward 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?"

NIV

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was 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?"

GWN

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he was completely wrong. 12 He had been eating with the Gentiles before certain persons came from James. But when they came, he drew back and stayed away from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who insisted on circumcision. 13 And the other Jews acted just as hypocritically as he did, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

14 But when I saw that they were not doing what is right according to the truth of the Gospel, I told Peter in front of everyone: "If you, a Jew, do not live like a Jew but like a Gentile, how can you insist that the Gentiles must live like Jews?"

1. vs. 11: Before what is recorded here in Galatians 2:11ff, Acts 10 records Peter (Greek, Cephas) visiting the house of the Gentile Cornelius. This was a major event in the life of St. Peter. Please read Acts 10 and then answer these questions:

What was God telling St. Peter? _____

What contextual clues lead us to this conclusion? _____

Take note of vs. 45 now, how did “the circumcised believers” react? _____

2. vs. 11 continued: Is there any modern-day person or group of people incapable of receiving the grace of God? Might we too be tempted to be astonished by the grace of God reaching anyone in particular?

3. vs. 11 continued: Our background in Acts continues...Now read Acts 11:1-18. We see that Peter actually informed the believers in Jerusalem that God had instructed him not to consider the Gentiles unclean. Peter is now defending the Gentiles!

4. vs. 11 continued: Now, Galatians 2:11-14 follows Acts 10 and 11 chronologically. Antioch -- the leading city in Syria and third leading city of the Roman empire after Rome and Alexandria -- had become Paul's base of departure for his missionary journeys. Acts 11 says that the people there were the first to be called “Christians.” The faith had clearly been established after the thorough ministry of Paul and Barnabas. After this establishment and at least a full year after Peter's initial experience, Peter now comes to Antioch again followed by “men from James,” etc.

5. vs. 11 continued: Paul withstands Peter to his face. This is quite severe because the sin is severe. Peter's action is inexcusable; he knows better. He yields to the pressure of the circumcision party (the Judaizers), and goes against what he knows is right. However, note that Paul's action is immediate. There is no hesitation on his part. Why doesn't Paul apply the steps of Mt. 18:15?

Answer: Because the sin is _____ not _____; public sins require public rebuke. Read 1 Tim. 5:20.

6. vs. 11 continued: However, this is not recorded here for an embarrassing legacy for St. Peter. It is recorded here in Sacred Scripture for us. That we would defend the doctrine of justification and not be afraid of any person or status in doing so. However, this incident is also recorded for our comfort. Luther:

“For it is a great comfort for us to hear that even such great saints sin -- a comfort which those who say that saints cannot sin would take away from us. Samson, David, and many other celebrated men who were full of the Holy Spirit fell into huge sins. Job (3:3ff.) and Jeremiah (20:14) curse the day of their birth; Elijah (1 Kings 19:4) and Jonah (4:8) are tired of life and pray for death...No man has ever fallen so grievously that he could not have stood up again. On the other hand, no one has such a sure footing that he cannot fall. If Peter fell, I, too, may fall; if he stood up again, so can I.”

7. Your comments....

8. vs. 12: Once again, the “circumcision group” is not a rock band, but a reference to the Judaizers we've been discussing all along.

9. vs. 12 continued: Paul is carefully describing Peter's sin for our sake. He is not accusing Peter of malice or ignorance, but of weakness. Peter was afraid of the Jews who had come from James, and fell because of his fear of them. As a result, Peter shows that he is more concerned about the Jews than he is about the Gentiles.

10. vs. 12 continued: As a result of his fear, the public sin develops. Picture yourself as one of the Gentiles. You're standing there with St. Peter, one of the leaders of the church, an apostle. His company and fellowship (unity of confession in Christ) is obviously very important to you. His joining you is symbolic of your reception of the Gospel. Just then, Judiazers arrive. They are on public record as rejecting you because you are not circumcised (since they continue to make it a requirement for true believers to be circumcised as well as believe in the Gospel). Peter who has been a comfort and reassurance to you, however, when he sees them arrive, leaves you and joins them. As the Judiazers avoid you and continue to look down on you and question your faith, the apostle removes himself and joins them. Luther suggests that the Gentiles were also in the process of eating and that by withdrawing, Peter "injected a scruple into the consciences of the faithful." (p. 110)

At any rate, the point is that Peter is now endangering Christian freedom and as a result, the truth of the Gospel. In other words, if the Gospel (our justification) is separate from the food we eat, then there ought to be no restrictions on our freedom to eat food. If our justification is separate from circumcision, then it ought not matter whether or not we're circumcised. We are free to have it or not have it. But by his actions, Peter was giving public notice that certain foods and lack of circumcision was unacceptable. He was looking down on the Gentiles. Thus, from the Gentiles' perspective, what they were doing in their freedom in the Gospel, was being treated as something against the Gospel. Their freedom was called into question, so the Gospel itself was being called into question. If you are not free to eat reptile and be uncircumcised, it must be that the Gospel is not justification by grace through faith in Christ ALONE, but must also be justification + avoid reptile + be circumcised. Freedom and the Gospel go hand in hand. This Peter completely disrupted, his actions were against the Gospel itself!

11. vs. 12 continued: Is there anything we do which might give the impression that our faith is THE GOSPEL + something? What are your thoughts on the issue of Christian freedom in the Gospel? Can this freedom ever be abused?

12. vs. 13: "hypocrisy" used 2x. Means the sin of acting contrary to one's own convictions. It is incredible how easy it is to fall into this sin. Note that even Barnabas was led astray. Again, this is truly humbling. These are great men of faith. Barnabas was a great missionary, strong, strong, strong in the faith, and yet how easy it was for him to follow the hypocrisy. We are taught again to flee to Christ and to the forgiveness of sins.

Question here: How easy is it to act contrary to your convictions?

13. vs. 14: The Jews were quite simply giving the impression that they were more righteous than the Gentiles. The "I'm better than you are" syndrome. The first verb describing the sin in vs. 14 is ortho podeo (you see the English breakdown, "ortho" straight or correct; and "podeo" for walking). They were walking correctly, they were leaving the straight path of the faith. If our practice contradicts our teaching on the Gospel, then we have a problem. Paul shows us something very important: While love bears all things (1 Cor. 13); faith bears nothing. Luther says, "Love yields even in trifles and says: 'I bear everything and yield to everyone.' But faith says: 'I yield to no one; but everything must yield to me -- people, nations, kings, princes, and judges of the earth.'" What does he mean?

Galatians, Part VIII
Pastor Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. Chapter Two Detailed Outline (Buls):

- 2: 1-10: At the second visit [or later visit] in Jerusalem Paul was acknowledged as Apostle to the Gentiles and His Gospel was considered genuine inasmuch as Titus was not compelled to be circumcised.
- 11-14: Paul scolds Peter for hypocrisy. This establishes freedom from Ceremonial Law and shows that Paul is not beneath Peter.
- 15-21: The theme: Not through works of the law but through faith in Christ. And thereby we live the new life in Christ.

III. vss. 15-21:

NASB

We are Jews by nature, and not sinners from among the Gentiles; 16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified. 17 But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! 18 For if I rebuild what I have *once* destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

NIV

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 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.

GWN

Since we were born Jews and not Gentile sinners, 16 we know that a person cannot be justified [declared righteous] by doing what the Law says, but only by believing in Jesus Christ. So we also believed in Jesus Christ in order to be justified [declared righteous] by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law, *because not one person will be justified [declared righteous] by the works of the Law.* 17 Now if we who are seeking to be justified [declared righteous] in Christ are found to be sinners ourselves, has Christ then become one who encourages sin? Never!

NASB

19 For through the Law I died to the Law, that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I

NIV

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

GWN

18 For if I build up again the very things which I have torn down, I make myself a sinner. 19 To be sure, by the Law I died to the Law that I might live to God. I have been

now live in the flesh I live
by faith in the Son of God,
who loved me, and de-
livered Himself up for me.
21 I do not nullify the grace
of God; for if righteousness
comes through the Law,
then Christ died needlessly.

I do not set aside the grace
of God, for if righteousness
could be gained through the
law, Christ died for nothing.

crucified with Christ. 20
So, it is no longer I who
live, but it is Christ who
lives in me. The life I now
live in my body I live by
believing in the Son of God,
who loved me and gave
Himself for me. 21 I do not
reject the grace of God.
For if we could receive
righteousness through
the Law, then Christ died
for nothing.

1. vs. 15: The CSSB says of this major section, vss. 15-21: "Probably a narrative section and not part of Paul's statement to Peter..." So Paul's correction and admonition would conclude at the end of vs. 14: "...*How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?*" It makes sense that Peter would have gotten the point by now! Whether or not the CSSB commentary is correct, we have arrived however, to the theme of Galatians. Paul now goes into his vital teaching on justification.

2. vs. 15 continued: "Jews by nature;" "Jews by birth;" and "born Jews." The point is that Jews were born into the covenant of God. In Genesis 17, we have God's command to Abraham to circumcise every male child on the eighth day [By the way, this is an outstanding point for teaching infant baptism. One of the popular arguments of our time is that infant baptism is wrong because the child "doesn't know what they're doing." The same could be said for the little baby boys being circumcised at 8-days old. So what? The point is that God knew what HE was doing as He applied His Word to them and to us...thanks be to God that baptism is HIS work, not ours! In addition, while the Bible does not give a "recommended age" for baptizing infants, the OT age for circumcision certainly offers a good guide also for baptism]. Getting back to our subject at hand...Paul is not comparing inherent sin between Jew and Gentile. Again, the point is that Jews -- by birth -- had the advantage of God's covenant, His Law, His sacrifices, His circumcision, adoption, promises, etc. etc. The Gentiles did not have these and from the OT vantage point, were therefore decidedly at a disadvantage. *However*, being circumcised even for the Jew was not the reason for righteousness in the time of the OT, neither was having the Law, or having the covenant. Recall that Romans 4:3 makes it clear that even Abraham was not justified by works, but his _____ was credited to him as righteousness.

3. vs. 15 continued: Needless to say, this is a huge ramification for understanding the relationship between the two testaments (covenants). That is to say, they share a common salvation. Christ was also the Savior of the Hebrews of the OT, and also the Gentiles of the OT who came to trust in the righteousness of God. While it is true that progressive revelation exists -- that OT believers would not possess the clarity and knowledge of Christ as you do -- still, they would be declared justified through the gift of faith in the coming Messiah, His prophecies depicting that salvation is by grace through faith alone. At any rate, this is what Paul means here. The Jews had this revelation by nature, while the Gentiles did not (though Paul is not contradicting that the Lord also reached out to Gentiles in the OT), the point is the specified covenants were to the Hebrews, the Israelites.

4. vs. 15 continued: However, Luther anticipates, that there is such a thing as false security: *"Therefore although Peter, Paul, and the other apostles were indeed children of God, righteous according to the Law, and, finally, even ministers of Christ, they were not declared righteous in the sight of God on this account. For if you bind all these together into one bundle -- the Law, its works and righteousness, circumcision, adoption, the covenants, the promises, the apostolate, etc. -- still Christian righteousness does not come through these; for none of these is Christ."*

5. vs. 16: [read] CSSB note: “A key verse in Galatians...Three times it tells us that no one is justified by observing the law, and three times it underscores the indispensable requirement of placing one’s faith in Christ. *by observing the law*. Paul is not depreciating the law itself, for he clearly maintained that God’s law is “holy, righteous and good” (Ro 7:12). He is arguing against an illegitimate use of the OT law that made the observance of that law the grounds of acceptance with God. *justified by faith*. The essence of the gospel message (see Ro 3:20, 28; Php 3:9...). Faith is a gift of God, accomplished by the Holy Spirit through word and sacrament (cf. Eph 2:8-9). Faith is not the cause of our justification, but it is the hand by which we receive and appropriate to ourselves all of the treasures proclaimed in the gospel.” This is a good summary, let us now get into some specifics...

6. vs. 16 continued: First of all, let’s appreciate some corresponding material from God’s Word:
Page 4

1) Romans 3:20: “Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.”

2) Romans 3:24: “and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

7. vs. 16 continued: First of all, there is a very important new word put before us: It is the word *dikaioo*, which is “justified.” It appears eight times in Galatians, and four of them are found here in vss. 16-17. Now we come to something extremely important: This word, “justified,” does not mean that God “makes us” righteous, in the sense that He makes us better people now empowered to live to His standards; or “made able” to live according to His righteousness. This is NOT the meaning of “justified.” Again, this is extremely important to know since oftentimes, this is precisely where our justification and sanctification become mixed and confused...as if to suggest that you ought base your faith, the strength of your faith, the condition of your faith, the value of your faith on “how you’re doing” in your Christian life, your ability to live righteously, according to the new creation. In today’s sermon I go to another aspect of daily renewal not to be forgotten, but this aspect really has nothing to do with the context here in Galatians 2.

8. vs. 16 continued: The word, *dikaioo* is forensic (legal, objective) and denotes a declaration, as a judge would declare a verdict in a court of law. Thus, the context is teaching that we are declared righteous. In this sense are we “justified.”

* This amazing grace teaching seems very simple and yet as simple as it seems, it also seems incredibly hard to grasp. In fact, the mind of the flesh CANNOT grasp it as human nature is insistent that it MUST contribute something to everything. It is too much for the sinful mind and heart to hear that God simply declares us righteous, while we have not even been granted the opportunity to perform, earn, impress, deserve, work for, etc. etc. Thus, as simple as this teaching sounds, may we be aware that our flesh would have us forget it in our daily life; because it does not appeal to our pride and ego.

9. vs. 16 continued: Furthermore, the word *nomos* (law) may mean different things in different contexts. In some cases might have a broad use; in other case a more narrow use. In this context, it is very broad. The whole idea behind “Law” here is any and all law; or any and all ideas of what man can do or perform with the intention of seeking to be justified. In other words, “by law works” means “by human endeavor.” Any and all human endeavors are canceled out when it comes to our being justified by God.

10. vs. 16 continued: This verse also contains what the Formula of Concord refers to as “exclusive particles.” Very important phrases of the Christian faith which in themselves

make clear that being justified has nothing to do with what we do. The two phrases/exclusive particles are the following:

- 1) “through faith in Christ”
- 2) “by faith in Christ”

These by the way, answer the “how” or the manner in which we are saved, not the cause (because of what) or the time (when). Thus, it is absolutely incorrect to say that we are saved “because of” faith. How can that be when faith itself is a gift from God. Above you saw the quotation from CSSB referring to faith as “the hand by which we receive and appropriate to ourselves all of the treasure proclaimed in the gospel.” However -- as we go along with the analogy -- look at your hands, who created them? We cannot even take the credit for grasping something! It is only because God created our hands and enables our hands to grasp that we grasp. Thus, if faith is to be compared to a hand, then we must understand that it is created by God to grasp and does grasp Christ solely by the gift of God. Namely, in this particular case, by the power of the Gospel itself (Rom. 1:16).

11. vs. 16 continued: Anyway, this verse is so huge that Luther devotes 20 pages to it in his 1535 commentary. Here is but one choice quotation. Note: “sophists” = a term denoting philosophers (relying on human wisdom over special revelation).

“[Faith] takes hold of Christ in such a way that Christ is the object of faith, or rather not the object but, so to speak, the One who is present in the faith itself. Thus faith is a sort of knowledge or darkness that nothing can see. Yet the Christ of whom faith takes hold is sitting in this darkness as God sat in the midst of darkness on Sinai and in the temple. Therefore our ‘formal righteousness’ is not a love that informs faith; but it is faith itself, a cloud in our hearts, that is, trust in a thing we do not see, in Christ, who is present especially when He cannot be seen.

Therefore faith justifies because it takes hold of and possesses this treasure, the present Christ. But how He is present -- this is beyond our thought; for there is darkness, as I have said. Where the confidence of the heart is present, therefore, there Christ is present, in that very cloud and faith. This is the formal righteousness on account of which a man is justified; it is not on account of love, as the sophists say. In short, just as the sophists say that love forms and trains faith, so we say that it is Christ who forms and trains faith or who is the form of faith. Therefore the Christ who is grasped by faith and who lives in the heart is the true Christian righteousness, on account of which God counts us righteous and grants us eternal life. Here there is no work of the Law, no love; but there is an entirely different kind of righteousness, a new world above and beyond the Law. For Christ or faith is neither the Law nor the work of the Law.” (pgs. 129-130) (to be continued...AOE)

Galatians, Part 9
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Rev. Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. Chapter Two Detailed Outline Outline (Buls):

- 2: 1-10: At the second visit [or later visit] in Jerusalem Paul was acknowledged as Apostle to the Gentiles and His Gospel was considered genuine inasmuch as Titus was not compelled to be circumcised.**
- 11-14: Paul scolds Peter for hypocrisy. This establishes freedom from Ceremonial Law and shows that Paul is not beneath Peter.**
- 15-21: The theme: Not through works of the laws but through faith in Christ. And thereby we live the new life in Christ.**

III. Conclusion of last week's study (please read vs. 16 again):

- 1. vs. 16 continued: Furthermore, the word *nomos* (law) may mean different things in different contexts. In some cases might have a broad use; in other case a more narrow case. In this context, it is very broad. The whole idea behind "Law" here is any and all law; or any and all ideas of what man can do or perform with the intention of seeking to be justified. In other words, "by law works" means "by human endeavor." Any and all human endeavors are canceled out when it comes to our being justified by God.**
- 2. vs. 16 continued: This verse also contains what the Formula of Concord refers to as "exclusive particles." Very important phrases of the Christian faith, which in themselves make clear that being justified has nothing to do with what we do. The two phrases/exclusive particles are the following:**
 - 1) "through faith in Christ"**
 - 2) "by faith in Christ"**

These by the way, answer the "how" or the manner in which we are saved, not the cause (because of what) or the time (when). Thus, it is absolutely incorrect to say that we are saved "because of" faith. How can that be when faith itself is a gift from God. Last week, we discussed faith as "the hand by which we receive and appropriate to ourselves all of the treasure proclaimed in the gospel." However – as we go along with the analogy – look at your

hands, who created them? We cannot even take the credit for grasping something! It is only because God created our hands and enables our hands to grasp that we grasp. Thus, if faith is to be compared to a hand, then we must understand that it is created by God to grasp and does grasp Christ solely by the gift of God. Namely, in this particular case, by the power of the Gospel itself (Rom. 1:16).

3. vs. 16 continued: Anyway, this verse is so huge that Luther devotes 20 pages to it in his 1535 commentary. Here is but one choice quotation. Note: “sophists” = a term denoting philosophers (relying on human wisdom over special revelation).

“[Faith] takes hold of Christ in such a way that Christ is the object of faith, or rather not the object but, so to speak, the One who is present in the faith itself. Thus faith is a sort of knowledge or darkness that nothing can see. Yet the Christ of whom faith takes hold is setting in this darkness that nothing can see. Yet the Christ of whom faith takes hold is sitting in this darkness as God sat in the midst of darkness on Sinai and in the temple. Therefore our ‘formal righteousness’ is not a love that informs faith; but it is faith itself, a cloud in our hearts, that is, trust in a thing we do not see, in Christ, who is present especially when He cannot be seen.”

“Therefore faith justifies because it takes hold of and possesses this treasure, the present Christ. But how He is present – this is beyond our thought; for there is darkness, as I have said. Where the confidence of the heart is present, therefore, there Christ is present, in that very cloud and faith. This is the formal righteousness on account of which a man is justified; it is not on account of love, as the sophists say. In short, just as the sophists say that love forms and trains faith, so we say that it is Christ who forms and trains faith or who is the form of faith. Therefore the Christ who is grasped by faith and who lives in the heart is the true Christian righteousness, on account of which God counts us righteous and grants us eternal life. Here there is no work of the Law, no love; but there is an entirely different kind of righteousness, a new world above and beyond the Law. For Christ or faith is neither the Law nor the work of the Law.” (pp. 129-130)

IV: vss. 17-21:

NASB

17 But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! 18 For if I rebuild what I have *once* destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. 19 For through the Law I died to the Law, that I might live to God. 20 I

NIV

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 to God.

GWN

17 Now if we who are seeking to be justified [declared righteous] in Christ are found to be sinners ourselves, has Christ then become one who encourages sin? Never! 18 For if I build up again the very things which I have torn down, I make myself a sinner. 19 To be sure, by the Law I Died to the Law that I might

Have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. 21 I do not nullify the grace of God; For if righteousness *comes* Through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.

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.

live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. 20 So, it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in my body I live by believing in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. 21 I do not reject the grace of God. For if we could Receive righteousness through the Law, then Christ died for Nothing.

1. vs. 17 Luther explains this verse: *“Therefore Paul is arguing from the impossible and from a sufficient division. If we who are justified in Christ are still sinners who must be justified otherwise than through Christ, namely, through the Law, then Christ cannot justify us but only accuses and condemns us.”* (pp. 146-147)
2. Buls restates the question this way: *“If what Christ did for us is not sufficient, does He then aid and abet sin?”* (p. 22)
3. Here’s the point: When we read “If while seeking to be justified in Christ, we still conclude ourselves to be accused and condemned sinners...” then we are most certainly confusing Law and Gospel [Luther in his commentary prefers the comparison Law and Grace (same difference)]. In other words, we’re treating Christ the wrong way; we are treating Christ as a new Law Giver and insisting that the “Gospel” is just a new way of referring to a new set of requirements. This is the mindblower...the self-righteousness blower...to truly know Christ, is to no longer know yourself as an accused and condemned sinner. That person is gone; that person doesn’t exist anymore. Read Romans 10:4! [please read] Now let’s follow this reasoning: 1) What is the purpose of the Law according to its primary, theological use? Answer: _____; 2) So, if Christ covers our sin, then He is also the end of the _____; 3) Thus, to know Christ as covering your sin (which the Law once revealed), is to no longer consider yourself as living under the Law; you are simply no longer condemned! *Christ DOES NOT PROMOTE SIN! ABSOLUTELY NOT!!!!* This is why Romans 8::1 says, *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...”*
4. Luther warns us however: *“This is why I often say that so far as the words are concerned, this doctrine of faith is very easy, and everyone can easily understand the distinction between the Law and grace; but so far as practice, life, and application are concerned, it is the most difficult thing there is.”* Why

would Luther say that living this distinction is the most difficult thing there is???

5. vs. 18: The GWN commentary provides all we need!

“The meaning of verse 18 is this: When we seek justification alone by faith in Christ (cf. v. 17), we ‘tear down’ the Law. If, to please the Jews, we try again to be justified by doing what the Law demands and so ‘build it up,’ the Law only condemns us as sinners.”(p. 347)

May we ever tear down the Law and never build it up!

6. vs. 19: There is some debate on the precise meaning of “law” in this verse. Is it the curse Christ took for us? Is it the second use we spoke of before which reveals our sin? The questions do not however take away from the essential teaching. This law which in either case would condemn me I have “died to.” On the basis of the *dikaioo* (being justified) we spoke of last week, the law no longer applies to me. It is as if I am dead to the law...it doesn’t know me and I do not know it. And if I no longer know its condemnation on account of Christ, then I am no longer condemned on account of Christ. This means I am alive through Christ; this means that I live for God. God sees me as living in His grace, in His justification, in the life of His Son, I am alive to God; as far as He is concerned (and His is the only judgment that matters), I belong in His realm of life, no longer in the realm of death, so I shall live forever with Him! It is a great and wonderful thing to be dead to the law.

Luther puts it this way:

“If a Christian is defined properly and accurately, therefore, he is a child of grace and of the forgiveness of sins. He has no Law at all, but he is above the Law, sin, death, and hell. Just as Christ is free of the grave and as Peter is free of the prison, so the Christian is free of the Law. The relation between Christ raised from the grave and the grave, or the relation between Peter delivered from prison and the prison – such is the relation between the justified conscience and the Law. And just as Christ by His death and resurrection dies to the grave, so that it has no jurisdiction over Him and cannot hold Him, and He rises and goes away freely, now that the stone and the seals have been broken, and the guards have been terrified; and just as Peter dies to his prison through his deliverance and goes where he pleases – so by grace the conscience is liberated from the Law.” (p. 159)

7. To be continued...(vss. 20-21 and then onto chapter 3!)

Galatians, Part X
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Rev. Alfonso O. Espinosa

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Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. Chapter Two Detailed Outline (Buls):

2: 1-10: At the second visit [or later visit] in Jerusalem Paul was acknowledged as Apostle to the Gentiles and His Gospel was considered genuine as Titus was not compelled to be circumcised.

11-14: Paul scolds Peter for hypocrisy. This establishes freedom from Ceremonial Law and shows that Paul is not beneath Peter.

15-21: The theme: Not through works of the law but through faith in Christ. And thereby we live the new life in Christ.

III. vss. 20-21:

NASB	NIV	GWN
I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the <i>life</i> which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. 21 I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness <i>comes</i> through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.	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.	I have been crucified with Christ. 20 So, it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in my body I live by believing in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. 21 I do not reject the grace of God. For if we could receive righteousness through the Law, then Christ died for nothing.

- 1. vs. 20 has been referred to this way: "This is the sum and marrow of Christianity." It is as Buls points out, a *locus classicus* on what faith accomplishes in regards to both justification and sanctification.**

2. See the other references to being “crucified” and dying with Christ:

- a. Gal. 5:24: What is crucified here?**

Answer: _____

- b. Gal. 6:14: What two things are crucified here?**

Answer: _____

- c. Rom. 6:8-10: If we died with Christ, what else do we believe?**

Answer: _____

- 3. But how do we know we are actually joined to Christ? Galatians 2:20 presents what is referred to as the vicarious atonement. In our stead, Christ died. Here, 2 Corinthians 5:21 is applicable: “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” Also, Isaiah 53 is the greatest text on Christ for us. For example, “Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows...But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed...” (vss. 4 and 5)**
- 4. In this sense we can say that we have been convicted for our sin, we have suffered scourging for it, we have been nailed to the cross, and we were condemned and killed for our sin. All of these things are true. Has God punished us for our sin? Yes, absolutely! He has! He is a just God, a holy and righteous God! The penalty for our sin was dishd out and we died. But when did you die? When were you punished? It was when Jesus did all these things “for you.” Vicariously...Himself for you...His life for yours...He made your account His account, your condemnation His condemnation, the punishment intended for you and reserved for you, His own. He was your substitute and as far as the Heavenly Father is concerned, you were crucified.**

Thus, God’s Law did not vanish, nor was it forgotten. God actually dealt with your sin! Upon Christ He did!

- 5. So Paul writes, “I have been crucified with Christ...” Luther asks: “But who is this ‘I’...It is the one that has the Law and is obliged to do works, the one that is a person separate from Christ. This ‘I’ Paul rejects; for ‘I’ as a person distinct from Christ, belongs to death and hell. This is why he says: ‘Not I, but Christ lives in me.’”**

6. Any comments on this great reality of your crucifixion and death? By the way, how are we absolutely certain that the vicarious atonement is actually for ME??? Galatians 3:27 answers the question.
7. Now look at vs. 20 again. And count how many personal references Paul makes to himself (the same number of times we refer to ourselves as we rightfully apply the verse to ourselves), so how many times are you referred to?
8. Luther remarks, “Therefore read these words ‘ME’ and ‘FOR ME’ with great emphasis, and accustom yourself to accepting this ‘ME’ with a sure faith and applying it to yourself. Do not doubt that you belong to the number of those who speak this ‘ME.’”!!!! This is not for being puffed up. God has revealed this for your great comfort!
9. Also, note the word “in” used three times. The three times are different uses:
 - #1: first is on mystical union between Christ and His people. Not to be confused with personal union or sacramental union, mystical union is “Christ lives in me.” Read also John 14:23.
 - #2: second is an attendant circumstance: while the main event is going on, something less is happening at the same time, that is, our physical body (something less) hides the real life (main event), the real “I”. The world only sees life in the body, we know there is much, much More
 - #3: third denotes instrument: How do we have the greater life? How? Through the instrument of faith. Again, not “because of” faith are we saved, but by faith IN the Son of God. The object, rather the life Himself, Jesus is what faith clings to.
10. Also, take note that this verse teaches the two natures of Christ:
 - a. What is the reference to Christ’s human nature?
Answer: _____
 - b. What is the reference to Christ’s divine nature?
Answer: _____

- 11. The ending defines true love...giving up oneself and the very end, are the words, which establish vicarious atonement, “for me.”**
- 12. vs. 21: This verse summarizes chapters 1 and 2. Once again, synergism is out and sola gratia in. If you add anything to the Gospel, what of Christ’s death?**

Galatians, Part XI
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3:1-5: That the Holy Spirit comes through the preaching of the Gospel is proof that this preaching is of God.

6-14: five arguments which prove that we are justified by faith and not by works:

First (6-7): [Abraham was declared righteous through faith]
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Third (10): [works of the Law can't justify since they curse]
Fourth (11-12): [faith is intrinsically other than practicing Law]
Fifth (13-14): [ultimately, vicarious atonement justifies]

15-18: God's Covenant with Abraham involves a promise which pointed to Christ. The law which came later cannot annul this Covenant.

19-22: The law, given through a mediator, could only show sin for what it is. Therefore it cannot bestow righteousness and life.

23-29: Before Christ came, man was imprisoned. It was burdensome. It all pointed forward to Christ who would bring freedom.

III. Chapter 3:1-5:

NIV: "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?"

NASB: "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? 2 This is the only thing I want to find out

from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain – if indeed it was in vain? 5 Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?”

GWN: “Foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you – you who saw Jesus Christ so clearly pictured before your eyes as crucified? 2 I want you to tell me just one thing: Did you receive the Spirit by doing what the Law says, or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? You started by the Spirit; are you now going to finish by your own effort? 4 Did you experience so much for nothing – if it really was for nothing? 5 Therefore, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing what the Law says, or by believing what you are hearing?”

1. vs. 1: It is hard to understand what the Galatians are doing. This word that says Christ was so clearly *pictured* means “to portray publicly.” GWN commentary: “Paul is saying that he had presented the message of Christ’s Gospel to the Galatians so clearly as if it had been portrayed on a public billboard for all to see.” (p. 348)
2. vs. 1 continued: From CSSB (p. 1795): “*foolish*. They were not mentally deficient but simply failed to use their powers of perception (see Lk 24:25; Ro 1:14; 1 Ti 6:9; Tit 3:3).” Let’s consider three of these references.

Luke 24:25: “He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!’”

1 Timothy 6:9: “People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.”

Titus 3:3: “At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.”

All of these describe the condition of the sinful, human heart.

3. Luther seems to address the problem in three stages:

First, Satan tempts and lures in the highest subtlety.

Second, our fickle flesh often goes along with the deception.

Third, this leads to “enthusiasm,” religion that prides itself in its own experience and work (Luther fought against the *Schwaermerei*).

4. Luther, however, also sees that Paul has the highest goal of love in his strong words. Luther points out that Paul is writing per the basis of his rule in 2 Timothy 4:2: ***“Preach the Word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort.”*** (p. 186)

“Christ reviles the Pharisees in a similar way when He calls them serpents, a brood of vipers (Matt. 23:33), and children of the devil (John 8:44). But these are revilings from the Holy Spirit. They are fatherly and motherly, the rebukes of a faithful friend, as is stated also in Prov. 27:6: ‘The wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of an enemy.’ Thus it happens that the same denunciation can be the greatest benefit if it comes from the mouth of a father, but the worst sort of injury if it comes from the mouth of a peer or an enemy.” (p. 188)

5. vs. 1 continued: Paul asks “Who has bewitched you?” The answer of course are the Judiazers we have been speaking of (those Jews who are standing for legalism and insist that salvation is Christ + keeping of the Mosaic Law, especially by demanding circumcision). However, isn’t the language startling?! Not simply, “who has deceived you,” but who has “bewitched you”! Note that all three translations – NIV, NASB and GWN – agree on the English translation. Paul goes into occult language! But this is the severity of this kind of “foolishness”! When believers leave the correct faith they foolishly leave the realm of light and enter into the realm of darkness (the realm of Satan). Thus again, Jesus – in love – calls the Jews in John 8, “children of the devil”!
6. Luther again: “It is as though he were saying: ‘What is happening to you is precisely what happens to children, whom witches, sorceresses, and hags usually charm quickly and easily with their bewitchment, a trick of Satan.’ Paul does not deny that witchcraft exists and is possible; for later on, in the fifth chapter (v. 20), he also lists ‘sorcery,’ which is the same as witchcraft among the works of the flesh. Thereby he proves that witchcraft and sorcery exists and are possible. For it is undeniable that the devil lives, yes, rules, in all the world. Therefore witchcraft and sorcery are works of the devil, by which he not only injures people but sometimes, with God’s permission, destroys them. But we are all subject to the devil, both according to our bodies and according to our material possessions. We are guests in the world, of which he is the ruler (John 16:11) and the god (2 Cor. 4:4).” (p. 190)
7. More Luther: “Therefore let no one think that the Galatians were the only ones to be bewitched by Satan, but let everyone think that he himself could have been bewitched and still can be. No one of us is so vigorous that he can resist Satan, especially if he tries to do so with his own strength. Job was a blameless and upright man, and there was no one like him on earth (Job 1:8).

But what could he do against the devil when God withdrew His hand? Did not that holy man fall horribly? Therefore this bewitcher not only was powerful in the Galatians; but he is always making an effort to deceive, if not everyone, then as many as he can, with his false persuasions. 'For he is a liar and the father of lies' (John 8:44)."

8. Now Luther's exegesis led him to teach that because the Galatians were bewitched that they were crucifying Christ again (similar to the problem in the book of Hebrews). Luther, however, legitimately came to this conclusion through a variant, *en humin* (*in you*). This variant, however, probably did not appear in the original and without this variant, the text reads that the Gospel of Christ crucified was simply clearly – very clearly – put before the Galatians.
9. Nevertheless, this is an amazing verse for us. How easy is it for us to be deceived from the Gospel. Consider Luther's points: 1) The devil is subtle; 2) We are fickle; and 3) The resultant religion based on experience and feeling is so attractive! So please discuss this question: "What is our best defense?" (take a few minutes and then we'll share our answers).
10. vs. 2: From this point on Paul in Galatians refers to the Holy Spirit 16 times! (CSSB, p. 1795) "law" is once again a general use, "law" in any sense of human endeavor. This law leads to the work of men, not the Spirit. The Spirit in creating faith however uses but one means: faith comes by hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word of Christ (Romans 10:17). That which is heard that creates saving faith is the Gospel. It is the message of Christ crucified (what God does with sin), not work's righteousness (what man does with sin). The former is the means for receiving the Holy Spirit, the latter is means for being crushed and totally defeated apart from the Spirit.
11. vs. 2: However, this is not how humanity views it. Luther comments: "The human heart neither understands nor believes that such a great prize as the Holy Spirit can be granted solely through hearing with faith; but it thinks this way: 'The forgiveness of sins, deliverance from sin and death, the granting of the Holy Spirit, of righteousness, and of eternal life – this is all something important. Therefore you must do something great to obtain these inestimable gifts.'" (p. 213)
12. So the Galatians reaction was typical of the common, human reaction. This gift of the Spirit is so great, surely it must rely on what I do, even though I was originally taught that what I do has nothing to do with my receiving the Spirit. What does God say about returning to vomit? How do we guard against this? We must daily live in our baptism, daily confess our sin, daily

never underestimate our flesh, marvel at our unbelief, but daily turn from sin and remain in the confession of Christ alone. The Gospel gives the Spirit not just on the day we were baptized into Christ, but everyday as we live in that baptism through confession and absolution.

13. vs. 3: There is an ongoing debate whether “spirit” in this verse is “Spirit” (Holy Spirit) or the regenerate spirit of the believer. There is a big difference. However, one argument for regenerate spirit is that *pneuma* and *sarx* (spirit and flesh) are in contrast. There are other contexts of Scripture that do this. On the other hand, vs. 2 just finished referring to the Holy Spirit. So...? However, the essential meaning is still intact either way. Beginning with the spirit (reborn by the Spirit) or beginning with the Spirit (so that we now have a born again spirit) is either way contrasted to *sarx* (flesh). It is interesting that the NIV and GWN take license to translate “flesh” as “human effort”. NASB sticks to the original “flesh.” NIV and GWN are probably being a little too presumptuous. The flesh is still a spiritual vehicle, a vehicle of darkness in tune and agreeing with principalities and powers, it is our dark side, it is led by the devil. It is also blinded to the spiritual reality of what is most important: justification by grace through faith. Our goal is to keep before us what is most important in life: That we are justified by faith in Christ. The most serious threat: That we would forget the Gospel.
14. vs. 4: Paul is clearly expressing his hope that those who have turned away from the Gospel will turn back. Paul is being less harsh and mellower and speaks with gentleness. Luther describes his gentleness this way: It is as if he were saying, “Still I do not cut off all hope from you, if you will only return to your senses. For children who are sick, weak, and full of sores are not to be rejected but must be cared for and cherished even more diligently than those who are healthy.” This sounds a lot like Christ does it not? Matthew 9: He did not come for the healthy, but the sick!
15. vs. 5: Four translations are possible: 1) spiritual powers IN you; 2) spiritual powers AMONG you; 3) miracles IN you; and, 4) miracles AMONG you. “But no matter what you choose, it is only faith in the Word.” (Buls, p. 27) Our theology would allow for all of the above. This does not mean we are charismatic, we are simply saying what the Word says: the Gospel is powerful. It conducts the greatest miracle: delivering sinners from death to life. Is there a greater miracle or spiritual power?

Galatians, Part XII
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Rev. Alfonso O. Espinosa, September 5, 2002

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Fourth (11-12): [faith is intrinsically other than practicing Law]

Fifth (13-14): [ultimately, vicarious atonement justifies]

15-18: God's Covenant with Abraham involves a promise, which pointed to Christ. The law, which came later, cannot annul this Covenant.

19-22: The law, given through a mediator, could only show sin for what it is. Therefore it cannot bestow righteousness and life.

23-29: Before Christ came, man was imprisoned. It was burdensome. It all pointed forward to Christ who would bring freedom.

III. Chapter 3:6-14:

NIV: "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."

NASB: "6 Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED

BY YOU.” 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. 10 For as many as are of the works of the Law 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 PERFORM THEM.’ 11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.” 12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM.” 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”—14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

GWN: “6 Abraham is a good example: He *believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness*. 7 You see, then, that those who believe are Abraham’s real descendants. 8 Since the Scripture foresaw that God would justify [acquit] the nations by faith, He announced the Gospel to Abraham beforehand: “*Through you all nations will be blessed.*” 9 So those who believe are blessed together with Abraham, the man of faith. 10 There is a curse on all who depend on doing what the Law says, because it is written: “*Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the Law.*” 11 It is clear that no one is justified [declared righteous] before God by doing what the Law says, because *the just [righteous person] will live by faith*. 12 But the Law is not based on faith; rather, it says: “*The person who does these things will find life in them.*” 13 Christ paid the price to free us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “*Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree [cross].*” 14 He redeemed us so that in Jesus Christ the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations, and that we by believing might receive the promised Spirit.”

1. Context: The early-church heretic Marcion (excommunicated in 144) proposed a distinction of theologies between the Old and New Testament and even a conflict between Peter and Paul. He favored Luke’s gospel and Paul’s epistle’s for correctly depicting the God of grace as opposed to the God of the Law of the Old Testament. In our section today – Galatians 3:6-14 – we see that Marcion’s theory is greatly marred. Take note of how many times St. Paul is referring to the Old Testament:
 - A. verse 6 quotes Genesis 15:6
 - B. verse 7 mentions the Old Testament patriarch Abraham
 - C. verse 8 quotes Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18 “Abrahamic b’rith/covenant”
 - D. verse 9 mentions the Old Testament patriarch Abraham again
 - E. verse 10 quotes Deuteronomy 27:26
 - F. verse 11 quotes Habakkuk 2:4
 - G. verse 12 quotes Leviticus 18:5
 - H. verse 13 quotes Deuteronomy 21:23
 - I. verse 14 indirectly points to Joel 2:28
2. How does this strike you in terms of St. Paul’s message?
3. It is absolutely clear that the message of justification by grace through faith is pan-Biblical.

4. For someone to say that Christianity “began” with the New Testament, or “was born” at Pentecost, or “started” with the earthly ministry of Jesus, is missing the Christian foundation clearly stated and taught in the Old Testament.
5. Onto considering each verse...vs. 6: Puts for the external nature of “righteousness.” This is not to deny that there is also an internal aspect in other places. For example, “righteous deeds” are wrought by those indwelt by the Holy Spirit. However, the fundamental “righteousness” is a “foreign” or “alien” righteousness. It must “credited” by God externally. It is based on God’s consideration and attitude towards us; it comes into fruition by virtue of the way God “looks” at us now, or the way God considers our standing. It is a “change” in Him, not us [I put quotations around “change” because is immutable, thus we are not suggesting that He changes in nature; I am simply acknowledging the fact that He chooses to be gracious through Christ whereas once He was angry with us apart from Christ. Fact is, He did not “change” His wrath at all, His wrath was discharged for our sin, but it is was diverted from us and imputed to Christ.]
6. vs. 6 continuation: “believed” is a form of “faith.” It is a gift from the Holy Spirit uniting us to Christ. Through this gift, we cling to God’s work for us, especially His declaring us righteous. But imagine, even our clinging to what He does is a gift from God. A gift holds to a gift. God is gracious!
7. vs. 7: “by believing” people or “by faith” people as opposed to “the ‘by the works of the Law’ people in verse 10” (see GWN comments, p. 348) are like Father Abraham. Mark this well: We are Abraham’s descendants. We are the redeemed Israel. Note Romans 9:8: “This means that Abraham’s children who are born in a natural way are not counted as the children of God. Only the children of the promise are counted as his descendants.”
8. vs. 8: This takes us back to the Abrahamic Covenant. The Biblical covenants are connected and unified. This one given about 4000 years ago is still unfolding today, we are among the “stars” and “grains of sand,” we are children of Abraham.
9. vs. 9: “blessed with Abraham.” That’s quite a status!
10. vs. 10: Deut. 27:26 proves our condition. Since we have not remained pure in the doing of the Law, we are cursed as a result. Our active rebellion shows we are under a curse. Jesus could not join us here. It was impossible for Him to sin. Much to the contrary, according to His living – His approximate 33 years of time on earth – not only did He never break the Law/fail to keep the Law, but also according to His active obedience He kept the Law/fulfilled the Law for us. He was sharing His life with those He had been baptized into – His Holy Church – His life now counts for them; their life; your life. Your life is suitable for the Kingdom, since His life of active obedience kept all accounts of the Law in your stead. His active obedience covers what we failed to keep.
11. vs. 11: Axiomatic statement as to why the Law cannot save. If one’s idea is to justify oneself or make oneself righteous via keeping the Law, they are doomed to failure.

It can't be done; it is absolutely impossible. James 2:10: "For if we keep the whole law, and yet stumble at just one point, we are guilty of breaking all of it!"

12. vs. 11 continued. Note again that Paul is quoting Habakkuk 2:4. How appropriate, since it was just as obvious then as it is now, that even folks with the best of intentions fail to live righteously. The same author – Habakkuk (at 1:13) – teaches that God is too pure to look upon evil; that God cannot tolerate wrong. All the Law does is lead us to this desperate state of realization: We cannot stand before God; we are banished, removed, condemned, without His life, because we are sinners, we are not His people. It can't justify, it can only condemn.
13. vs. 12: So, vs. 12 solidifies this thought: "the Law is not of faith" If faith is of the realm of righteousness and salvation, Law cannot be of faith, since Law reveals sinfulness and condemnation. These themes are diametrically opposed to each other. To bring this home, Paul quotes Lev. 18:5 to say if this is what you are trusting in [the Law] then you must live by the Law...but you can't, you fail constantly, thus, the Law is not of faith.
14. vs. 12: Thus, in a very significant sense, the Christian must not know the Law. This is not to say that we become antinomians who ignore or bury the Law; it is not to say that in our new creation state that we do not love His commandments (we do), but in this particular realm (the realm of assurance of righteousness and be right with God), the Law is unknown, it is categorically inappropriate to know, believe in, to rest in when it comes to the realm of right standing before God. In this context, we must not know the Law, but only faith in Christ. If on the other hand, we try to hold to some idea that we stand before God on account of our keeping the Law, then we must know that God's standard for this approach is perfection..."He who practices them shall live by them."
15. vs. 13: Perhaps one of the most important verses in the Bible on the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ. A summary statement of Isaiah 53, bringing out Christ on the cross as our substitute, "for us," taking our place.
16. vs. 13: Furthermore, it completes the thought from verse 10. Yes, Christ's active obedience answered our rebellion and extended His fulfillment of the Law to those in whom He was baptized. However, we still transgressed this Law, we are still accursed because of our failure. Something else had to be done for this. Thus, the next step was Christ's passive obedience on the cross of Calvary. We are cursed for our active rebellion...in His life, however, Christ could never be cursed, for He was/is sinless...however, in passivity He could take our place; in the greatest humility, He could choose to humble Himself and take our punishment upon Himself, in being our substitute, He could be a curse for us.
17. This of course is the greatest objection to the Gospel from Islam and Judaism. From Islam because it seems contradictory that Messiah who was assured of defeating His enemies would be defeated by them; from Judaism, how can sinless Messiah be a curse?! But here is indeed where the beauty of the Gospel is most clearly seen. The pure, spotless Lamb of God allows Himself to be treated as a cursed one so as to take the place of the cursed ones.

18. Luther is fantastic here:

“And all the prophets saw this, that Christ was to become the greatest thief, murderer, adulterer, robber, desecrator, blasphemer, etc., there has ever been anywhere in the world. He is not acting in His own Person now. Now He is not the Son of God, born of the Virgin. But He is a sinner, who has and bears the sin of Paul, the former blasphemer, persecutor, and assaulter; of Peter, who denied Christ; of David, who was an adultery and a murderer, and who caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the Lord (Rom. 2:24). In short, He has and bears all the sins of the all men in His body – not in the sense that He has committed them but in the sense that He took these sins, committed by us, upon His own body, in order to make satisfaction for them with His own blood.” (p. 277, LW 26)

This has other results...

“Now that Christ reigns, there is in fact no more sin, death, or curse – this we confess every day in the Apostles’ Creed when we say: ‘I believe in the holy church.’ This is plainly nothing else than if we were to say: ‘I believe that there is no sin and no death in the church. For believers in Christ are not sinners and are not sentenced to death but are altogether holy and righteous, lords over sin and death who live eternally.’ But it is faith alone that discerns this, because we say: ‘I believe in the holy church.’ If you consult your reason and your eyes, you will judge differently. For in devout people you will see many things that offend you; you will see them fall now and again, see them sin, or be weak in faith, or be troubled by a bad temper, envy, or other evil emotions. ‘Therefore the church is not holy.’ I deny the conclusion that you draw. If I look at my own person or at that of my neighbor, the church will never be holy. But if I look at Christ, who is the Propitiator and Cleanser of the church, then it is completely holy; for He bore the sins of the entire world.” (ibid., p. 285)

19. vs. 14: His atoning work was indeed universal/objective (for all people, and “all” means all), so that just as Abraham received the gift of faith, anyone else through faith may know the same benefit. God is fulfilling His plan for “all nations.” Joel 2:28: “And it will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind...” The Gentiles – all of us – are included because Christ became a curse for us and paid for our sins.

Galatians, Part XIII
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Rev. Alfonso O. Espinosa, September 19, 2002

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. Chapter Three Detailed Outline (Buls):

3: 1-5: That the Holy Spirit comes through the preaching of the Gospel is proof that this preaching is of God.

6-14: Five arguments which prove that we are justified by faith and not by works.

15-18: God's Covenant with Abraham involves a promise which pointed to Christ. The law which came later cannot annul this Covenant.

19-22: The law, given through a mediator, could only show sin for what it is. Therefore it cannot bestow righteousness and life.

23-29: Before Christ came, man was imprisoned. It was burdensome. It all pointed forward to Christ who would bring freedom.

III. Chapter 3:15-18:

verse 15 NASB: "Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations; even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it."

NIV: "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."

GWN: "My fellow Christians, let me use an example from daily life. Once a "last will and testament" is ratified, even if it is only a human will, no one sets it aside or adds to it."

A. *diatheke* (*dia-thay-kay*) is the word Paul uses here, it is the word "covenant." The word was also used in the Old Testament as *b'rith*. It refers to what God established by His grace in connection to sinful man; it is a bound based on the irrevocable promise of God.

- B. It was Jerome (who translated the Latin Vulgate) who used *tetamentum* for *diatheke*. It stuck. To this day, we follow Jerome's preference as we refer to the two units of the Bible as "Old Testament" and "New Testament."
- C. Luther followed Jerome's lead in treating *diatheke* as "last will and testament," but also appreciated some of the early fathers who did as well such as Chrysostom. "*For Luther the berith of the Old Testament was, in essence, the Gospel-promise of Jesus Christ, while the diatheke was the Gospel-promise completed in the Christ...*" (GWN, p. 533)
- D. Anyway, in getting back to the verse, Paul is making this point: Don't make too much of the Law, because long before the Law was ever given, God gave a Covenant or a Testament (as in a last will and testament). Here, it is the Apostle Himself to supports this re-wording of "covenant," as he speaks this way of it per our translations:
 - 1. NASB: "a man's covenant"
 - 2. NIV: "a human covenant"
 - 3. GWN: "a last will and testament"
- E. He is saying that not even a *human* last will and testament is set aside or added to. How much more are we to hold to GOD's covenant?!!!!
- F. That is, God promised (made a covenant of grace) long before the Law. Think of the very first promises. Now the Adamic/Edenic covenant does not use the word "covenant," but it has all the forms of a covenant, so that Genesis 3:15 ("the first Gospel") comes certainly before the Law introduced through Moses. [for your information, the first covenant is with Noah, see Gen. 9] However, we can also easily find covenants clearly established (using the word) in relation for example to Abraham. You are very familiar with them, but here is one of them:

Genesis 17:1-5: "Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am El Shaddai (God Almighty); Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly. 3 And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, 4 'As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.'"

- G. Of course, when we consider the context of this covenant, we know that God is establishing the line through which the seed (*zarah*) of Genesis 3:15 will come, the divine pronoun "He" will be the Savior. God's covenant to Abraham is the establishment of the Saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

H. So, again going back to Galatians 3:15, when Paul put forth this argument he is in effect saying do not confuse Law with Gospel, do not treat them as if they should be side-by-side. The Gospel covenant came before the Law. The Gospel cannot therefore be replaced by or confused with the Law.

Questions: There are several things to consider here (not in any required order):

#1: The Gospel – that God forgives you your sin through the Messiah and Savior, Jesus Christ – was promised centuries and centuries before your birth. God bound Himself to this promise. He made it irrevocable. How does this compliment your understanding of the Gospel?

#2: The Law cannot cancel this promise of the Gospel. That is, by the very nature of the Gospel, one cannot add the Law to the realm of salvation (which is the realm of the Gospel). The Law cannot interfere with your salvation. How does this compliment your understanding of the Law?

Verse 16 NASB: “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one. ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.”

NIV: “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.”

GWN: “Now the promises were spoken in reference to Abraham and in reference to his Descendant. He does not say: ‘in descendants,’ as referring to many, but as referring to one: ‘in your Descendant,’ who is Christ.”

- I. “Promises” plural were really one promise of coming Messiah, but given on different occasions, thus the plural is warranted. For example:

Genesis 12:3: “And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 13:15: “for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendents forever.”

Genesis 17:8: “And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Genesis 22:18: “And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

- J. Now, it here at Genesis 22:18 that we see the important Christology that Paul discusses back at Galatians 3:16. Note that at Genesis 22:18, God makes a distinction between “seed” (singular) and “nations” (plural). This is a singular seed.
- K. Paul is taking this a step further. Law cannot interfere with the Gospel covenant that came before it, neither does it interfere with the only One in whom we trust, the object of the Gospel, the fulfillment of the Law, the Savior, THE (singular) SEED, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- L. Question: How does it impress you that God was telling describing the coming of Jesus Christ to Abraham approximately 4000 years ago???

Verse 17 NASB: “What 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.”

NIV: “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.”

GWN: “What I am saying is this: The Law, which came 430 years after God’s confirmation of the covenant [“last will and testament”] made with Abraham, does not make this covenant null and void, and so cancel its promise.”

- M. The time of 430 years is in connection to the covenant given to Moses at Mt. Sinai (see Exodus 20).
- N. This covenant to Moses, however, does not make “null and void” the covenant given to Abraham.
- O. Interesting that when Christ is correcting the Pharisees and scribes at Matthew 15, notice how He reproves them at verses 5-6:

“But you say, ‘Whoever shall say to his father or mother, “Anything of mine you might have been helped by has been given to God.” He is not to honor his father or his mother.’ And thus you invalidated (made null and void) the word of God for the sake of your tradition.”

- P. This is what anyone does who confuses the Law with the Gospel, they try to make “null and void” the Gospel, or invalidate the Gospel by demanding that we meet requirements of the Law. Gal. 3:17 says you can’t do this!

Verse 18 NASB: “For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.”

NIV: “For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it is no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.”

GWN: “For if we receive the inheritance by the Law, we do not receive it by a promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.”

Q. This brings out the obvious. Gospel is by nature a promise (the gracious – loving and merciful – promise of God) and is therefore opposed to the Law that speaks of our obligations and requirements.

Luther: Natural reason, no matter how blind it is, is still forced to admit that it is one thing to promise and another thing to demand...If a horse could speak, it would be forced to say that it is one thing when a stableboy offers it oats to eat and another thing when the stable boy mounts it and rides it. Therefore the promise and the Law are as far apart from each other as heaven and earth. For the Law demands: “Do this!” The promise grants: “Accept this!” (LW, vol. 26, p. 303)

Galatians, Part XIV
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Rev. Alfonso O. Espinosa, September 26, 2002

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. Chapter Three Detailed Outline (Buls):

3: 1-5: That the Holy Spirit comes through the preaching of the Gospel is proof that this preaching is of God.

6-14: Five arguments which prove that we are justified by faith and not by works.

15-18: God's Covenant with Abraham involves a promise which pointed to Christ. The law which came later cannot annul this Covenant.

19-22: The law, given through a mediator, could only show sin for what it is. Therefore it cannot bestow righteousness and life.

23-29: Before Christ came, man was imprisoned. It was burdensome. It all pointed forward to Christ who would bring freedom.

III. Chapter 3:19-22:

A. Verse 19:

NASB: "Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made."

NIV: "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."

GWN: "Why then was the Law given? It was added to point out trespasses until the Descendant would come to whom the promise referred. And it was given through angels by the hand of a mediator."

1. CSSB, p. 1796: *was added*. From the time of Abraham, the promise covenanted to him (Ge 12:2-3,7; 15:18-20; 17:4-8) had stood at the center of God's relationship with his people. After the exodus the law contained in the Sinaitic covenant (Ex 19-24) became an additional element in that relationship – what Jeremiah by implication called the "old covenant" when he brought God's promise of a "new covenant" (Jer 31:31-34). *the Seed. Christ. through angels.* See Dt 33:2; Ac 7:38,53; Heb 2:2.

- a. This is a good little summary of the verse. It points out when the Law was added, but does not answer why the Law was added. This the verse itself does, but we will get to this in just a moment. For now just be aware that the formal giving of the Law was given in the days of Moses at Sinai (Mosaic/Sinaitic Covenant), **after the time of Abraham and after the time of God's promises to Abraham concerning what the Gospel of Jesus Christ would accomplish.**
- b. Yes, "the seed/Seed/Descendant" = Christ. Again, Abraham knew about Jesus. For this point, let's take a look at John 8:52-59:

"The Jews said to Him, 'Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, "If anyone keeps My word, he shall never taste of death." 'Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?' Jesus answered, 'If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, "He is our God"; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I shall be a liar like you, but I do know Him, and keep His word. **Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.**' The Jews therefore said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple."

- c. Finally, we have this intriguing aspect of the angels. Let's look at the other Bible verses the CSSB recommends:

Deuteronomy 33:2: "And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir, He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones; At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them."

Acts 7:38: "This is the one [Moses] who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you."

Acts 7:53: "you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it."

Hebrews 2:2: "For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense."

- d. This is all we know. The law and evidently the Word in general (taking the Hebrew passage into consideration) was/is given in connection to the angels. How the Lord uses the holy angels in this capacity we do not know, but if nothing else, it magnifies the Word. This Word of God is so holy, so precious, that there cannot seem to be enough attention given to its handling and transmission to us!

2. Let us now get to the most important aspect of this verse. As Luther points out, “When we teach that a man is justified without the Law and works, this question necessarily follows: **‘If the Law does not justify, why, then, was it given?’**”
3. The English translations are “because of transgressions” (2x above) and “to point out trespasses” (GWN above).
4. Here, Luther is pretty awesome:

“We are debating against this abuse and this imaginary function of the Law, and we reply with Paul that the Law does not pertain to justification. But by this we are not asserting that the Law is nothing, as they immediately infer: ‘If the Law does not justify, it was given to no purpose.’ No. The Law has its proper function and use; but this is not the one that our opponents attribute to it, namely, that of justifying. It does not belong to the Law to be used for justification; therefore we teach that it must be separated from this as far as heaven is from earth. With Paul we say that ‘the Law is good, if anyone uses it lawfully’ (1 Tim. 1:8), that is, if anyone uses the Law as Law. If I define the Law with a proper definition and keep it in its own function and use, it is a very good thing. But if I transfer it to another use and attribute to it what should not be attributed to it, I distort not only the Law but all theology.”

“Therefore Paul is arguing here against those vicious hypocrites who say: ‘Why, then, the Law?’ They find altogether intolerable the statement of Paul: ‘The Law was added because of transgressions.’ For they suppose that the function of the Law is to justify. And that is the general opinion of human reason in all the sophists and in the whole world about religion and about righteousness that it is achieved by the works of the Law. Reason will not permit this extremely dangerous opinion to be taken away from it by any means at all, because it does not understand the righteousness of faith. Hence the papists babble, not so much foolishly as wickedly: ‘The church has the Law of God; it has the decrees of the councils and the writings of the holy fathers. If it lives according to these, it is holy.’ No one will persuade them that by their self-chosen works and their religion they are only provoking the wrath of God, not placating it. No self-righteous people believe this, but they suppose the very opposite. Therefore the presumption of righteousness is the dregs of all the evils and the sin of all the sins of the world. For all other sins and vices can be corrected, or at least prohibited by the punishment of the magistrate. But this sin, each man’s personal presumption of his own righteousness, peddles itself as the height of religion and sanctity, because it is impossible for the nonspiritual man to judge rightly about this issue. Therefore this disease is the highest and greatest empire of the devil in the whole universe, truly the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15) and the snare by which the devil captures all men and holds them captive (1 Tim. 3:7). For by nature all men think that the Law justifies. To the objection, ‘Why then, the Law, if it does not justify?’ Paul therefore replies as follows: ‘Not because of justification but **because of transgressions it was added.**’

“These are distinct matters; therefore their use is distinct also. Hence the uses of these things must not be confused. ‘A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to man, nor shall a man put on a woman’s garment’ (Deut. 22:5). Let the uses of the things remain distinct; otherwise sheer confusion results. The male was not created for spinning; the woman was not created for warfare. Let the proper station and task be attributed to each person: let the preacher and bishop teach; let the prince, etc., rule; let the people obey the magistrate. In this way let every creature serve in its own order and place. Let the sun shine by day, and the moon and the stars by night. Let the sea produce fish, the earth produce plants, and the forests produce animals and wood.”

“In the same way let not the Law usurp for itself an alien function and use, that of justification; but let it leave this solely to grace, to the promise, and to faith. Let the monks fast, pray, and dress differently from the rest of the Christian people. Let them do this, that is, and even more to tame the flesh and put it to death. But let them not attribute to these disciplines the function of justifying in the sight of God, for this is an alien function that does not belong to them. What, then, is

the function of the Law? Transgression. Really a lovely function! 'The Law,' he says, 'was added because of transgressions'; that is, the Law was added beyond and after the promises until the offspring would come. Thus in Rom. 5:20: 'The Law came in,' that is, after the promise of grace and until Christ, who would fulfill the promises."

"Here one must know that there is a double use of the Law. One is the civic use. God has ordained civic laws, indeed all laws, to restrain transgressions. Therefore every law was given to hinder sins. Does this mean that when the Law restrains sins, it justifies? Not at all. When I refrain from killing or from committing adultery or from stealing, or when I abstain from other sins, I do not do this voluntarily or from the love of virtue but because I am afraid of the sword and of the executioner. This prevents me, as the ropes or the chains prevent a lion or a bear from ravaging something that comes along. Therefore restraint from sins is not righteousness but rather an indication of unrighteousness. Therefore just as a rope holds a furious and untamed beast and keeps it from attacking whatever it meets, so the Law constrains an insane and furious man lest he commit further sins. This restraint makes it abundantly clear that those who have need of it – as does everyone who is outside Christ – are not righteous but unrighteous and insane, whom it is necessary to tame with the rope and with prison to keep them from sinning. Therefore the Law does not justify."

[skip a paragraph]

"The other use of the Law is the theological and spiritual one, which serves to increase transgressions. This is the primary purpose of the Law of Moses, that through it sin might grow and be multiplied, especially in the conscience. Paul discusses this magnificently in Rom. 7. Therefore the true function and the chief and proper use of the Law is to reveal to man his sin, blindness, misery, wickedness, ignorance, hate and contempt of God, death, hell, judgment, and the well-deserved wrath of God. Yet his use of the Law is completely unknown to the hypocrites, the sophists in the universities, and to all men who go along in the presumption of the righteousness of the Law or of their own righteousness. To curb and crush the monster and raging beast, that is, the presumption of religion, God is obliged, on Mt. Sinai, to give a new Law with such pomp and with such an awesome spectacle that the entire people is crushed with fear. For since the reason becomes haughty with this human presumption of righteousness and imagines that on account of this it is pleasing to God, therefore God has to send some Hercules, namely, the Law, to attack, subdue, and destroy this monster with full force. Therefore the Law is intent only on this beast, not on any other."

"Hence this use of the Law is extremely beneficial and very necessary. For if someone is not a murderer, adulterer, or thief, and abstains from external sins, as that Pharisee did (Luke 18:11), he would swear, being possessed by the devil, that he is a righteous man; therefore he develops the presumption of righteousness and relies on his good works. God cannot soften and humble this man or make him acknowledge his misery and damnation any other way than by the Law. Therefore the proper and absolute use of the Law is to terrify with lightning (as on Mt. Sinai), thunder, and the blare of the trumpet, with a thunderbolt to burn and crush that brute which is called the presumption of righteousness. Hence God says through Jeremiah (23:29): 'My Word is a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces.' For as long as the presumption of righteousness remains in a man, there remain immense pride, self-trust, smugness, hate of God, contempt of grace and mercy, ignorance of the promises and of Christ. The proclamation of free grace and the forgiveness of sins does not enter his heart and understanding, because that huge rock and solid wall, namely, the presumption of righteousness by which the heart itself is surrounded, prevents this from happening."

[skip six paragraphs]

"On the other hand, the Gospel is a light that illumines hearts and makes them alive. It discloses what grace and the mercy of God are; what the forgiveness of sins, blessing, righteousness, life, and eternal salvation are; and how we are to attain to these. When we distinguish the Law from the Gospel this way, we attribute to each its proper use and function. You will not find anything about this distinction between the Law and the Gospel in the books of the monks, the canonists, and the recent and ancient theologians. Augustine taught and expressed it to some extent. Jererome and others like him knew nothing at all about it. In other words, for many centuries there has been a remarkable silence about this in all the schools and churches. This situation has produced a very dangerous condition for consciences; for unless the Gospel is clearly distinguished from the Law, Christian

doctrine cannot be kept sound. But when this distinction is recognized, the true meaning of justification is recognized. Then it is easy to distinguish faith from works, and Christ from Moses, as well as from the magistrate and all civil laws. For everything apart from Christ is a ministry of death for the punishment of the wicked.” (Luther’s Works, volume 26, pp. 306-313)

5. The Bible brings out the purpose of the Law – this theological or spiritual purpose – this way:

Romans 3:20: “Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”

Romans 5:13: “for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”

Romans 7:5: “For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.”

Romans 7:8: “but sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.”

B. Verse 20:

NASB: “Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.”

NIV: “A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.”

GWN: “A mediator deals with more than one, but God is One.”

1. This verse is controversial and theologians have a hard time agreeing to its meaning. However, the meaning is basic to our theme here. The Law is characterized by necessary mediator. Again just look at the Mosaic covenant: God made a covenant with Israel and Moses was the mediator. Thus, the verse says “...mediator is not for one party only...”
2. “whereas God is only one” (NASB); “but God is one” (NIV, GWN). This is contrast to the previous fact. Because the Law required a mediator it is inferior to the Gospel that requires only God.
3. In other words, the Law is from God and contains what you and I must do. We try to do it, and behold, we see our sin!
4. The Gospel is not like this. The promise is one-sided, is it of the realm of grace. God does it. What do we do? Nothing! It requires no mediator.
5. Now at this point someone might ask, “But isn’t Christ called a ‘Mediator’?” Answer: Yes. For example 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24. For example:

1 Timothy 2:5: "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

6. However, this mediator of the Gospel is different than the mediator of the Law. Because the mediator of the Gospel is Himself God. It requires nothing of men. So Paul's statement at the end of this verse: "but God is one" describes the Gospel promise as needing only God.

C. Verse 21:

NASB: "Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law."

NIV: "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."

GWN: "Is the Law then opposed to the promises of God? Never! For if a law had been given that could make us alive, then certainly righteousness would become ours by keeping that law."

1. Again, the reason the Law is not contrary to the Gospel is because it is a different thing altogether. It has a different role and serves a different purpose. Of course it is not contrary to the promise of God.
2. However, IF the Law did impart life, then who needs the Gospel. This is the grand problem of confusing Law and Gospel! If the Law is treated as the source of righteousness, then why on earth did Jesus do what He did??????
3. Of course those who treat the Law as giving righteousness usually have an answer. One of the more popular answers is treating Christ and His atonement as an example of salvation "by example." Despicable and sickening is this belief.

D. Verse 22:

NASB: "But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."

NIV: "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."

GWN: "But the Scripture has said that everything is a prisoner of sin, so that the promised blessing might be given to believers through faith in Jesus Christ."

1. Law and Gospel in this verse: 22a: Law; 22b: Gospel.
2. The Law shuts us up, that we would abandon trying to justify ourselves.
3. The Gospel is by faith in Jesus Christ. (“given” = as a gift from God)

Galatians, Part XV
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Rev. Alfonso O. Espinosa, October 24, 2002

- I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:
- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|----------------------|
| Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications | OR | The Gospel Defended |
| Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism | OR | The Gospel Explained |
| Chapters 5-6: Practical Application | OR | The Gospel Applied |
- II. Chapter Three Detailed Outline (Buls):
- 3: 1-5: That the Holy Spirit comes through the preaching of the Gospel is proof that this preaching is of God.
- 6-14: Five arguments which prove that we are justified by faith and not by works.
- 15-18: God's Covenant with Abraham involves a promise which pointed to Christ. The law which came later cannot annul this Covenant.
- 19-22: The law, given through a mediator, could only show sin for what it is. Therefore it cannot bestow righteousness and life.
- 23-29: Before Christ came, man was imprisoned. It was burdensome. It all pointed forward to Christ who would bring freedom.
- III. Chapter 3:23-29:
- A. Verse 23:
- NASB: "But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed."
- NIV: "Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed."
- GWN: "Before this faith came, we were kept under guard by the Law, until this faith which was about to come would be revealed."
1. A restatement of vs. 22 and certainly refers back to vs. 22. "this faith" is what faith as you look back at vs. 22?
- Answer: faith in _____
- *Note: It is always important to clarify what people mean by "faith". Many from the outside looking in at Christianity assume that Christians mean "blind faith" when they speak of faith. That faith in believe in a

good God despite all appearances for example in regards to "the problem of evil" in the world," etc. That "faith" is "just" believing that God exists without any kind of substantial witness. Or less from a less complicated perspective: "faith" is simply "believing in God." Furthermore, "faith" is also meaningful in referring to what unbelievers "believe" (as faith is a basic synonym for belief in general). For example, it takes "faith" to believe that miracles are impossible, it takes faith to believe that God did not create the universe, it takes faith to believe that the background radiation of the universe and Hubble's observation of an expanding universe does NOT imply that our universe has a beginning, it takes faith to believe that we do NOT have a soul. Thus, as you can see, the word "faith" has many, many, many applications. What does it mean to the person you are currently witnessing to/dialoging with? What does it mean to your favorite objector to the Christian faith?

2. There has also been a difference in how to treat vs. 23 among Biblical interpreters (going back and forth between two legitimate and Biblical definitions of "faith"). Luther treated it as the personal, subjective faith of the believer in Jesus Christ (this faith is Biblical taught and refers to the faith of "subjective justification," the personal trust of the believer in Christ..."It is by grace you have been saved **through faith and this is not of yourselves, but the gift of God...**". Certainly, taken "faith in Jesus Christ" in isolation that seems clear enough. However, when taken in context, notice that vs. 22 refers to "faith in Jesus Christ" in connection to:

NASB: "faith which was later to be revealed."

NIV: "until faith should be revealed."

GWN: "faith which was about to come would be revealed."

3. Notice that in connection to these words, especially in regards to what was "promised" (vs. 22) that "faith" is most likely "the body of faith," "the teaching of faith," "the revelation of faith," "the foundation of faith," that is, faith not in the sense of the believers personal trust (which again is a Biblical and legitimate use of the word "faith," but in this context another legitimate, personal use of the word "faith") but in this case, meaning "the saving faith given to the Christian Church," the faith that is the revelation of God's grace in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and His life, death, resurrection and reign for us today. This "faith" is the objective, foundational faith of the Church, the saving doctrine as opposed to the personal, subjective faith of the believer who holds to this doctrine.

4. Thus, vs. 23 is referring to this saving foundation, the objective faith of Christianity.
5. By the way, there can be no "subjective faith" apart from this "objective faith"!!!!
6. Vs. 23 continued. We have appropriately tried to track the use of the word "law" (nomos) throughout our study in Galatians. This is appropriate.

NASB: Treats the "law" as lower case general usage. Note that the NASB in vs. 21 as vs. 17, etc. the Law is capitalized and is in reference to the Mosaic Law. However, NASB makes a transition here.

NIV: Also treats "law" in terms of a more universal in it's lower case. The Concordia Self Study Bible makes this comment in this context:

"held prisoner by the law. To be a prisoner of sin (v. 22) and a prisoner of law amounts to much the same, because law reveals and stimulates sin (see 4:3; Ro 7:8; Col 2:20)." (p. 1796)

Now these are good theological comments and all, but again, the assumption is that the use of "nomos" in vs. 23 is the lower-case, general, universal use of the law.

GWN: Is different, notice that GWN uses the capitalized "LAW".

7. I would submit that this is the way to go, that is the GWN approach. First of all, it seems more contextual: Notice the context of chapter 3. Recall the fundamental problem in Galatia (here we have to do a little review). It was the Hebrew "Judaizers" who insisted on what to begin with (review question)? And where did this law come from? It was part of the _____. Furthermore, in the discussion of Galatians 3, Paul talks about what came 430 years after God's promise to Abraham...then goes on to talk about the mediator (in vs. 20, that mediator is Moses).
8. The second reason is because it makes more sense. The Law is also being described as a "guardian" (to use the GWN word), the NASB says, "kept in custody," the NIV "kept as prisoners"... The Mosaic Law with emphasis on the ceremonial Law is put out in reference to believing Jews who were kept in bondage to the Law before the freedom of the Gospel was revealed. Now let me explain here, I'm not saying that faith in Christ did not exist among O.T. believers...it did. However, this faith in Christ was covered by the Law, that it is, it could only be known by the O.T. believers being absolutely bound to the

Mosaic Law that pointed to the coming Messiah. Without this Law, a believer in the O.T. could not be a believer. They could not be “kept” for the salvation of Messiah who would fulfill the Law.

This is the reason that the metaphorical concept of “imprisonment” (vs. 23) transfers to the further metaphorical “custodian” or “guardian” or “baby-sitter” [see notes below on vs. 24]. There was a good “keeping” going on...yes, “a keeping” that was also a bondage under Law, but a keeping for the sake of leading the Hebrews to the freedom of Messiah.

A more literal translation of vs. 23 seems to be: ***“But before the coming of faith, we were guarded under law, having been locked up to the faith being about to be revealed.”***

The Mosaic Law was good and holy and was a guardian of God's people, keeping Coming Messiah before them, but under this Law, they could not know the freedom that comes from the Gospel revelation (the Faith) of the One who would perfectly fulfill the Law and remove the guardian and bring complete freedom from the keeping of the Mosaic Law.

Anyway, vs. 23 is still on the Mosaic Law.

Vs. 24:

NASB: “Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.”

NIV: “So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.”

GWN: “Thus the Law has been our guardian until Christ came, so that we might be justified [declared righteous] by faith.”

1. This is an exciting elaboration of what we have already discussed above! Here is the good exegetical notation from the Concordia Self Study Bible:

“was put in charge.” The expression translates the Greek *paidagogos* (from which “pedagogue” is derived). It refers to the personal slave-attendant who accompanied a freeborn boy wherever he went and exercised a certain amount of discipline over him. His function was more like that of a baby-sitter than a teacher.” (pg. 1796)

2. The GWN has this study note, also very good:

“Greek *“paidago[e]gos,”* a slave whose duty was similar to that of a modern-day chaperon. Such a slave saw to it that a child under his care was raised properly. He escorted the child to school and reminded the child of who he was and why he was to conduct himself properly.” (pg. 349)

3. Here is Lenski's elaboration:

“Paul is here speaking of the ceremonial contents of the law, all completely abrogated when Christ came, all having finished the purpose for which it was given when the faith was revealed. Yes, all the ceremonial regulations acted just like a slave-guardian did for the boy in his charge. These regulations kept the Jews from mingling with the Gentiles, the bad boys who had no guardian, whose influence and association would bring pagan contamination. All these regulations focused on Christ; they were full of types of Christ [recall our discussion on “types” several weeks ago]. ...None of them had any meaning apart from Christ who was about to be revealed.” (p. 182)

4. Now, despite our ongoing distinctions in the use of *nomos*, all of the comments above still find application in our lives today. The law still leads us to Christ. The law does not save, but it is used by God to lead us to the Savior. Here is Luther:

“But the true use of the Law is this, that I know that by the Law I am being brought to an acknowledgement of sin and am being humbled, so that I may come to Christ and be justified by faith. But faith is neither a Law nor a work; it is a sure confidence that takes hold of Christ, who “is the end of the Law” (Romans 10:4). How? Not by abrogating the old Law and passing a new one or by being a judge who needs to be appeased by works, as the papists taught. But He “is the end of the Law, that everyone who has faith may be justified”; that is, everyone who believes in Christ is righteous, and the Law cannot accuse him. This is the true power and the true use of the Law. Therefore the Law is good, holy, useful, and necessary, so long as one uses it in the legitimate way. Its civic use is good and necessary, but its theological use is the most important and the highest. But the Law is abused, first, by hypocrites who attribute to it the power to justify, and secondly, by men of despair who do not that the Law is a custodian until Christ comes, that is, that the Law humbles us, not to harm us but to save us. For God wounds in order to heal; He kills in order to make alive.”

Galatians, Part XVI
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Rev. Alfonso O. Espinosa, November 21, 2002

Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism OR The Gospel Explained

Chapter 4:1-7: From Bondage to Freedom

Introduction:

- A. Galatians 4:1-7 is a parallel to Galatians 3:22-29.
- B. The only difference is in the literary figures that Paul uses.
- C. Why be repetitive? Because the problem he is addressing is so serious and so difficult to overcome. That is, salvation by works. This seems so elementary to us, but read Luke 18:9-14 and observe how challenging reactions can be. If our reaction is to look down upon the account of the “bad guy” because we have a sense of being better, then we probably have a problem.
- D. The Gospel says: “Done.” The Law says: “Do.” By nature we prefer “Do.”

I. Galatians 4:1-2:

NASB: Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything. 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.

NIV: 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.

GWN: Now I say that as long as the heir is a child, he is no better than a slave, although he owns everything. 2 Rather, he is under guardians and managers until the day set by his father.

- A. *Napios* (vs. 1 above “child”) is the Greek equivalent to Latin *infans*, “not speaking,” the age at which a person’s word carries no weight. This word is put into illustration here to be contrasted to the other word *hyios* “sons” (also contrasted to *doulos*, “slaves”).

The comparison in the text here being:

1. napios: a non-speaking one and doulos, slave: The point: No ability and no right to speak. Remember from the last time how the nomos, the law was presented? As a baby-sitter.

So the extended idea is that while you are a napios under the law, you have nothing to say, you can't speak, mind your place. You are only as one who requires a baby-sitter. You are not even able to speak up, no one would listen to you anyway. This is the condition of a napios and doulos.

Versus...

2. hyios: a "son," one who is vested with full legal rights. You transcend the baby-sitter, you are acknowledged as an heir. You are able to speak and what is more, God will hear you and acknowledge you as a child of God, an heir. You have an "in" that you didn't have before. You have privileges never known before. "Son" has nothing to do with gender distinctions, it applies to the child who is legal heir, male or female.
3. A "son" (hyios) is no longer under guardians and managers (NASB), guardians and trustees (NIV) or guardians and managers (GWN). But as long as one is under the law, they are under all of these – guardians, managers, trustees – and the law functions as baby-sitter for the unspeaking napios.
4. Please share your thoughts here on the difference between an-under-the law napios (unspeaking child) and a full rights hyios (son).

B. Thus, again the two underlying themes of Galatians come out:

1. Bondage (represented in the one who cannot be heard)
2. Freedom (represented in the son with full rights)

C. vs. 1-2: We have an illustration

vs. 3-5: We have application

vs. 6-7: We have further application

II. Galatians 4:3-5:

NASB: So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son,

born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

NIV: 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.

GWN: So it is with us. When we were children, we were slaves under the elementary rules of the world. 4 But when the time finally came, God sent out His Son to be born of a woman and to be born under law, 5 in order to pay the price to free [redeem] those under law that we might be adopted as His full-fledged sons.

- A. Now we might ask what makes a napolis a napolis other than what we've already said (being under the law, not being able to speak, etc.)???
- B. Note how vs. 3 puts it: "when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world." What are "the basic principles of the world"? English translations are:
 - 1. NASB: "elemental things of the world."
 - 2. NIV: "basic principles of the world."
 - 3. GWN: "elementary rules of the world."

What are these?

It would help to ascertain who the "we" are? Where it says, "when *we* were children." (vs. 4)

- 1. Luther interpreted the "we" as referring to Jews only, others include Gentiles. Luther seems to have good grounds for his view. Paul has spent much time in addressing the basic problem of the Judaizers who are misapplying the O.T. to the Christian Church. Further, Paul has spoken of the Mosaic Law and Abraham's seed, etc. The context is one of Biblical Judaism and gaining a proper understanding of how to make the transition from Old to New Testaments. Also, remember that while Paul is a Roman citizen, he is a Jew, in fact "a Jew of Jews," a Pharisee himself. So, going into this reference to "elemental things" it seems to be in application to "we" Hebrews, "we" Jews, "we" people of the Old Covenant.
- 2. Clue #2: Paul has just spent considerable time presenting the Law as a baby-sitter as we discussed last time (the Mosaic Law given through Moses).

3. Thus, based on these aspects, it appears that the “elemental things” *is a false application of the Mosaic Law (including for example, the ceremonial/sacrificial law)*. This is the religion of the world – the religion of the elemental things, basic principles, elementary rules – that is having a form of godliness, but denying its power and having but an elemental faith, an elemental religion. A religion that has no real spiritual power, but one that is based on your appearance, your doing, it is shallow, un-spiritual, dead.

Note: In the above paragraph, I have 2 Timothy 3:1-5 in mind: “But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.”

4. Take note of Colossians 2:20: “Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules; 21 “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”? 22 These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings, 23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.”
5. So a napios is one who does not get the big picture here. As a limited child, he or she only sees the law in a superficial way. It is for behavior control. This is Christianity for the napios...it is behavior adjustment, attitude adjustment, facial expression adjustment, verbage adjustment...it is all secondary stuff (the things a good baby-sitter would remind a mischievous child to do). But do these have any impact on the spirit? No, not at all.
6. Just keep in mind that we are not saying that the Law itself (esp. the Mosaic Law) was superficial, but that when one loses sight of God’s purposes and Messianic promises, then the spiritual element, the faith element is lost.
7. Thus, even the sacrificial/ceremonial law became a system of works righteousness instead of its intended use: to point to faith in a gracious and merciful God who covers sin with the life-blood of the sacrifice and all the while, was pointing to the ultimate Savior, coming Messiah.

8. In this light, we are served a powerful warning. The ministry of Word and Sacrament and the divine liturgy can be abused in the same way. That is, the meaning can be lost and new meaning can be invested, so that people “just go through the motions,” and no longer approach even the Sacrament in faith.
9. This is challenging, because we are not saying that the faith of people legitimize the divine liturgy. No, by virtue of the Word and Sacrament given, the divine liturgy is God’s service to us whether we believe in it or not. Furthermore, it is the Word and Sacrament that create, sustain and nourish faith. However, a Christian has the potential to rebel against this truth and may even sinfully strive – out of pride, apathy, power, etc. – to “change” the meaning to serve self-centered goals. This is to say that divine service – like all of God’s gifts – may be abused. Abuse it enough and one may find themselves rejecting God’s gift and hardening their hearts. Isn’t this precisely the problem in Galatians in regards to the Judaizers? God’s grace was not sufficient, it had to be supplemented according to their sinful pride (but to “supplement” God’s grace is to replace with something else altogether). At this point, then a person is indeed a slave to sin (vs. 3... “we were in slavery”).
10. Anyway, all of this was in connection to verse 3 and Paul’s mentioning of “the basic, elemental principles.” Any questions or comments?
11. verse 4-5, the verses form one sentence.
12. the wording in vs. 4 is literally “sent forth of God,” not “born”. When this fact is connected to the mention of “seed” (at 3:16 that takes us back to the Gospel promise in Genesis 3:15), many see that this refers to the miraculous work of God in connection to “the woman” who *is* virgin when she conceives. At any rate, the wording of “sent forth” many say is another reference to the virgin birth (the clear passages are in Matthew and Luke). However, there is more just trivial interest here, because it appears that these two verses are about emphasizing the great work of Christ in the state of humiliation from incarnation to His making atonement on the cross (“to redeem” vs. 5).
13. I know this can seem a little theological heavy, there is deep and wonderful beauty in Paul’s words here.
14. He takes us from verses 1-3 on the bondage of the Law to the 4-5 introducing the freedom of the Gospel. He is comparing and contrasting in a very powerful way. Notice that verses 1-3 spoke of our limitations and perversions, but verses 4-5 speak of what God did for our salvation.

15. The real block-buster, however, is that Christ doing all that He did for our salvation was in the context of His “being born under the Law.” Remember all those restrictions we spoke of before about being under the baby-sitter? Well, guess who joined you? To save us, Christ joined us...He was born “under the Law.” This is what Luther says:

“The Law did everything to Him (Jesus) that it did to us. It accused us and terrified us. It subjected us to sin, death, and the wrath of God; and it condemned us with its judgment...It accused Him of blasphemy and sedition; it found Him guilty in the sight of God of all the sins of the entire world; finally it so saddened and frightened Him that He sweat blood (Luke 22:44); and eventually it sentenced Him to death, even death on a cross (Phil. 2:8).”

16. People go forward with the correct instinct that the Law just can't be ignored...God put it out there to reveal His nature, His holiness, His righteousness...you just can't ignore the Ten Commandments!!!! So...sinful reason takes this truth and then perverts it with...”that must mean that I can keep it or perhaps just pretend to keep it or just try my best to keep it!” But NO! If we claim that the Law is our salvation, then we must keep it perfectly! But we can't...so what to do? What to do is not for us to do, but for God to do...and He did! He sent His Son...to be “born under the Law.” Our salvation begins with Jesus Christ joining our lives under the Law. And everything the Law does to us...it did to Him and more, since He was not just living for one or two, but for all...all sinners, all people, all of us.

17. vs. 5: But the Law could not accuse Him forever. At the final chapter of its accusation, the Law affected the death it demanded, but this death...the death of this man was also the death of the Son of God...and this particular death achieved what Paul refers to in vs. 5 as “redemption.” This is an important word in the language of atonement.

****The words “redemption” and “ransom” point to freedom and liberation.

****Warfare context: Victors took defeated prisoners of war, while the prisoners' people back home would raise funds for required amount to send back to the land of the victors and buy back their brothers. This is the process that the ancients called “redemption.” They used the verb “redeem” of it and anyone who carried it out was a “redeemer.” The sum of money was called the “ransom.” (Morris, p. 108 of *The Atonement: Its Meaning and Significance*)

**** 18. Now WHY? Here we have two “hina” purpose clauses (vs. 5). What did God purpose in all of this???? The two hina purpose clauses answer the question.

#1 Hina (purpose) clause is connected to “redeem”

#2 Hina (purpose) clause is connected to “adoption as sons” (+ the description of our experience as “sons”)

19. By the way, its hard to read the two hina clauses in the NIV, the NASB makes them clear in having two “that” phrases in verse 5:

#1 “...that He might redeem those who were under the Law...”

#2 “...that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

20. The first hina clause is about redemption, our being “bought back” from death to life. The stuff of objective justification. The objective foundation of the Gospel. This Gospel is true whether we believe it or not. Christ redeemed all people. This is universal justification.

III. Galatians 4:6-7:

NASB: And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

NIV: 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.

GWN: And because you are sons, God sent out the Spirit of His Son into our hearts to cry, “Abba! Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave but a son. And since you are a son, God has also made you an heir.

1. The second hina clause is about actually experiencing life as a son. Through faith in the Gospel, we have the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, having received the Holy Spirit, this is what we experience in our lives of faith: The Holy Spirit cries out, “Abba, Father.” This is the life description of a “son” (an heir).
2. The second hina clause is therefore in the realm of subjective justification. When the objective, universal atonement is personally beneficial to a given individual through faith (the gift of God).
3. This again is an expression of the personal experience of the Christian who passes from bondage to freedom. Remember the comparison between napios and hyios? Having the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ creates the absolute impossibility that one would merely be napios without words. Now, you are

hyios. Your words are vital. You speak as an heir. The Father will never ignore you, but will always give an heir speaking rights. You are welcomed in His presence, you are personally known as an heir. The Holy Spirit, God Himself, speaks on your behalf and leads you to speak words of faith received by God and prayers that are answered in the Name of Christ!

4. Furthermore, your speaking is in the collective, in a body. In verse 6, Christians are referred to in the second person plural, in verse 7, the second person singular. So, our speaking in verse 6 is “our” (“you” = plural, the body of Christ). We speak as a body, as one, we pray “OUR Father,” we encourage one another, we are wrapped up in each other in the Holy Communion.

Ramification: So much for doing church in front of the television!

Ramification: There is no such thing as a “private” Christian faith. Yes, faith is personal, but THE FAITH is not private. No wonder God admonishes us so much to pray for each other and to pray together!!!!

5. Now back to the second hina from vs. 5 flowing over into vss. 6-7: As Buls says, “God sends His Spirit into our Hearts because Jesus took our place under the Law. God sends His Spirit into our hearts as evidence of the fact that we are redeemed...God *does* give the Christian experiential evidence.” (p. 42)
6. He makes an important point here. There is a tendency to set up a false dichotomy in the Church, a dichotomy guilty of the logical fallacy called “excluded middle” or “either-or.” We are either charismatic/Pentecostal and teach that faith is experiential or we are not charismatic, objective and non-experiential.
7. Galatians 4:1-7 does neither. The text begins with the first necessary hina clause. Our foundation is external, objective and does not wait for our experience to be true and powerful and saving. On the other hand, when this foundation becomes personally beneficial through faith (the gift of God), then we experience something. Namely, the Holy Spirit praying in the heart of the believing.
8. Let that soak in. Galatians 4 teaches that God prays in you.
9. God prays in you.
10. And this prayer is an indication of your status as heir. Now we do not rest assurance on prayer. We rest assurance on the first hina clause, our objective foundation...Christ redeemed us...period. At the same time, as a result of this, God prays in you. You are no longer in bondage, the Law – the baby-

sitter – keeping you unable to speak, you are now in Freedom, able to speak, given the Father's full attention on account of Jesus Christ.

11. This is all to say that as far as the Christian is personally concerned, 1. Redemption from condemnation of law and 2. reception of sonship and the gift of the Holy Spirit are a unit. These rise and fall together in the life of the Christian. If we know that we are redeemed, then we have the Holy Spirit and your prayers are heard and answered by God. Wow!!!!

12. Let's let Luther speak to vs. 7 in terms of ramifications of "heir" by going back to some commentary on 6 (which is connected also to vs. 7):

"The Holy Spirit is sent forth in two ways. In the primitive church He was sent forth in a manifest and visible form. Thus He descended upon Christ at the Jordan in the form of a dove (Matt. 3:16), and upon the apostles and other believers in the form of fire (Acts 2:3). This was the first sending forth of the Holy Spirit; it was necessary in the primitive church, which had to be established with visible signs on account of the unbelievers, as Paul testifies. 1 Cor. 14:22: 'Tongues are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers.' But later on, when the church had been gathered and confirmed by these signs, it was not necessary for this visible sending forth of the Holy Spirit to continue."

"The second sending is that by which the Holy Spirit, through the Word, is sent into the hearts of believers, as is said here: 'God has sent the Spirit of His son into your hearts.' This happens without a visible form, namely, when through the spoken Word we receive fire and light, by which we are made new and different, and by which a new judgment, new sensations, and new drives arise in us. This change and new judgment are not the work of human reason or power; they are the gift and accomplishment of the Holy Spirit, who comes with the preached Word, purifies our hearts by faith, and produces spiritual motivation in us. Therefore there is the greatest possible difference between us and the enemies and perverters of the Word. We, by the grace of God, are able to declare and judge with certainty, on the basis of the Word, about the will of God toward us, about all laws and doctrines, about our own lives and those of others."

[skip three sentences onto the next paragraph...]

"It is not evident, of course, that we have been renewed in our minds and that we have the Holy Spirit. Yet our very ability to judge, our speech, and our confession are evidence enough that the Holy Spirit is in us with His gifts."

[skip the rest of the paragraph of 5 sentences...]

"We also discipline ourselves in piety and avoid sin as much as we can. If we do sin, it is not deliberate; we sin through ignorance, and we regret it. We can fall, for the devil is lying in wait for us day and night. The remnants of sin also cling to our flesh. So far as

the flesh is concerned, then, we are sinners even after we have received the Holy Spirit. Externally there is not much difference between the Christian and another socially upright human being. The works of the Christian are cheap in appearance: He does his duty according to his calling; he rules the commonwealth; he runs the household; he tills the field; he helps, supports, and serves his neighbor. The unspiritual man does not praise these works but thinks of them as common and as nothing, as something that laymen and even heathen do. For the world does not perceive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14); therefore it forms a distorted judgment of the works of the pious.”

[skip the rest of the paragraph of 4 sentences...]

“Therefore we must not doubt that the Holy Spirit dwells in us; but we must be sure and acknowledge that we are, as Paul says, ‘a temple of the Holy Spirit’ (1 Cor. 6:19). For if someone experiences love toward the Word, and if he enjoys hearing, speaking, thinking, lecturing, and writing about Christ, he should know that this is not a work of human will or reason but a gift of the Holy Spirit. For it is impossible for these things to happen without the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, where there is hate and contempt for the Word, there the devil, ‘the god of this world’ (2 Cor. 4:4), is reigning, blinding the hearts of men and holding them captive, to keep the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ from shining upon them...[skip 1 sentence]...Those in whom there is some glow and yearning for the Word should acknowledge with gratitude that this feeling has been infused into them by the Holy Spirit. For we are not born with this feeling; nor can we be instructed to acquire it by any laws. It is the right hand of the Most High, pure and simple, that has changed us (Ps. 77:10). Therefore when we are glad to hear the proclamation about Christ, the Son of God, who was made man for us and subjected Himself to the Law to redeem us, then with and through that proclamation God surely sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts. Therefore it is extremely profitable to the pious to know that they have the Holy Spirit.”

[skip a paragraph...]

“Augustine says correctly and faithfully that anyone can certainly see his own faith if he has it.”

[skip a few paragraphs...]

“In addition, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, as Paul says here. Now Christ is completely certain that in His Spirit He is pleasing to God. Since we have the same Spirit of Christ, we, too, should be certain that we are in a state of grace, on account of Him who is certain. So much for the internal testimony, by which the heart should believe with complete certainty that it is in a state of grace and that it has the Holy Spirit. But the external signs, as I have said earlier, are these: to enjoy hearing about Christ; to teach, give thanks, praise, and confess Him, even at the cost of property and life; to do one’s duty according to one’s calling in a manly way, in faith and joy; not to take delight in sin; not to invade someone else’s calling but to serve one’s own; to help a needy

brother, comfort the sorrowful, etc. By these signs we are assured and confirmed a posteriori that we are in a state of grace. The wicked have these signs too, but not in a pure way...” (LW, vol. 26, pp. 374-379)

Galatians, Part XVII
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Rev. Alfonso O. Espinosa, December 19, 2002

Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism OR The Gospel Explained

Chapter 4:8-11; 4:12-15; 4:16-20

Introduction:

From 3:1-4:7 St. Paul has presented his argument that salvation is by faith alone. Galatians 4:8-11 is the conclusion of his argument. This is the content of today's Bible Study, the conclusion of the argument.

We will then move onto 4:12-15 and 4:16-20 next week. These are connected to the above section, but not in arguing the point of justification apart from the works of the Law. St. Paul in these two sections, however, is making an urgent appeal that his addressees enter into what *results* from a clear understanding of justification. That is, St. Paul is appealing to them that they would enter into freedom from Law. He will then present the allegory of Hagar and Sarah (the woman of bondage/Law and the woman of the promise/freedom/Gospel) in 4:21-31. With these final appeals to follow the way of freedom, Paul will then begin teaching and describing the life that is displayed when one is in Christ (the Gospel of freedom). Consequently, the final two chapters of Galatians present practical, moral and ethical applications of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (our sanctification).

This study concludes with St. Paul's appeal to live in the freedom of the Gospel, rather than remaining in bondage of the Law. Now, we conclude Paul's argument on righteousness through faith alone apart from the Law. This concludes the necessary foundation for anyone who would then live in the Gospel.

I. Galatians 4:8-11:

NASB: However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. 9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? 10 You observe days and months and seasons and years. 11 I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.

NIV: 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.

GWN: On the other hand, when you did not know God, you were slaves to gods who do not really exist. 9 Now that you know God – or rather, God knows you – how can you turn back again to those elementary rules, so weak and beggarly, and be willing to become slaves to them all over again? 10 You observe days, months, seasons, and years! 11 I am afraid for you that the hard work I did on you may been wasted.

1. vs. 8. Last week we brought out the significance of the two *hina* (purpose) clauses from vs. 5. The saving work of Christ was for the purposes of 1) redeeming us (our justification) and 2) adopting us (as vs. 6 went on to describe our sanctification based on receiving the Holy Spirit). Vs. 7 went on to firmly establish our identities as a result of these purposes accomplished by the grace of God: You are a “son” (*hyios*) – as opposed to the non-speaking/no rights “child” (*napios*) – and now you are an heir with full privileges. The Lord receives your prayers and is pleased to give you the Kingdom (Lk. 12:32).
2. Now here at vs. 8, St. Paul reminds the Galatians what the alternative to all of this is. If one is NOT a “son” then you don’t know God!
3. This is a sobering thought to say the least. That is, one may “believe in God,” one may even have a very high regard for the Law and strive to keep that Law...one may be very religious. And yet, if one is not in the status of “son,” then he or she is still in the status of “slave” (*doulos*) to those elemental things we spoke of last time. [Keep in mind that *doulos* “slave” is used in both a negative and positive context. We are to be slaves of God (Romans 6:18-23), but not slaves to idols as we have presented here.]

Question #1: People have many standards for “knowing God,” but here in a Galatians the standard is straight-forward: Being a son who clings to the forgiveness of sins in Christ. Why are so many other “standards” insufficient, for example the standard of “believing in God”?

Question #2: What impact does God’s standard have on you...that He considers you as a son (legal heir) simply because you cling to the forgiveness of sins (your redemption through faith) and because -- by virtue of your baptism -- you have been given the Holy Spirit? What do you think of God’s standards for knowing Him?

4. The Mosaic Law – good and holy as is all of God’s Law – was abused, misinterpreted and misapplied to the extent that it became a form of idolatry.
5. In this while section – vss. 8-11 – St. Paul is saying that to use the sacrificial law as basis for justification amounts to heathen idolatry.

6. Luther says: *“Whoever falls from the doctrine of justification is ignorant of God and is an idolater.”*
7. Once again, we will either be a slave of God or a slave of idolatry. There is no third option. St. Paul uses “gods” not to suggest any sort of divine nature in anything other than the One True God, but to point out what deluded people do in making gods for themselves: “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods.”

Point to Ponder: As pagans, the Galatians had other gods. Their “god” was not God at all. This gets back to our discussion on how God is known. What’s kind of scary is how confident folks can be about “god,” but until the Gospel is known “god” or “gods” are totally false concepts. The text makes it clear that people may be very religious, very “spiritual” but have no idea who God is (consider the various World Religions and Cults). We are called to share the Gospel to all people that all would know the true and only God.

Point to Ponder: But isn’t it humbling to consider that the only way of knowing God is through the Gospel? The Lord is so good to us! While the Gospel of Christ is absolutely wondrous and marvelous, it is also very simple, lucid and direct: God took on flesh, lived and died in our stead, rose for our justification.

Now consider the “all roads” analogy of the New Age movement. But the Gospel will not allow this! John 14:6 and Acts 4:12 (and many other references) depict the exclusivity of Christianity. Christianity isn’t one road among many on the mountain to God, but is a different mountain altogether!

This helps us to understand Luther’s emphasis on Christology. If we do not know Christ, we cannot know God. In Christ, God is revealed – we may know His mercy and grace and love – but apart from Christ, God is hidden...and man will go on to invent a god that isn’t god at all in their attempt to know God.

8. vs. 9: Uses in an important word, the word “know” (*ginosko*). When the word is applied to Christians, it describes a knowledge approved by God, given and revealed to us. For example:

John 6:69, Peter says, “And we have come to believe and know that You are the Holy One of God.”

It also describes Christ knowing us as His very own:

John 10:14: “I am the Good Shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me.”

9. Paul uses a deliberate correction from the active (you know) to the passive (are known). This is a literary device for making a point, intensifying what is being said. The active voice of “know” represents the intimate knowledge between Christian and God (and this is well and good), but Paul wants to be clear about why this is in any way possible (again, he is reminding the Galatians about grace as opposed to Law)!
10. Luther says, “Not for this reason are they known because they know [active], but, on the contrary, because they are known [passive], for that reason they know.”
11. Thus, Buls summarizes: “In other words, Paul gives God alone all the honor and glory for their conversion and justification.”
12. If one is clear about how it is one knows God, then all synergism is out the window. Recall that synergism means “to work with” God for salvation, it suggests that man is capable of cooperating with God for salvation and that man contributes to salvation.
13. But for St. Paul to say this here at vs. 9 says that the Galatians are clearly the _____ of God!
14. Soak that in again. Paul has been quite severe in this letter! I made this point several months ago, and it was challenging back then, it is probably still challenging! Remember, “You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?”???!!! (3:1) But again, Paul treats them as people who were once pagans, became Christians, and are now again *becoming* pagans. But evidently – even with all the problems – Paul gives them the benefit of the doubt, they are being treated as Christians. He is warning them and at times doing so in a most stern fashion, but they are the elect, they are known by God, they *are* sons and heirs despite all their problems, temptations, confusions and abuses, but nevertheless Paul calls them “brothers” (3:15).

Question: What does this say of the Lord’s patience?

15. On the other hand, there is a real tension inherent in this text. They are referred to as believers, but...
16. Luther: “The topic that Paul is treating here is extremely important and worthy of the most careful consideration, namely, that falling away from the grace of God is the same as losing all knowledge of the truth.”
17. The Galatians desire to go back to paganism...they want to go back, so Paul warns them. Slide enough and before you know it, you’ve fallen away.

18. vs. 10: This gets us back to the question as to what is being referred to by the elemental things above. Again, one side says Ceremonial Law (which I gave you rationale for last time), others say heathen ordinances (other man-made laws). It is obvious that they've gone way beyond simple circumcision. That is certain.
19. Again, read Col. 2:16.
20. vs. 11: Not "I'm afraid of you," but "I am afraid ____ ____." Paul is a good pastor. His concern is for their spiritual life. Just remember that Paul never repudiates the Law, but the practice of attaching righteousness to its observance.

Galatians, Part XVIII
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Rev. Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. The Rest of Chapter 4:

A. 4:12-15:	Urgent appeal part I to receive the blessings of justification
B. 4:16-20:	Urgent appeal part II to receive the blessings of justification
C. 4:21-31:	Allegory of Hagar and Sarah to show the difference between bondage and freedom; that these do not coexist.

III. 4:12-15:

NASB: I beg you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong; 13 but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; 14 and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself. 15 Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness, that if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.

NIV: 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.

GWN: I beg you, my fellow Christians, act as I did because I am acting as you did. You did me no wrong. 13 You know that I brought you the Gospel the first time because I was sick. 14 Though my sick body was a test for you, you did not despise or scorn me, but you welcomed me as if I were a messenger of God or Christ Jesus Himself. 15 Your positive attitude toward me – what has become of that? I can say for a fact that if it had been possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me.

A. Again after the serious admonition and correction, Paul continues to call the Galatians “brethren” (brothers), meaning fellow-Christians. Our being simultaneously justified and sinners is a constant theme in Galatians. Paul uses Law to speak to the Galatians as if they were unbelievers and the Gospel as if they were completely holy. But this is true for us constantly. Our flesh never becomes “more Christian,” but always disbelieves and rebels, it never seeks to honor God, but tempts us to return to the vomit of serving the devil. Our spirit in Christ has nothing to do with the accusation of the Law, is completely in Christ, totally holy and without any stain, wrinkle or blemish. In Christ, you are 100% pure, complete, perfect, without sin. So again, we are not confused as to how it is Paul can call these Galatians with their terrible problems in the flesh are nevertheless called “brethren.”

- B. What about these words: “become like me, for I became like you.”? This is speaking of the heart-felt attitude of Paul. Become as I am in regard to the attitude I have towards you. Have the same kind of heart and mind toward me. 1 Corinthians 9:22 is Paul’s missionary strategy: “I have become all things to all men...” But where does any of this relating begin? It begins with love. Love was needed to serve the Galatians. This is true especially when it comes to doctrine. If there are fundamental differences in teaching, then hatred will develop. No chasm develops like the chasm of a difference in faith. So, Paul urges them to imitate his sacrificial love. The Galatians legalism was cause for complete alienation from the apostle, and yet Paul holds onto them in love. Note, however, Paul will not budge in doctrine, he will never compromise the faith, but he continues to serve the Galatians in love. He now urges them to treat him the same way. But to grow in this mutual love is really to begin to celebrate a mutual doctrine, for the Galatians to leave no question about their holding to justification. Buls makes this insightful comment: *“In any case we can see that heresy destroys the deep love once held.”*(p. 46)
- C. vs. 13: Paul’s illness. We don’t know what it was. CSSB suggests that Galatians 6:11 clues us into eye trouble as the culprit. However, GWN suggests the possibility of malaria. Here is the GWN comment: “It may have been malaria that forced Paul to leave the swampy country of Pamphylia and climb up the rugged Taurus Mountains to Antioch near Pisidia, lying 3,600 feet above sea level. Here Paul began his missionary work among the Galatians. See Acts 13:13,14.” (p. 350)
- D. vs. 14: Fascinating to say the least. Whatever this illness in his body was, it appears that it might have reasonably produced a negative response from the world. This gets us into realities that perhaps we would rather not talk about. But Hendricksen is quoted here by Buls: “a sickness which one spits at.” Human nature applauds the charismatic and physically attractive. We like good appearances. But what about ugly ducklings? Remember the description of our Lord? Isaiah 52:14: “Just as there were many who were appalled at him – his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness” (in context of His suffering for us). But was there ever anyone more beautiful? But let’s not lose our train of thought. I wonder how outwardly attractive and appealing the legalistic Judaizers were?

The point Paul is making though is despite his unattractive bodily illness, that before the Judaizers came to negatively influence the Galatians, they received Paul with open arms; welcomed him as if he were an angel or Christ himself...why? Because they had experienced the power of the Gospel he preached. Nothing is more appealing than the pure Gospel when it is received in faith. Nothing is more comforting, nothing more relieving, nothing more attractive, nothing more beautiful. Paul is trying to remind them of this fact.

- E. vs. 15: What happened to your former happiness? RSV uses “satisfaction,” JB has “enthusiasm,” our three translations: NASB: “sense of blessing,” NIV: “joy,” GWN: “positive attitude.” The awesome thing here is that they are all trying to translate the *experience* of faith in the Gospel (yep, we Lutherans know this as well as anyone!). But Paul is pointing out something to them: Something has happened to this spiritual result of clinging to the Gospel of freedom and the allure of the Law has dampened their spirit to say the least. They have lost their joy. But it may return by returning to the only true

source of peace and blessing, the Gospel. The rest of the verse about plucking out your eyes is again to say how Paul was previously received. Things had changed, but Paul holds onto them in love.

IV. 4:16-20:

NASB: Have I therefore become your enemy by telling you the truth? 17 They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out, in order that you may seek them. 18 but it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you. 19 My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you – 20 but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

NIV: 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 of 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, 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!

GWN: Can it be that I have become your enemy by telling you the truth? 17 These men are zealous for you, but not in your interest. They want to cut you off from me so that you will be zealous for them. 18 It is good to be zealous in a good cause always, and not only when I am present with you. 19 My children, I am suffering birth pains for you again until Christ is formed in you. 20 I wish I were with you right now and could change my way of speaking to you, because I am puzzled about you.

A. vs. 16: Rhetorical question to recognize the possibility that telling the truth to a friend may possibly turn that friend into an enemy. Not only are the faithful called to serve, but also sometimes it includes the call to bear the hatred of those who resent the truth. Buls: “Those who speak the truth are often slandered as troublemakers and hateful people by those who don’t want the truth. Cf. Elijah and Ahab, I Kings 18:1-40; Christ and His enemies, John 8:30-59.” (p. 48) This is not to say that the Christian goes out of their way to be less than tactful; does not mean that we go out of our way to offend, nor does this excuse a pharisaical attitude to look down on others. The simple fact in this text is that even when we speak the truth in love at times, that we may be resented for it and become an enemy.

Luther: “It is a friend’s responsibility, if his friend is in the wrong, to admonish him freely; and the one who has been admonished does not become angry with his friend because of the friendly admonition and statement of the truth but is grateful to him and shows it. In the world, of course, it is extremely common that the truth arouses hatred and that someone who tells the truth is regarded as an enemy. This does not happen among friends, much less among Christians. Since I scolded you purely out of love, in order to keep you in the truth, you should not be angry with me or forsake the truth because of my fatherly rebuke; nor should you suspect that I am your enemy.” (p. 424)

- B. vs. 17: A reference to the Judaizers. By the way, the word translated as “zealous” (NIV) and “eagerly” (NASB) and “zealous” GWN can be used in a positive/good and a negative/evil context. For the Christian, may express a divine jealousy. The highest desire to have for someone is that they would know justification by grace through faith (that they would cling to Christ alone). In this case here at vs. 17, the zealousness of the Judaizers is to manipulate the Galatians for their legalism.
- C. vs. 18: This is pretty much self-explanatory based on vs. 17’s comment, but there seems to be the inference that perhaps there is a problem with inconsistency (being “two-faced”). Don’t be one way with me and then when I’m away follow the Judaziers.
- D. vs. 19: What a fascinating expression here! Paul says, “...I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you.” Paul is expressing his great love for the Galatians in calling them “My children.” Christ used this expression in John 13:33: “My children, I will be with you only a little longer...” The apostle John uses it too: “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin...” (1 John 2:1) and 1 John 3:7: “Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray.” This is why we still have the concept of confessor and spiritual father in the evangelical and catholic Church. When Christ warns against calling anyone “Father” it is in the context of one who lords authority over someone else, someone who wants only honor and cares not to serve spiritual children. St. Paul knows nothing of this...the Galatians are his children...he is willing to suffer for them.

But what of “until Christ is formed in you”? Luther focused on justification. Other good theologians (e.g. Calvin and Bruce) believe it refers to sanctification. Others say both. Personally, I think it interesting that this occurs here. It is a literal transition between the long defense of justification vs. legalism and is in the process of introducing chapters 5 & 6 on freedom in the Gospel. Thus, to say that it is a combination of our being declared righteous *and* the conformity of our lives in Christ by the Spirit’s guiding seems reasonable. After all, these are at any rate inextricable. You really can’t have one without the other.

However, we are still in the predominant context of justification, so it seems that we ought stay on that side of things. Lenski puts it simply: “Paul is not speaking of our conduct which is, of course, also to be conformable to Christ in holy living and abundance of good works...Here Paul deals with faith as embracing Christ, him fully, him alone.” (p. 230) I like what Lenski says here. He also says this before his making his emphasis on faith: “By inculcating trust in ceremonial works of law the Judaistic error was taking Christ out of the hearts of the Galatians, and Paul’s strong efforts in this epistle, which wrench his heart like travail pains, sought to put Christ back into the hearts of his little children.” (p. 230)

This is a very long way of saying I think Luther was right.

- E. vs. 20: Our various English translations: “I am perplexed about you” (NASB and NIV) and “I am puzzled about you” (GWN). He’s at his wits’ end! It is a mystery that while the Gospel is so clear, the flesh is so obstinate.
- V. 4:21-31:

NASB: Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. 23 But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. 24 This is allegorically speaking: for these women are two covenants, one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. 25 Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. 26 But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. 27 For it is written, "Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in labor; for more are the children of the desolate than of the one who has a husband." 28 And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 But 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. 30 But 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." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

NIV: 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 a 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 labor 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.

GWN: Tell me, you who want to be under the Law, will you not listen to what the Law says? 22 It is written that Abraham had two sons; one was the son of the slave woman and the other the son of the free woman. 23 Now the son of the slave woman was born in a natural way, but the son of the free woman by the promise. 24 I am going to use these historical events as illustrations. The women are two covenants [two "last will and testaments"]. The children of the covenant given on Mount Sinai are born to be slaves; this is Hagar. 25 Hagar in this sense is Mount Sinai in Arabia and she is like Jerusalem today; she and her children are slaves. 26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free; and she is our mother. 27 It is written: *Be glad, barren woman, you who do not have any children; break into shouting, you who feel no pains of childbirth, because the deserted woman has many more children than the one who has the husband.* 28 Now you, my fellow Christians, like Isaac, are children of the promise. 29 Furthermore, at that time the son who was born in a natural way persecuted the son born in a spiritual way. And it is exactly the same way now. 30 But what does the Scripture say? *"Get rid of the slave woman and her son, because the son of the slave woman will not be an heir together with the son of the free woman."* 31 Now then, fellow Christians, we are not children of a slave woman but of a free woman.

- A. As we move into this final argument of St. Paul, let us consider Bul's presentation on three illustrative figures of speech in the NT (p. 50):
- B. "Figures and figurative languages are not *sedes doctrinae* [seat of doctrine, Scriptures that establish major doctrine, e.g. original sin, the Holy Trinity, etc.], but merely illustrate the *sedes* [what has already been taught as doctrine, within the seat]."
- C. Here are three major illustrative figures of speech in the NT:
 - #1: "Type-antitype: A miniature followed by a major. Both are Scriptural. One is prophetic [the miniature]. The other is fulfillment [the major]. Cf. the Paschal Lamb and Melchizedek. The major always governs the minor. Heb. 7:3."
 - #2: "Allegory: On the basis of a historical narrative, the same nature in two things is compared. Allegory is Scriptural, but is not prophetic."
 - #3: "Parable and metaphor: Illustrations with a point of comparison. Neither is necessarily historical. The story of Jonah is NOT a parable because it is definitely true history. But the so-called parable of The Good Samaritan is parabolic. Its historicity is beside the point."
- D. Now, Galatians 4:21-31 is an allegory with its application, (21-27 is the allegory) and (28-31 is its application).
- E. It is important not to read too much into the allegory. For example, we ought not assume that Hagar and Ishmael disbelieved. In Genesis 17:23 we read that Abraham circumcised Ishmael as well. Ishmael also received the sign of God's covenant.
- F. The point of the allegory is to say that apart from God's grace, God's promise, there is no inheritance nor salvation. We can't fulfill God's promises, God must fulfill God's promises. Faith says that Christ did it all and trusts in Him alone.
- G. In the past, we've appreciated the different uses of the word "law." Well in vs. 21 we have two uses in one sentence. This section starts off with this thought: "Tell me, you who want to justify yourself through law-works ("law"), do you not listen to the Law (the Law of Moses/the Pentateuch/the Torah)?"
- H. And thus, the allegory takes off from here: As for human endeavor, represented by the words, "according to the flesh" see how human endeavor did under the Law of Moses. It failed miserably. The Law is holy, but we are not. However, now consider the Gospel. While we were yet sinners, God made a promise and He kept His promise. From Sarah the royal line commenced and it led to Messiah, it led to Christ.
- I. It is exciting to consider that our "mother" is this heavenly Jerusalem, the heavenly Kingdom. But are we not connected to her now? Yes we are through Christ's Church. He is here serving us through His bride, the Church where Word and Sacrament are given. As Christ's nourishes us with the Holy Gospel, we are "children of promise" (vs. 28) and "children of...the free woman" (vs. 31). We are the children born of His grace.

Galatians, Part XIX
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Pastor Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. Outline of chapters 5 & 6 (from Harold H. Bultmann):

5:1-12: The importance of disavowing the Judaizers and clinging to Christian Freedom.

5:13-15: Love, the fulfilling of the law, not strife, must reign among Christians.

5:16-24: The God pleasing life comes through the Holy Spirit, who opposes the flesh and its works and grants a life of true love.

5:25-6:5: If we are led by the Holy Spirit we won't lord it over our brethren but bear their weaknesses.

6:6-10: Christians should not fail to support pastors and teachers and in general should be beneficial to all, especially fellow Christians.

6:11-18: Paul reminds the hearers that not externals but rather the Cross is the Christian's highest principle. He closes with a heartfelt blessing.

III. Today, we do the first half of 5:1-12: "Stand Fast!"

- A. Chapters 5 & 6 are the practical section of this epistle.
- B. These two chapters provide a test as to whether or not a person has abandoned the teaching of the Judaizers (works righteousness).
- C. It will be helpful for us going into this section to keep before us the concept of *adiaphoron*. *Adiaphoron* is that which is neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word.
- D. St. Paul is not saying that circumcision is forbidden. Paul is not opposing circumcision in and of itself, because circumcision is an *adiaphoron*. Someone might claim that circumcision is not an *adiaphoron* per the Abrahamic covenant and God's command to circumcise every male child at 8 days old (Genesis 17). However, in the overall context of Scripture, Christ has fulfilled the Law and has provided for us a "circumcision of the heart" by grace through faith in Him.

Colossians 2:11-12: *“and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; 12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”*

E. Ephesians 2:11 and 15 bring out Christ’s work in regards to the Law:

Ephesians 2:11 & 13-16: *“Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called ‘Uncircumcision’ by the so-called ‘Circumcision,’ which is performed in the flesh by human hands – 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.”*

F. You’ll recall, however, that the problem depicted in Galatians is that the Judaizers were treating circumcision as a _____.

G. This is the potential misuse of ANY adiaphoron. We too must be aware! For example, the use of our great TLH hymnal is in itself an adiaphoron. Christians do not *have to* use it in divine service. While I personally have disdain for them, cigarettes are adiaphoron. Some might try to make the argument that because it has been proven that these are harmful to the body; that because the Lord teaches us that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6) that we should therefore treat the use of cigarettes as sinful. However, there is no direct command nor prohibition against smoking tobacco. Furthermore, if one *did* agree with the criterion of the legalist in regards to cigarettes, then where would you draw the line? How healthy, for example is a Big Mac? Ought one *ever* eat processed meat, margarine, or lobster (which is essentially a giant roach that crawls on the sea floor)?

H. Needless to say, we can see how legalism can quickly get out of hand! If you qualify the Gospel of Christ with even one thing, where do you draw the line?

I. At any rate, we have a model for Christian counseling right here in Galatians. St. Paul’s first move is not to get into the superficial issue of the adiaphoron. Instead, he goes to the heart of the matter. In the first four chapters, especially in chapters 3 & 4, he teaches on what???

J. These suggest that the whole realm of ethics and life application will be botched if one does not know the Gospel!

IV. The text of 5:1-6:

A. 5:1:

NASB: It is for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

NIV: 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.

GWN: Christ has freed us so that we will be free. Stand firm then, and do not get caught again under a yoke of slavery.

1. Luther gets us started with a great quote:

That is: "Be firm!" Thus Peter says (1 Peter 5:8-9): "Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith." "Do not be smug," he says, "but be firm. Do not lie down or sleep, but stand." It is as though he were saying: "Vigilance and steadiness are necessary if you are to keep the freedom for which Christ has set us free. Those who are smug and sleepy are not able to keep it." For Satan violently hates the light of the Gospel, that is, the teaching about grace, freedom, comfort and life. Therefore as soon as he sees it arise, he immediately strives to obliterate it with all his winds and storms. For this reason Paul urges godly persons not to be drowsy and smug in their behavior but to stand bravely in the battle against Satan, lest he take away the freedom achieved for them by Christ." (LW 27, p. 3)

2. Luther also has a superb commentary on three kinds of freedom:

#1: First of all, there is political freedom. When we speak of "the land of the free" in our national anthem, we are describing this civic or political freedom. This has nothing to do with the context of Galatians!

#2: Then there is the freedom of the flesh. The sinful nature that rebels against God, that leads us in the desire to be autonomous, to do our own thing, to be our own masters, to ignore the Word of God or to try to change it. All of these things describe the freedom of the flesh. Ironically, the freedom of the flesh epitomizes the greatest slavery. That is, slavery to sin.

#3: Finally and most importantly, there is the freedom of Christ, that which is spoken of here in Galatians. This freedom is freedom from the wrath of God. We pick up on Luther's commentary again...

Where? In the conscience. This is where our freedom comes to a halt; it goes no further. For Christ has set us free, not for a political freedom or a freedom of the flesh but for a

theological or spiritual freedom, that is, to make our conscience free and joyful, unafraid of the wrath to come (Matt. 3:7). This is the most genuine freedom; it is immeasurable. (LW 27, p. 4)

3. In the context of this freedom, St. Paul gives both a command and a prohibition: “keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”
4. What is this “yoke of slavery”? It refers to being a slave to the Law of God. Yes the Law is good as Paul says in Romans 7, but here Paul is being indignant and contemptuous in regards the perversion of its application. If we go along with the Judaizers, we enter into a yoke of slavery! Luther: “Here Paul seems to be comparing those who seek righteousness through the Law to oxen that have been subjected to a yoke.” (ibid, p. 7) The only reward that comes of this is sin, death and the wrath of God along with slavery to the devil, the flesh and the world.

B. 5:2:

NASB: Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you.

NIV: Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.

GWN: I, Paul, tell you, if you have yourselves circumcised, Christ will be of absolutely no benefit to you.

1. Again, Paul is not speaking against circumcision in and of itself; not the ACT, but the ATTITUDE or the going along with the belief that circumcision is necessary for salvation. If this is our faith then we are in effect rejecting faith in Christ; then, our salvation becomes a matter of what we do, not what God has done in Christ. Thus, Christ will be of no benefit! This is not saying that His universal atonement is no longer effective, it will always be, but it is saying that the individual choosing works righteousness refuses the saving work of Christ.
2. By the way, this verse implicitly denies one of the facets of classic 5-point Calvinism, namely irresistible grace. Per this verse, why would Paul be warning these Christians in Galatia if grace were irresistible; if God forced us to believe in the Gospel? In fact, if we change our mind about the Gospel and insist on works righteousness, we prove that God's grace is indeed resistible.

3. Luther is great in pointing out how one teaching/doctrine alone grants us the ability to judge all other doctrines!

This teaching is the touchstone by which we can judge most surely and freely about all doctrines, works, forms of worship, and ceremonies of all men. Whoever (whether he be a papist, a Jew, a Turk, or a sectarian) teaches that anything beyond the Gospel of Christ is necessary to attain salvation; whoever establishes any work or form of worship; whoever observes any rule, tradition, or ceremony with the opinion that thereby he will obtain the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and eternal life – will hear the judgment of the Holy Spirit pronounced against him here by the apostle: that Christ is of no advantage to him at all. (LW 27, p. 9)

C. 5:3:

NASB: And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.

NIV: Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.

GWN: And again I warn everyone who has himself circumcised that he obligates himself to do everything the Law says.

1. “Law” (nomos) probably refers to the entire Mosaic Law. Makes sense. If you’re going to take a part of the Mosaic Law, why not take all of it. Isn’t it all from God and holy? Wouldn’t we have an obligation to obey all of it and not pick and choose?!
2. So, now if we go along with this insistence on circumcision, we are really saying we ought follow the whole law, but now read James 2:10:

“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.”

3. Thus, to insist on keeping one part is really to dig oneself even deeper into the condemnation/curse/slavery of the law.
4. This will help us to understand Luther’s comments:

Luther: “By the very act of trying to satisfy the Law and to be set free from it you have involved yourselves all the more completely in its yoke, so that it has all the more right to accuse and condemn you...Thus it is certainly true that those who keep the Law do not keep it. The more men try to satisfy the Law, the more they transgress it. The more someone tries to bring peace to his conscience through his own righteousness, the more disquieted he makes it.” (LW 27, p. 13)

5. Now soak that in! “The more men try to satisfy the Law, the more they transgress it.” Let’s explain this one in our own words and make sure we understand it!
6. In fact, Luther goes even further on this point: *“Therefore they [those who insist on trying to keep the Law for righteousness] are less fortunate than tax collectors and harlots, who do not offer their good works to a wrathful God in exchange for eternal life, as the self-righteous do, since they have none to offer, but beg that their sins be forgiven them for the sake of Christ.”* (ibid, p. 14)

D. 5:4:

NASB: You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

NIV: You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

GWN: You who try to be justified [declared righteous] by law have been cut off from Christ and have fallen from grace.

1. Again, so much for eternal security in the sense of Calvinism. See also 2 Peter 3:17: *“You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness.”*
2. It is hard to imagine how much more clear a warning this could be.

E. 5:5:

NASB: For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

NIV: But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.

GWN: For we through the Spirit eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope.

1. In what sense is the word “hope” used? There is disagreement here, but it hardly matters in the bottom line of the basic and most important meaning of this verse.
2. There are two “hopes” in Scripture:

#1: Objective: The thing hoped for.

#2: Subjective: The feeling of hope.

Luther takes the easy way out! “Thus in this passage “hope” can be taken in both senses, and accordingly the passage can have two meanings.”!!!!

The first sense, as in Col. 1:5: “because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel.” This is objective.

The second sense, as in Romans 8:24-25: “For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.”

3. But there is any even greater lesson here: When we are confronted by fears, anxieties and doubts about our faith, we do not run to our conscience for solace and comfort. We do not retreat to our own thoughts! Instead, we must run to the Word of God! This is where our hope (both objective and subjective) lies!

F. 5:6:

NASB: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

NIV: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

GWN: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor the lack of it counts for anything, but what counts is faith that is active in love.

1. This is the verse that Rome teaches its “faith which is formed by love;” the idea that active love causes faith. This is a false doctrine.
2. At the same time, we would also be making a grave error to say that the two – faith and love – have no relation to each other. Not true.
3. F.F. Bruce had this to say: *“Justification by faith and life in the Spirit are like two sides of one coin; neither is present without the other.”* So again to quote Luther, “Faith alone justifies but faith is never alone.”
4. Luther says that these two, faith and love, comprehend all of Christianity, and may be prayed this way in connection to Holy Communion: “faith toward Thee and fervent love toward one another.” Thus, in matters of faith, we cannot budge; but in matters of love, we will bend over backwards.

Galatians, Part XX
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Pastor Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. The first section of chapter 5 to be completed today:

5:1-12: The importance of disavowing the Judaizers and clinging to Christian Freedom.

III. 5:7:

NASB: "You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?"

NIV: "You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?"

AAT: "You were running well. Who has kept you from obeying the truth?"

1. "Before the Judaizers hindered them. Paul was fond of depicting the Christian life as a race." (CSSB, pp. 1798-1799). For example, 1 Corinthians 9:24: "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win." As for the hindering: Galatians 3:1: "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified."
2. The verbs used here mean that in the past the Galatians had been continually running well. Their faithfulness had been regular, constant, daily. But then we come to the second verb: You held back, you were kept, cut in on, hindered. There was a definite interruption. This denotes the short time it took to mislead the Galatians.
3. This is a sobering warning to us all. We can be strong in the Gospel and be running along regularly in a splendid tradition of faith and then all of a sudden, it is possible to be interrupted when false teaching is allowed to creep in (cut in on our running). And it can happen quickly! Thus, all of the admonitions in Scripture to be watchful, on guard, alert, awake, etc. certainly make sense! Or, to simply stay with the athletic analogy, keep running! We can hear the admonition in Proverbs 4:27: "Don't turn to the right or to the left, and walk away from evil." Especially false doctrine!

4. Paul goes on to ask a question. Who did this? In connection to verse 8, the point here is to say, "Not the Lord!" Thus, verses 7-9 is a reproach, as if to say, "Why did you stop listening to the Gospel?!"
5. What about the word "truth" (who kept you from obeying the truth)? It is used here as it is used in John 8:31-32: "Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'" It is interesting to note that this is one of those passages that is freely taken out of context. What is the context of John 8? Powerfully and clearly, the Jews do not recognize Christ as Messiah. So what is the "truth"? And yet, this passage is quoted to mean that we should tell the truth, or it is used for academic institutions to suggest that further discovery or enlightenment in other aspects will lead to advancement, etc. etc. But the "truth" is the truth of the Gospel, it is to know Christ and the power of the forgiveness of sins, the free gift of God's love and mercy in Christ apart from the works of the Law.

5:8:

NASB: "This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you."

NIV: "That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you."

AAT: "You were not persuaded by Him Who called you."

1. The persuasion referred to here is that which came from the Judaizers, not from God.
2. The basic word for "call" is *kaleo*, it is the effective call of the Gospel. It is how we are saved. By His power alone, God calls us and we come to Him. All synergism and works righteousness is excluded. So, what is attributed to the Judaizers is "persuasion," a word that describes the sinful call of man, but it is nothing compared to "kaleo," the true and effective call from God. NASB and NIV maintain "who calls you." It brings out the Scriptural truth that God constantly calls the Christian. The way we are sustained, the way we persevere, is not because of our sanctified cooperation with God, but because God continues to call us through the Gospel and Sacraments. We constantly need this call, especially in a world filled with so many distractions even against (especially against) the faithful of God.
3. In effect, Paul is saying that God is still calling you Galatians, don't give in to this evil persuasion any longer! What a testimony to God's grace once again. God continued to call King David after he fell into sin, he continues to call us even as we struggle against the flesh, the world and the devil.

5:9:

NASB: "A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough."

NIV: "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough."

AAT: "A little yeast ferments the whole dough."

1. This verse is an axiom as we conclude the reproach section of 5:1-12.
2. Summary of leaven: "Substance, usually old fermented dough, used to make dough rise; removed from houses during Passover; not used in meal offerings. Symbol of corruption and of moral influence, whether good or bad." (Concordia Bible Dictionary, p. 85)
3. In the negative context (like Galatians 5:9), see also 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 (please look up and read). But note this, that there is a distinction between doctrine and persons (or life). False doctrine and false life, however, are also connected.
4. CSSB, p. 1799 says: "A proverb used here to stress the pervasive effect of Judaism. When the word 'yeast' in the Bible is used as a symbol, it indicates evil or false teaching." For example, Mark 8:15: "And He was giving orders to them, saying, 'Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.'"
5. However, there is an exception. See Matthew 13:33: "He spoke another parable to them, 'The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened.'"
6. Note the contrast between the words in 5:9: "little" and "whole". The Greek word for "little" is where we get our "micron." The Greek gives us our English "whole" as well. So the obvious point, it takes very little yeast to permeate a lump of dough in its entirety. If a little false doctrine gets into a person, it may permeate every other aspect of our doctrine! (WOW).

*Discussion: Let's brain storm on some examples of this. Think of a little false doctrine in one area that could spread to the whole foundation of faith.

7. Luther: "A little yeast leavens the whole lump. In philosophy a tiny error in the beginning is very great at the end. Thus in theology a tiny error overthrows the whole teaching."

5:10:

NASB: "I have confidence in you in the Lord, that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is."

NIV: "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."

AAT: "I'm convinced in the Lord that you'll think as I do, but anyone who troubles you will have to take his punishment, whoever he may be."

1. In verses 5:10-11 Paul shifts from reproach to defense. Once again, we see evidence as to why Paul can still call the Galatians "brothers." He is "confident/convinced" that they will share his view for the Gospel and against the Judaizers! So he is also defending them. Again, this is remarkable in light of Galatians 1:6 (read again).
2. Again, how do we explain this? A key phrase above in verse 10 is our answer: "in the Lord" Paul is convinced and confident "in the Lord." Luther puts it this way: "I have confidence in you to the extent that the Lord is in you and you are in Him, that is, to the extent that you remain in the truth."
3. "whoever he may be": either Paul is not sure of the identity or he may suspect the identity, but prefers to name no one.
4. *krima* is an example of what is known as a *vox media*, a word in the middle that depending on the context may be good or bad. The word means "judgment." You see that the NASB is the only translation above that sticks to the actual word, NIV and AAT take the liberty to put the word in the negative context, by translating with "punishment" or "pay the penalty".

5:11:

NASB: "But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished."

NIV: "Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished."

AAT: "My fellow Christians, if I'm 'still preaching that people have to be circumcised,' why am I still persecuted? If I were preaching that, the Jews would have no reason to oppose the cross."

1. The offense of the cross. See also Romans 9:32-33 and 1 Corinthians 1:23. Today, our vicar preaches an outstanding sermon on this!
2. False doctrine is often also illogical. See Luke 11:14-20 (time permitting). In this case, if Paul is preaching the same message of the Judaizers, why is he being persecuted. Remember that Paul gave the Galatians the Gospel first and that it appears that the Galatians were deceived into believing that the Judaizers also

believed in the Gospel. But Paul and the Judaizers couldn't possibly be on the same team, because Paul is persecuted. So to suggest that they are really saying the same thing is illogical! (By the way, confusion probably came from the fact that in freedom – not in the context of it being demanded, Paul had allowed circumcision, Acts 16:3. But again, if it was demanded, Paul said “no” Gal. 2:3, then the adiaphoron became a requirement...it had to be resisted for the sake of freedom in the Gospel).

3. On the offense of the cross. The Greek word for “offense” is where we get our English word “scandal.” The *skandalon of the cross*! The preaching of the cross causes offense, the Gospel creates opposition.

Discussion: Why?

5:12:

NASB: “Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.”

NIV: “As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!”

AAT: “I could wish the men who upset you would castrate themselves.”

1. I am going to let this verse speak for itself. Though the Jerusalem Bible reads this way: “Tell those who are disturbing you I would like to see the knife slip.”
2. The thought: If you leave the Gospel, you enter into paganism and nothing but horrible judgment awaits you.
3. This verse may be surprising for some to find in the Bible, but it proves how aversive this problem is. I am doing a series on the 7 deadly sins. I haven't come to the sin of one who causes division among believers. But here is that sin. It is one that God hates! And Paul is simply expressing that kind of holy hatred. How dare you try to take the Gospel of life from my children in Galatia, I wish that your knife would slip!

Galatians, Part XXI
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Rev. Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. The second section of chapter 5 is covered today:

5:13-18: "Stand Fast in Your Liberty and Do Not Misuse It" (Buls, p. 60)

III. 5:13:

NASB: "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."

NIV: "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."

AAT: "You were called to be free, my fellow Christians. Only don't use your freedom as a chance to sin as you like, but in love serve one another."

1. Verse 12 ended with "you," verse 13 starts with "you": we see the strong application in regards our sanctification. That is, how we live while having faith in Christ. Sanctification does not suddenly confuse the grace of God. Everything that Paul leads us to in this section is still on the foundation of justification. Sanctification is the fruit or the result of being justified and living in the gift of faith in Christ. It literally means to be set apart by God's grace; to live as His set apart and holy people.
2. "to freedom," or "to be free" states our objective goal. To be in Christ is for what result now? It is to be free. To be free from the tyranny of sin; Christ has set us free from sin, death and the devil. We are no longer captives of the devil; sin is no longer our master. We are set free by the Gospel of Christ.
3. Then we have the word "*were called*" a form of *kaleo* (call). You were called (passive voice). All synergism is wiped away. This freedom is the work of God by His grace alone. It is based on His call. We are familiar with these words: "*I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts...*" (Luther's explanation of the third article of the Creed).
4. So to summarize thus far, St. Paul is teaching us about sanctification, this is about living in the grace of God and it is extremely personal (again note the

“you’s” above...its about you). The goal is to live in freedom (our condition of being set free from the bondage of sin and death), and this is the work of God’s call, not our efforts.

5. Then we come to the little word *monon*. That is, “only,” in the sense of “just one thing.” In other words: The Holy Spirit calls you by grace to be free, but there is this one thing to keep in mind. Here, Paul is guiding us to great wisdom. With this gracious and wonderful work of the Holy Spirit, there is unfortunately the possibility for the sinful flesh to pervert God’s work. What is that possibility? Paul warns every Christian! Don’t allow this freedom to become an opportunity for the sinful flesh.
6. Don’t allow the flesh *aphormen* that is a “starting point,” an opportunity, a chance, an opportunity, a foot in the door!
7. How? The answer is at the end of the sentence: “But serve one another as slaves by love.” The answer is a Law answer for the flesh. Remember, we do not suddenly start to confuse Law and Gospel. Our freedom is the message of the Gospel. We are set free by what Christ has done. Immediately, however, our sinful flesh wants to ruin everything, so Paul applies Law to our flesh. This is Law for the Christian (or the third use of the Law). That is, our spirit so much rejoices in the Gospel and the freedom from sin and death that it has effected, we are willing to submit our flesh to the Law, so that it will be crushed once again. This is a sanctified use of the Law for the sake of smashing the flesh that wants to ruin our gift of grace.
8. But again, how? When your flesh wants to invade your freedom and pervert your freedom in order to serve the sinful desires of the flesh, here’s the solution in controlling it: Serve one another in love.
9. But serve how? Serve as a *doulos*, as a slave...one who has no will. Submit yourself to the service of others, be active in love. Get busy loving other people and serving them, so that your flesh won’t have the opportunity to indulge in a perversion of freedom.
10. Buls aptly points out: “The believer in Christ constantly faces two dangers: a) Using his own works to justify himself before God (vss. 2-12) and, b) Misusing his Christian liberty to live in sin.” (p. 60)
- II. Luther: *“Therefore the godly should remember that for the sake of Christ they are free in their conscience before God from the curse of the Law, from sin, and from death, but that according to the body they are bound; here each must serve the other through love, in accordance with this commandment of Paul. Therefore let everyone strive to do his duty in his calling and to help his neighbor in whatever way he can.”*

5:14:

NASB: "For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

NIV: "The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

AAT: "You keep the whole Law when you do one thing: "love your neighbor as yourself."

1. We have a future indicative, the strongest imperative command: "You shall love." Like a parent who tells their child: "You will do this." God is saying to us: "You will do this..." What? "Love!" As you battle against the flesh that threatens your freedom in Christ, be about this command: Love your neighbor! This is God's solution to our battle, our struggle, the temptation will not stop, we will continue to see our sin rise, we will continue to battle against it, just do this one thing: Love your neighbor. This too, the Holy Spirit will lead us to do.
2. This leads us to an important insight. Love is an obligation, not a freedom. Our faith is in relation to our freedom; our love is in relation to what we ought to do to care for that freedom. Our faith leads us to love, not the other way around. In the freedom of our faith in the Gospel, we choose the obligation, we make ourselves slaves...that is, the Holy Spirit leads us through faith in Christ to choose the holy obligation to love our neighbor. If we do not love, we will be abuse our freedom and abuse our neighbor!
3. But as Lenski points out, all the while God is doing a great work: "The marvel is the fact that the very law, from which the Christian believer is free, should substantiate this very freedom...What the law demands, the Gospel gives." So to summarize: On account of our freedom in Christ, the Holy Spirit leads the Christian to willfully submit himself/herself to the Law so that the flesh that threatens their freedom would be made a slave, and loving one's neighbor becomes the very expression of the Christian living in faith.

*Discussion Question: How are we discussing "love" here...what is true love????

5:15:

NASB: "But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another."

NIV: "If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other."

AAT: “But if you continue to bite and devour one another, be careful, or you’ll be destroyed by one another.”

1. But what if we don’t take St. Paul up on his guidance? Then essentially, we will allow the flesh that foot in the door.
2. The immediate result in relationship with others will be that we will no longer submit to the Law of love. But something will fill that void and if it isn’t love, if we are not submitting to others, then our flesh will lead us to do the opposite, namely use others and guess what happens when people don’t do what we want them to do? We get nasty and here Paul uses a metaphor of vicious dogs destroying each other. Take your pick, subdue the flesh by loving your neighbor, or let your flesh run the show and use and hurt your neighbor.
3. Does this mean that your faith depends on your works? No. We maintain proper limits. The good works of Christians depend on faith, but your faith depends entirely on God. So in overall context, it is always the Holy Spirit who is responsible even for our good works as Christians...when we submit to our neighbor, it is by the leading of the Spirit, not because we are such good Christians.
4. Thus, to no longer love your neighbor is another way of resisting the Spirit. It is amazing to consider how our neighbor becomes a reflection of our lives in Christ. Christ did not simply talk about His love for us, He loved us by going to the cross. In the same way, our love is not to be theoretical and only discussed, it is lived...the Gospel that proclaims God’s love for us leads us to love others.

5:16:

NASB: “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”

NIV: “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

AAT: “I say, follow the Spirit, and you will not do what the flesh wants.”

1. Is this a promise or a command? Most say it is a promise and we have good reason to take this view.
2. As a result of the Gospel of Christ, we are given the Holy Spirit – the Comforter and the Counselor – and we are assured that He will lead us to live in accordance with the will of God. This is a promise. And ultimately, leads us to understand again that our sanctification is not really about what we do, but what the Holy Spirit makes us to be.

3. To live by the Spirit or to walk by the Spirit means that we continue to trust in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. So when you are tempted to sin what ought be your first response? Keep the Law? No, but flee to Christ. Flee to the cross of Calvary and see once again your Savior who put your sin on Himself. Through His blood, you are free from sin's dominion. Then the Gospel that is your freedom leads you to crucify the flesh and love your neighbor, not sin against them. So again, in effect, to walk by the Spirit is to live in faith in Christ.
5. This verse is saying that if we take our justification seriously, we will not fulfill sinful desires.
6. To be tempted is not wrong, it is the yielding to temptation that is the problem.

5:17:

NASB: "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."

NIV: "For the flesh sets its desire against its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."

AAT: "What the flesh wants is against the Spirit, and what the Spirit wants is against the flesh, because they are opposed to each other and so keep you from doing what you want to do."

1. Paul is not saying that we don't do good works.
2. Neither is he saying that it is alright to live in sin...so much for the two most common abuses.
3. He is rather warning us that the sinful flesh is a burden, a hindrance, to the Christian. And in the process of fighting against it, you will see your sin surface on a regular basis, you will see your weakness and you will not always do what you know you should have done.
4. Luther is fantastic here:

"...there is great comfort for the faithful in this teaching of Paul's, because they know that they have partly flesh and partly Spirit, but in such a way that the Spirit rules and the flesh is subordinate, that righteousness is supreme and sin is a servant. Otherwise

someone who is not aware of this will be completely overwhelmed by a spirit of sadness and will despair. But for someone who knows this doctrine and uses it properly even evil will have to cooperate for good. For when his flesh impels him to sin, he is aroused and incited to seek forgiveness of sins through Christ and to embrace righteousness of faith, which he would otherwise not have regarded as so important or yearned for with such intensity. And so it is very beneficial if we sometimes become aware of the evil of our nature and our flesh, because in this way we are aroused and stirred up to have faith and to call upon Christ...*In fact, the godlier one is, the more aware he is of this conflict.* This is the course of the complaint of the saints in the Psalms and throughout Scripture...A believer's sin is the same sin and sin just as great as that of the unbeliever. To the believer, however, it is forgiven and not imputed, while to the unbeliever it is retained and imputed."

5:18:

NASB: "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."

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

AAT: "But if the Spirit leads you, you are not under the Law."

1. Paul ends on a comforting note. Despite this burden of the sinful nature, the Christian is still to be comforted. To be led by the Spirit – that is, to continue to live in faith in Christ – means that while you struggle against sin, that struggle and your weakness does not condemn you. You are not under the Law, you are not under bondage and a curse, you are NOT condemned. The Holy Spirit keeps you free from the guilt of sin, the power of death and the devil. God is no longer angry with you, but daily and constantly forgives you as you cling to His Son in faith. We are still sinners, but sinners that are constantly forgiven!
2. So Luther advises, "What [are you] to do [when fiercely attacked by anger, hatred, impatience, sexual desire, mental depression, etc]? Should [you] despair on this account? No, he should say: "My flesh is battling and raging against the Spirit. Let it rage as long as it pleases! But you do not give in to it. Walk by the Spirit, and be led by Him, so that you do not gratify its desires."

Galatians, Part XXII
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Rev. Alfonso O. Espinosa

- I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications OR The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism OR The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application OR The Gospel Applied

- II. The last part of chapter 5 – verses 19-26 – is our focus today.

5:19-26 "The Works of the Flesh and the Fruits of the Spirit"
(Buls, p. 63)

- III. 5:19-21a:

NASB: "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these..."

NIV: "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."

ATT: "Now, you know the works of the flesh. They are: sexual sin, uncleanness, wild living, 20 worshiping of idols, witchcraft, hate, wrangling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, quarreling, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like."

1. The *Concordia Self-Study Bible* has this straightforward comment: "Christian character is produced by the Holy Spirit, not by the mere moral discipline of trying to live by law. Paul makes it clear that justification through faith does not result in libertinism [that is, "doing whatever you want"; serving the sinful flesh or treating grace as "cheap grace"]. The indwelling Holy Spirit produces faith and Christian virtues in the believer's life." I think I would have improved the comment by deleting the word "mere"...Christian character has its **complete origin** in the work of God. Even the "cooperation" of the Christian in sanctification is produced by the Holy Spirit, it is not a side-by-side enterprise. Thus, even after

conversion, the born-again Christian (the “new man”) is the caboose that follows the train engine (the engine being the Holy Spirit, the gift of God Himself dwelling in us). That is, even “moral discipline” if it is truly from faith, is a gift of the Holy Spirit and not the product of man.

2. Thus, we do not forget the context of our study. Buls is quite accurate in putting this section under the heading of “the application of the Gospel”. This is not to say that the “Gospel” becomes something we “do,” which would in fact call Law “Gospel”. On the contrary, we are referring to the “application” of the Gospel, that is what the gift of forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit (given to those forgiven) applies or produces. The works of the Spirit are in fact God’s work. The word for “grace” is also the basic word for “gift” (what comes from God alone). The “charis” of God refers to “grace-gifts”.
3. By virtue of God’s grace-oriented disposition and attitude toward us through His Son Jesus Christ, He is gracious to us (giving us gifts from the love and mercy in Him on account of what Jesus Christ did and does for us: taking our flesh, keeping the Law, taking our punishment at His crucifixion, conquering our death and currently interceding for us). When we confess the Creed and thank God for the “1st Article” gifts (house, family and home, food and water, clothing, etc.); for “2nd Article” gifts (forgiveness of sins through Jesus); and “3rd Article” gifts (the Holy Spirit, the Church, etc.), ALL of these are GIFTS flowing from our Heavenly Father who is kind to us **on account of His Son, Jesus Christ!** All of these are given to us because God loves us and God loves us through His Son; all of these are the works of God, not the works of man. All of these are from God, outside of us and are freely given through Christ.

Even our “good works” are understood in this context: “prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10), “for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” (Philippians 2:13). So again, even “moral discipline” in this context is the gift of God.

4. Now I know this has been a long introduction, but we need this foundation **because what follows is often misinterpreted as an invitation to return to the Law**. When people start reading the list of

sins and the list of virtues, they are often tempted to “try harder,” “to do better,” “to be a ‘better’ Christian,” but if that is the direction we go in our understanding, we will remove the words from their context in the Gospel. This is not St. Paul’s intention. His intention rather is **to describe what life without the Gospel of justification in Christ looks like and what the life with the Gospel of justification in Christ looks like.**

5. Another way of putting this is to say that what follows (the list of sins and virtues) is what the “old man” looks like and then what the “new man” (the new creation) looks like. **This is a “how you can recognize the man section,” not a “do this” and “do that” section.** If it were a “do this” and “do that” section, then Paul would be concluding his wonderful letter on justification (the Gospel) with the Law, but that is not what he is doing.

IV. Part 2 on vss. 19-21a:

1. So, Paul begins with the words “now the deeds of the flesh are evident” (NASB); “the acts of the sinful nature are obvious” (NIV); “Now, you know the works of the flesh.” These are all ways of saying, “there’s no hiding the sinful nature (aka “the flesh”). You all know what the old man looks like, “he” is evident and obvious.
2. Bultmann puts it simply: “All men have a flesh. And, therefore, the products of the flesh are well-known.” (p. 63)
3. Matthew 7:16-17:

“You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit.”

4. Now let’s look at the list:

	NASB	NIV	ATT
#1	immorality	sexual immorality	sexual sin
#2	impurity	impurity	uncleanness

#3	sensuality	debauchery	wild living
#4	idolatry	idolatry	worshiping of idols
#5	sorcery	witchcraft	witchcraft
#6	enmities	hatred	hate
#7	strife	discord	wrangling
#8	jealousy	jealousy	jealousy
#9	outbursts of anger	fits of rage	anger
#10	disputes	selfish ambition	selfishness
#11	dissensions	dissensions	quarreling
#12	factions	factions	divisions
#13	envying	envy	envy
#14	drunkenness	drunkenness	drunkenness
#15	carousing	orgies	carousing
#16	and things like these	and the like	and the like

5. Here is a summary explanation of each of the 15 specific actual sins:

#1 *pornea*, this is the word for "fornication," it is sexual sin. You see that the Greek forms the basis for our English word "pornography." So, the list here is persisting in the sin of sexual immorality.

#2 *akatharsia*, denotes moral uncleanness, esp. in the context of sexuality. Thus, the word is very much related to the first word. One might wonder why the list starts off with these two words. The answer is simple in that when there is idolatry, false worship, the first thing to be effected is the use and treatment of the physical body (we ought also appreciate that Greek culture – what Galatia was exposed to – these perversions were common.

#3 *aselgeia*, this is the sin of throwing off all constraints and self-control, thus, one of the translations above “wild living” is a pretty vivid description of the concept. This is throwing self-control to the wind and just following sinful instincts.

This is what Luther says in regards to this sin:

“A saint is one who has been baptized and who believes in Christ. Such a saint will also abstain from the desires of the flesh by means of the faith through which he is justified and through which his sins, past and present are forgiven; but he is not completely cleansed of them. For the desires of the flesh are still against the Spirit. This uncleanness remains in him to keep him humble, so that in his humility the grace and blessing of Christ taste sweet to him. Thus, such uncleanness and such remnants of sin are not a hindrance but a great advantage to the godly. For the more aware they are of their weakness and sin, the more they take refuge in Christ, the mercy seat (Rom. 3:25).” (Luther's Works, vol. 27, pg. 86)

- Here, however, be aware of one of the easiest abuses we may fall into and an easy mistake to make. That is, we reason that since we still have the flesh and will experience these sins, that it is nothing to simply “go along with” these sins when they occur. This is a misunderstanding and a grave mistake. Here Luther is quite helpful again:

“Different people are tempted in different ways, according to the diversity in their makeup or attitude. One person is subject to graver feelings, such as mental depression, blasphemy, unbelief, or despair; another, to more obvious ones, such as sexual desire, anger, or hatred. But here Paul demands of us that we walk by the Spirit and resist the flesh. Anyone who yields to his flesh and persists in smugly gratifying its desires should know that he does not belong to Christ; though he may pride himself ever so much on the title ‘Christian,’ he is merely deceiving himself.” (Luther's Works, vol. 27, pg. 81)

Thus, when St. Paul writes at vs. 21, “...of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” The message of Scripture therefore is that every Christian because of their flesh will certainly be tempted to sin in these capacities and will in fact even do so – that is why we struggle against our flesh – *but* to seek to persist in these, to approve of these as regular

practice, to habitually seek to live in these is to be self-deceived and instead of fighting the flesh, we are in fact giving into to it, without a fight and obeying its sinful inclinations. Thus, we are no longer following Christ as our Master, but following sin and putting it in the throne of our heart. There is a big difference here. We all need to be sure we understand the difference. ***But again, Galatians 5 is not a call for you to “make yourself better,” but to simply give you recognition of the two conditions. If we find ourselves in the condition of serving sin, we are not to “try harder,” or “make ourselves right,” but we are to confess our sin and God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. Then, by His grace and His Spirit, He will lead us to live in Christ and by the Spirit’s guidance, we will know the description of the other life, as the work of God, not the work of man. Our place is to confess, it is God’s place to work! When we work, we pervert the process.***

We will seek to complete the rest of chapter 5 next Sunday!

Galatians, Part XXIII
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Pastor Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. The last part of chapter 5:19-26 is our focus today:

“The works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit.” (Buls, p. 63)

III. 5:19-21a:

NASB: “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these...”

NIV: “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.”

ATT: “Now, you know the works of the flesh. They are: sexual sin, uncleanness, wild living, 20 worshiping of idols, witchcraft, hate, wrangling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, quarreling, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like.”

1. We left off last time going through the list of the 15 specific sins mentioned here by Paul, we will continue to go through the list picking it up at #4. However, keep in mind that the intention of Paul in this section is not to go from justification to works, so that you'll try to be a “better” Christian, this is not a “what to do section,” but a “how to recognize the man” section. The description of the Old Adam is given us here so that if we recognize this trend, we would confess it to the Lord and rely on His grace to redirect us. The description of the New Man (the New Creation) is given so that we would know that as well.
2. Why is this even necessary? Because on our own, our discerning powers are quite poor. Oftentimes, what the Lord says is wrong, we think is right and what the Lord says is right, we think is wrong. We need clarity and that is what we are given here in Galatians 5.
3. So the list continues:

#4 idolatry (NASB), idolatry (NIV) and worshiping of idols (ATT). The original includes any and all forms of false worship, not simply graven images, but substituting anything for the Living God. In other words, this sin is the sin against the first

commandment. If you recall from your *Small Catechism*, the meaning of this commandment is “We should fear, love and trust in God above all things.” Thus, if our habitual practice and real intent is to cling to, love and take comfort in ANYTHING else more than the Lord, then life in the Spirit is rejected and the flesh is our god. Luther has a great section on this by the way. In summary, this sin is one in which it is easy to think that we’re not sinning, but in the name of “religion” and “spirituality” think that our idolatry is true worship, when it is anything but. How are we to discern? Luther cuts to the chase: *“Thus every such form of religion, which worships God without His Word and command, is idolatry. The more spiritual and holy it appears to be, the more dangerous and destructive it is; for it deflects men from faith in Christ and causes them to rely on their own powers, works, and righteousness.” (LW, vol. 27, p. 88)*

#5 sorcery (NASB), witchcraft (NIV and ATT): This is one of the most crass examples of idolatry and false worship. It appeals to the devil and demons and their realm of death. This is the area of the occult (that which is “hidden”) that Deut. 18 thoroughly condemns: “There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination [this is the sinful counterpart of prophecy, anything that tries to foretell, inform, predict, etc. through some other means], one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.” Interestingly this is one of those areas that may seem so archaic, but it is anything but nowadays, our media is packed with this stuff.

#6 enmities (NASB), hatred (NIV) and hate (ATT): Opposite of love. Not desiring and seeking what is good for your neighbor, but that they would fall and suffer hardship. In love you help, in hate you hurt. In love you embrace, in hate you fight against.

#7 strife (NASB), discord (NIV) and wrangling (ATT): The antithesis of “peace.” We’ll look at the antithesis below. This sin is closely tied to the sin of arrogance and pride that desires to control and rejects God’s authority, it insists in what it wants and thus causes strife and a lack of peace.

#8 jealousy (all three English translations): One of those words that in itself is neutral. Can be good or bad depending on the context. In this case, it is bad, as in selfish jealousy. In the good sense, it is about protecting what you love and cherish.

#9 outbursts of anger (NASB), fits of rage (NIV) and anger (ATT): Perhaps the most self-evident sin on the list. This sin is uncontrolled, thus NASB’s “outbursts of” is good.

#10 disputes (NASB), selfish ambition (NIV) and selfishness (ATT): very close to #7 above, the two go hand-in-hand. Arrogance drives one to seek one’s own desire and any resistance leads to disputes (#10) and strife, discord, wrangling (#7). Luther calls this “party spirit”: “[When people] do not have one and same doctrine, faith, religion, worship, and mind; but they are all extremely diverse.” (vol. 27, p. 91)

#11 dissensions (NASB and NIV) and quarreling (ATT): flows out of #10. Again, source is pride and arrogance.

#12 factions (NASB and NIV) and divisions (ATT): flows out of #10. Again, source is pride and arrogance. The words “heresy” and “heretic” were later derived from this word. (Buls, p. 64)

#13 envying (NASB) and envy (NIV and ATT): Similar to “jealousy” above, but this word isn’t neutral, but always bad! Begrudging and goes nuts inside when someone else is blessed and prosperous.

#14 drunkenness (all three English translations): Again, very self-explanatory and very much related to the last term...

#15 carousing (NASB and ATT) and orgies (NIV): Luther has some great comments:

“Paul is not saying that drinking and eating are works of the flesh; he is speaking of drunkenness and carousing, and nothing is more widespread in our lands today. Those who are addicted to such debauchery, which is more degraded than the behavior of animals, should know that they are not spiritual, regardless of their boasting, but that they are following the flesh and performing its works. Such people heard the dreadful sentence pronounced upon them that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Thus Paul wants Christians to avoid drunkenness and intoxication and to live a sober and frugal life, lest a well-fed flesh provoke them into wantonness; for the flesh is usually powerfully stimulated after excessive drinking and gluttony.” (vol. 27, pp. 91-92)

4. Let’s back up a little and appreciate what Paul is saying and what he is not saying in regards to this catalog of sins:

#1 It is possible to know doctrine, confess Christ with the lips and even attend worship, but deceive oneself into believing that a Christian will not resist the flesh. This catalog is intended to help us recognize the life that is contrary to the new creation. The habitual practice – not to be confused with habitual weakness – but the habitual deliberate and approving way of life in these areas mean that we follow our sin, not the Lord. Do not be deceived!

#2 Here is one of Luther’s explanations:

“For this is how they should think about the matter: It is one thing to be aroused by the flesh and not to tolerate its desires any further but to walk and to withstand by the Spirit; it is quite another thing to give in to the flesh and to do its works with a smug air, to persist in them, and yet at the same time to put on a pretense of piety and to make a boast of the Spirit.” (LW 27, p. 80)

#3 Yes, saints – true Christians – may lapse and gratify the desires of their flesh. Look at David for example. However, Luther says, *“But no matter how great these sins were, they were not committed intentionally; they were committed because of weakness.” ... Luther goes on: “Those who sin because of weakness, even if they do it often, will not be denied forgiveness, provided that they rise again and do not persist in their sins; for persistence in sin is the worst of all. If they do not return to their senses but stubbornly go on gratifying the desires of their flesh, this is the surest possible sign of dishonesty in their spirit.” (LW 27, p. 80)*

#4 Here is a summary of the difference:

<u>The Christian Who Sins In Weakness</u>	<u>The Hypocrite Who Deceives Himself</u>
1. Relates to the sins in the above catalog	Revels in the sins in the above catalog
2. Hates the above sins	Approves of the above sins
3. Is in the midst of battling these sins	Is in the midst of planning these sins
4. Disrupts, interrupts and undulates	Persists in and practices, makes regular
5. Battles guilt and shame	Battles getting caught
6. Confesses with <i>heart</i> and mouth	Confesses with mouth alone
7. Absolution: For Remission of Sin	Absolution: For Permission to Sin

#5 Final words from Luther on the matter that comfort as well:

“On no account, therefore, am I to jump to the conclusion that those who are weak in faith or morals are unholy, when I see that they love and revere the Word, receive the Lord’s Supper, etc.; for God has received them and regards them as righteous through the forgiveness of sins. It is before Him that they stand or fall (Rom. 14:4).” (p. 82)

“These [Christians] do not manage all at once to divest themselves of the old Adam with all his activities; but throughout their life the desires of the flesh remain with them, although the awareness of these does not harm them as long as they do not permit them to dominate them but subject them to the Spirit.” (p. 84)

“Thus a Christian struggles with sin continually, and yet in his struggle he does not surrender but obtains the victory.”

IV. Galatians 5:21b:

NASB: “...of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

NIV: "I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."

ATT: "I warn you, as I did before, those who do such things will have no share in God's kingdom."

1. The verb is present tense, denoting habitual action. Thus, I think the translations here matter a great deal. The ATT is straight-forward enough, but because of our flexibility with English, does it mean those who have ever done such things, or perhaps gone through a season of having done such things, or perhaps even now – in great weakness are doing such things now – will not inherit the kingdom of God? I think we need to be more specific and true to the meaning of the verb. NASB is the best: "those who practice," this communicates persistent, habitual, constant behavior, doing justice to the verb. NIV is ok, "who live like this," these are not fluctuations per weakness, this is a lifestyle, habitual practice. ATT again is very straightforward to the plain verb, but when you read, "those who do" I think it invites special anxiety, "what if I've done" which means at some time I could have spoken in the present tense like verse 21b reads now.
2. At any rate, God's intention is to scare the smug! Don't be deceived! Don't be a hypocrite! Luther: *"Perhaps this severe sentence would frighten some of them thoroughly, so that they would begin to battle against the works of the flesh by the Spirit and stop performing them."* (vol. 27, p. 92)

V. Galatians 5:22-26:

NASB: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another."

NIV: "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."

ATT: "But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace. He makes us patient, kindly, good, faithful, 23 gentle, and gives us self-control. There's no law against such things. 24 But if we belong to Christ Jesus, we have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, challenge one another and become jealous of one another."

1. From John R.W. Stott's *Baptism & Fullness*:

“The mere recital of these Christian graces should be enough to make the mouth water and the heart beat faster. For this is a portrait of Jesus Christ. No man or woman has ever exhibited these qualities in such balance or to such perfection as the man Christ Jesus. Yet this is the kind of person that every Christian longs to be.”

“Various attempts have been made to classify the nine qualities Paul lists. No classification is altogether satisfactory, however, and there is a danger of imposing an artificial one. Perhaps the simplest is to take them as three triads, which depict our Christian relationship first to God, next to others and lastly to ourselves.”

“First our relationship with God: ‘love, joy, peace’. The Holy Spirit puts God’s love in our hearts, God’s joy in our souls and God’s peace in our minds. Love, joy and peace pervade a Spirit-filled Christian. Indeed, these may be said to be his principal and abiding characteristics. Everything he does is conceived in love, undertaken with joy and accomplished in peace.”

“Secondly, our relationship with others: ‘patience, kindness, goodness’. Here is the patience which bears rudeness and unkindness from others and refuses to retaliate; the kindness which goes beyond the negative toleration of not wishing anybody any harm to the positive benevolence of wishing everybody well; and the goodness which turns wish into deed, and takes the initiative to serve people in concrete, constructive ways. It is not difficult to see ‘patience, kindness, goodness’ as three ascending steps in our attitude to others.”

“Thirdly, our relationship with ourselves: ‘faithfulness, gentleness, self-control’. The word for ‘faithfulness’ is that usually translated ‘faith’...But here it seems to mean not the faith which relies on Christ or on others, but the faithfulness which invites others to rely on us. More simply, it is not trust but trustworthiness, the solid dependability of those who always keep their promises and finish their tasks. Gentleness is a quality not of the soft and weak, but of the strong and energetic, whose strength and energy are kept under control. Self-control is mastery of our tongue, thoughts, appetites and passions.”

(pp. 76-77)

2. It could easily be argued that all nine fruits may apply to all three aspects: God, others and ourselves, but Stott’s words are insightful and logical.
3. The fruit, however, come as a “package” if you will, we are not to “pick and choose.” These are the life of Christ and we are in Christ and the Holy Spirit lives us to live in His life, not part of His life.
4. Those living in Christ and show these fruits of the Spirit...against such, there is no law! Read also 1 Tim. 1:9: “The Law was not laid down for the just.” That means the one in Christ does not need the Law to admonish, urge and constrain (Luther), but as Luther says elsewhere, this new creation has faith and faith is living and active and doing good works before it is told to do them! In other words, this fruit is

spontaneous, not forced, because it is the work of God, part of the gift coming through the Gospel.

5. Again, yes even Christians are aroused by the sins of the flesh...all of the 15 sins above and more, BUT as Luther says, *“they do not carry out these feelings, because, as Paul says here, they crucify their flesh with its passions and faults.”* (vol. 27, p. 96)
6. Still, the term is hard to understand. What do we mean by “crucify the flesh,” which seems abstract. Luther elaborates: *“...when, instructed by the Word, by faith, and by prayer, they refuse to yield to the desires of the flesh.”* (vol. 27, p. 97)
7. Paul ends by addressing the grand-daddy of them all in terms of actual sins. Verse 26 describes conceit or boastfulness. This is pride, arrogance, etc. It is the sin of the devil in paradise. It is the sin of Adam and Eve when they decided to try to be like God, etc. It is the middle letter of the word “S I N”. Luther quotes Augustine who said: *“Pride is the mother of all heresies.”* (vol. 27, p. 97)
8. Wisdom stays on course. It avoids two extremes:
 1. The extreme of letting praise get to the head and treating God’s glory as one’s own glory.
 2. The extreme of letting rejection and insult get to the heart and treating resistance to God as a reason to run and forsake one’s calling.
9. Pride invites these extremes. If things are going well, we act as if we are to get the credit, if things are going rough, we act as if we must run away. Both play the role of fool.
10. Luther: *“Therefore the Gospel is the sort of teaching in which the last thing to look for is our own glory.”* (vol. 27, p. 100)
11. Final Luther quote: *“If it is true that we live by the Spirit, then let us proceed in an orderly fashion and walk by the Spirit. For where the Spirit is present, He renews men and creates new attitudes in them. He changes men who are vainglorious, wrathful, and envious into men who are humble, gentle, and loving. Such men seek not their own glory but God’s. They do not provoke and envy one another; they yield to one another and outdo one another in showing honor (Rom. 12:10).”* (vol. 27, p. 98)
12. Bruce made a great remark: *“Moses was ‘very gentle’ (Nu. 12:30) in the sense that, in face of undeserved criticism, he did not give way to rage but rather interceded with God for the offenders.” Then Buls says, “It is the quality of a forgiving spirit which does not insist on its own rights. But it does not mean permissiveness, allowing people to live in their sins.”* (Buls, p. 65)

Galatians, Part XXIV
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Pastor Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle to the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. Chapter 6, verses 1-5 is our focus today. This has been subtitled as "Living Together in the Spirit" (Buls, p. 67).

III. Biblical Exposition:

A. 6:1

NASB: "Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted."

NIV: "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."

ATT: "My fellow Christians, if you find anyone doing wrong, you who are spiritual should set him right. But be gentle and keep an eye on yourself; you may be tempted, too."

1. First major concept here: "caught" (NASB and NIV) brings out the Greek nicely. The concept is per our weakness leading to the possibility of being overtaken or overpowered. It can happen. No Christian is immune to the weaknesses of the flesh. Sometimes these expressions of weakness stay upon the Christian for long seasons...we can be trapped, caught-up in a sin on account of our sinful nature. This is a humbling possibility. It reminds us why the Scriptures constantly put watchfulness before us. This by the way is one of the fundamental reasons why daily prayer and devotion in the Word is important.

*It is important to note context esp. here however. This contexts seems to suggest a penitent sinner who is trapped by his flesh, not an unbeliever.

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2. Among the many vices that we listed from chapter 5 were the vices of pride leading to factions and "the party spirit" we spoke of last time. Here, Paul offers a practical solution. If anyone gets caught up in such a sin, then the solution involves the Christians addressing it in terms of the word used here at 6:1: "restore" (while the ATT uses the elongated translation: "set him right"). Interestingly, as the Greek word is used for setting broken bones for healing, "set him right" is a good way to put it. So, we are to "restore" in the sense of repairing or healing, bringing someone back to the way of Christ. Broken bones need "re-aligning"...our "re-alignment" is to repent of all that is against Christ and His Word and to "set right" our lives in Him and His Word (e.g. the one that is stealing, should stop stealing and be satisfied with his pay; if one is using sexually explicit media or publications, it is time to forsake the pay channel or cancel the subscription; if we are holding a grudge -- treating someone with contempt -- then we must crucify our hatred and replace it with long-suffering and forgiveness, etc.). Thus, the "restoration" is very much a description of leading one to repentance (the work of the Spirit through Word and Sacrament producing contrition & conviction, heart-felt confession and the reception of holy absolution) and the fruits that follow such repentance (the works of the Holy Spirit Himself

through the penitent).

3. Inherent in this instruction is that when we encounter the vices, we are to respond in Christian love and service (note the emphasis on the “how” in all three English translations). In what MANNER are we to restore our fellow member in the Church? [pause for answer] Our approach is not returning evil for evil, but overcoming evil with good (Rom. 12:21). Certainly this is the epitome of Christian thought towards the neighbor: willingness to endure wrong, and then reaching out to restore.

Too often, gentleness is thrown out the window. It is terribly destructive to take the approach: “I’m right, you’re wrong, so get your act together!” This approach may carry on about defending the truth, but leaves restoration to words with no life -- no gentleness -- backing it up.

Sometimes restoration may necessitate correction (sometimes even rebuke), but in this correction and rebuke, we need to check the attitude behind our words. If we speak without humility, without love, without patience, without the desire to serve the one to whom we speak, then Galatians 6:1 is ignored or rejected. A good summary of this: Don’t assume a superior attitude!

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*Luther points out an important qualification though. As we appreciate the ethical and moral nature of chapter 5 flowing into chapter 6, that we are not speaking to false doctrine, but the weaknesses of the flesh, life and works. Here, Prof. Marquart would make clear that in matters of love we must be flexible, gentle, patient, etc., but in matters of the faith, we must never bend or budge. Galatians 6 is on life and works.

4. There is more to the “how” in restoration. How are the Christians -- the brethren/brothers -- described? You who are _____. [pause for answer]. Here is the Biblical precedent for being “spiritual.” We should desire to be “spiritual.” What does it mean to lack this quality? Read 1st. Corinthians 3:1-3. Just the opposite of “spiritual” is worldly and to be worldly is to be driven by jealousy and quarreling. To be spiritual then is to seek life in the Spirit, calling on the Name of the Lord and applying the Word over and above sinful reason.

5. Finally, a warning. When seeking to restore, be aware that the same temptation that confronted your neighbor will confront you. Be watchful and pray for strength and then after the restoration go to Christ as did the disciples when they returned after healing and commanding out demons...Christ instructed them to confess that they too were unworthy servants.

B. 6:2

NASB: “Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.”

NIV: “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

ATT: “Help one another carry these burdens, and so do everything the Law of Christ demands.”

1. Read John 13:34.

2. This is to emphasize the point of Galatians 6:2. As Buls points out, our faith does not exist in a vacuum. Here and now, we live it and experience it through the expression of loving one another. This is the active result and constant occupation of faith. We are called to restore one another, to serve one another, to

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help one another...so Paul puts this in a very practical way: "Carry/bear each other's burdens..." or "Help one another carry..." (ATT).

3. The "Law" of Christ is Love. Think about it: Why did Christ go to Calvary for us (besides His faithfulness and love to the Father), because He LOVED YOU! Thus, the practical expression of love is "bear"...put up with one another's weaknesses...not in a begrudging way, but in the way of forgiveness and long-suffering. As much as we possibly can, we are to look the other way...as much as we can we are to let the sins of weakness go, let them slide, look past them. Sure, there may come the time that you MUST address something for the good of your neighbor who might be in a trap, but MOST of the time, we ought just "bear it" through love.

Luther: "In the church faithful pastors see many errors and sins which they are obliged to bear...In the family many things happen that displease the householder. But if we are able to bear and overlook our own faults and sins, which we commit in such great numbers every day, let us bear those of others as well."

C. 6:3

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

NIV: "If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself."

ATT: "If anyone thinks he's something when he's nothing, he's fooling himself."

1. This is again a truly humbling revelation. Paul must warn us of a very real sinful tendency: In the flesh, we look down on our fellow Christians.

2. And what is even more alarming is that if this goes unchecked, we will "deceive/fool" ourselves. That is, we will render our own identity as a loving Christian, as a Christian who is living his or her faith, a trick; a deception. We will become ineffective in our lives to show Christ.

3. It is impossible to love and look down upon someone at the same time.

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D. 6:4

NASB: "But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another."

NIV: "Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else,"

ATT: "Everyone should examine his own work. Then he will have something in himself that deserves praise, without comparing himself with anyone else."

1. This verse may concern the sincere Christian: Are we supposed to boast in ourselves, take pride in ourselves and dwell on praise we deserve? Remember that Scripture interprets Scripture. Read 2 Corinthians 10:17 and 2 Corinthians 1:12 (note what Paul says in this second verse, "in the grace of God"). This boasting, this pride is not in ourselves, but in the Lord. But why does Galatians 6:4 say "himself," because this "himself" is the one who is crucified with Christ and no longer lives...this is the "himself" who is utterly and totally dependent on Christ. This is another way of saying we take pride in our Savior, we boast in our Lord!

2. In effect, we are concerned with a clear conscience. Are we being faithful to Christ? This is the only question that is to concern the Christian in these matters. Am I being faithful? If the answer is yes, then a thousand people may accuse you otherwise, but you will be safe. BUT if we are not concerned with our own faithfulness (not testing/examining our OWN actions in light of God's Word), then we are fools who compare ourselves to others and look for commendation not from the Lord but from our own pride and other people.

3. Thus, when you reach out to others, do so in faithfulness to the Word, be faithful yourself and speak to others with a clear conscience.

E. 6:5

NASB: "For each one shall bear his own load."

NIV: "for each one should carry his own load."

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ATT: "Everyone will have to carry his own burden."

1. This is a very short, but a very powerful verse.

2. Remember what we said above about "carrying/bearing". Here, the Lord is pointing out that this must begin with ourselves. We must bear our own load, our own burden, our own sin. Now, I realize this is a little challenging. Christ bore our sin, He has forgiven us, so what does this mean? It means that we must still battle the sinful flesh (remember Gal. 5), and this battle must lead us to confession, it leads us to constantly cry out to the Lord to keep us in the forgiveness of sins throughout our lives. Thus, we bear our own burden.

3. But to live in this Scripture is to open the door to truly being able to love our neighbor. When the Christian truly bears his own sin, then he knows his sin, is humbled, and is molded by the Holy Spirit as someone truly gentle and truly able to look at others -- not with prideful superiority -- but with humility. We cannot look down on others if we are truly bearing our own load. We will be too aware of our own sin, to criticize and put down someone else. With this work of the Holy Spirit, God puts in a position to love. This is His work!

Galatians, Part XXV
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Pastor Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. The Epistle of the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

II. Chapter 6, verses 6-10 is our focus today. This has been subtitled as "Sowing and Reaping" (Buls, p. 69).

III. Biblical Exposition:

A. 6:6

NASB: "And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches."

NIV: "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor."

ATT: "If someone teaches you the Word, share all your good things with your teacher."

1. This sharing of good things is joining in the holy ministry and supporting it. Because it is of benefit to you, you "share" in your resources to perpetuate that good ministry. See Philippians 4:14-19, where Paul praises the support coming from this Christian Church.
2. The specific word in the Greek is *agathos* that means "that which is beneficial." Most interpretations see this as contributing to and for the pastors and teachers earthly needs. Philippians that we read above would seem to agree with this. However, one interpretation at least prefers the concept of sharing in spiritual fellowship apart from physical things. Maybe both?
3. At any rate, there is real need to support the office of the holy ministry. Pastors cannot do it by themselves; they need the faithful to support them. That Paul would even have to address this is a reminder that the sinful nature/the flesh has better things to do with its money and resources. Luther has these choice words:

"There is nothing that Satan can bear less than the light of the Gospel. When it shines, he becomes furious and tries with all his might to extinguish it. He attempts this in two

ways: first, by the deceit of heretics and the might of tyrants; secondly, by poverty and famine. Because Satan has been unable thus far to suppress the Gospel in our territories through heretics and tyrants, he is now trying the second way; he is depriving the ministers of the Word of their livelihood, so that poverty and famine will force them to forsake their ministry, and the unfortunate people, deprived of the Word, will eventually degenerate into animals." (LW 27, p. 123)

4. It is well known that at the current rate, the LC-MS will be facing a crisis in the number of available pastors. During my service for the professional church worker committee of the PSWD (1991-1994), we confirmed that one of the fundamental reasons for our shortage (lack of new candidates) is related to the financial realm. The costs to cover a Bachelor's degree and then the M-Div (8 years of higher education) plus the generally low salaries paid is enough to dissuade many fine candidates from pursuing the holy ministry. To some degree this seems like a poor reason to avoid the ministry, but we must recall that the Scriptures themselves admonish the people of God to well provide for her ministers. For myself, I feel that I am well provided for here at St. Paul's and I thank the Lord for that, but in general, this is a growing problem. Paul's admonition is for the sinful flesh that would rather pursue its own interests than provide for the holy ministry.
5. See also Luke 10:7 and I Corinthians 9:14. The pastor relieves his people through the consolation of the Word of God (Law and Gospel), the people ought relieve the pastor of any concern in regards his subsistence.

B. 6:7

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

NIV: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."

ATT: "Don't make a mistake; you can't fool God. Whatever you sow, you'll reap."

1. "mocked" means literally to "turn up nose at". How foolish it is to treat God with contempt. How foolish it is to try to outwit Him. These concepts are ludicrous and yet this is what the sinful nature/the flesh seeks to do.
2. The second part of the verse is presented as an axiom, a general truth. The sowing of the Christian is preoccupied with Christ. The CSSB (p. 1800) refers to 2nd Corinthians 9:6 as presenting both a negative and positive side to the axiom (please look up at this time). It is possible to sow for God or for the

desires of the flesh. Either way, we will reap what we sow. What will come of our sowing? The next verse – 6:8 – answers that.

3. However, let's pause to soak in this truth. We are always sowing. We are planting; we are investing every single day of these precious lives given to us by the Lord. What are we investing in? What pay off are we seeking? What will be our sowing? Our time is invaluable. It is not simply temporal and passing, it is recorded. And while – as Sasse says – eternity is the opposite of time, what we did in time will be reaped into eternity. This puts a new spin on our time and our lives. Though time passes and eternity never has beginning nor end, still what we did in time is “reaped” into eternity. We are not simply “passing” through, these passing days, your passing prayers, your passing acts, your passing words, your passing service, will come up again...in eternity.

C. 6:8

NASB: “For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

NIV: “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.”

ATT: “If you sow to please your own flesh, you will from your flesh reap destruction. If you sow to please the Spirit, you will from the Spirit reap everlasting life.”

1. First of all, this is one of those verses in Scripture that teaches the necessity of good works. No, not for salvation, but as the result of salvation in Christ.
2. These are two, symmetrical and independent clauses.
3. The first: sow to please the flesh (*sarx*)/sinful nature means that the one used “liberty for license to commit sin, using neither faith toward God nor works toward the neighbor.” (Buls, p. 70) The translations are divided between “corruption” and “destruction,” but the bottom line is in connection to loss of eternal life, eternal condemnation. That's the point. This first life cared for the desires of the sinful flesh over and above the desires of the Holy Spirit. Note, that these do not include the natural desire of every human being (apart from perversion). The Christian may desire food when he or she is hungry, or desire intimacy with one's spouse. The point here is going beyond these natural desires to perversion, to abuse the natural desire and serve the flesh for sin against God and one's neighbor.

4. The second: sow to please the Holy Spirit. There is slight debate on whether this is the born-again, new spirit or God, the Holy Spirit. Most agree that it is a reference to God Himself. The eternal life reaped is already in existence as we live in Christ and by the Spirit. The practical expression of all this is that we use our Christian liberty in fervent love towards our neighbor. Driven through faith in Christ, we want to serve the needs of our neighbor.
5. The contrast here is quite practical: Sowing in the flesh means living for self, sowing in the Spirit means living for others. One is inward directed, the other outward directed.

D. 6:9

NASB: "And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary."

NIV: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

ATT: "Let us not get tired of doing good. At the right time we'll reap if we don't give up."

1. This is one of the first Bible verses I remember President Clinton using during his office as President. As is common in political situations, it was completely taken out of context. We may only understand "good" as that which is driven by faith in Christ.
2. This is actually a very comforting verse. We are being encouraged here. Evidently, the Lord knows that at times we will NEED the encouragement. There will be times in the life of the Christian when he or she will wonder if they are doing any good, if they've been forgotten or if anyone cares. The pietist will say we should not think of such things, but we do think of these things and they are important. Christians are after all called children in the Bible. We easily become discouraged. This is encouragement!
3. See 2 Corinthians 4:1 and 16 and Luke 18:1. The Lord acknowledges our need to counter discouragement.
4. "At the right time" is probably an eschatological reference (at the end). We ought not necessarily expect the reaping on this side of heaven. In some cases, the pay off is never seen until we are before the throne of God. That is fine. The Word is given to us so that we would know that.

E. 6:10

NASB: "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

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

ATT: "So whenever we have a chance, let us do good to everyone but especially to the household of believers."

1. We are reminded of the importance of "opportunity" or "chance" (ATT). These pass by. Make the most of them. They are part of your spiritual service. It is easy to let them slip away. But as we make the most of every opportunity, we sow, we redeem time, we are led the Spirit to remain in Christ in our service and lives. We subdue the flesh and serve the Spirit on all occasions. This is what we seek to do per this verse.
2. There is also in the meantime a priority of persons. We are to serve and love ALL people, but especially "the household of faith," "family of believers," "household of believers". Why? One reason is that these are persecuted especially by the sin, the world and the devil.

Galatians, Part XXVI
Living Word Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, TX
Pastor Alfonso O. Espinosa

I. We commenced our study in the book of Galatians about one year ago. All 26 parts on the six (6) chapters are available upon request and will soon be put on our website, www.lwlc.org. Thank you for taking part in this study and for your insights shared along the way! Soli Deo Gloria! Today, we present the last installment, chapter 6, verses 11-18.

II. The Epistle of the Galatians divides itself into three parts:

Chapters 1-2: Paul's Qualifications	OR	The Gospel Defended
Chapters 3-4: Gospel vs. Legalism	OR	The Gospel Explained
Chapters 5-6: Practical Application	OR	The Gospel Applied

III. Chapter 6, verses 11-18 is our focus today. This has been subtitled as "Improper and Proper Boasting" (Buls, p. 71).

IV. Biblical Exposition:

A. 6:11

NASB: "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand."

NIV: "See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!"

ATT: "See what big letters I make when I write to you with my own hand."

- 1. The commentary from the CSSB (p. 1800) is a good summary: "*large letters*. May have been for emphasis or, as some have suggested, because he had poor eyesight [recall that 4:13 mentions an "illness"]. *with my own hand*. The letter up to this point had probably been dictated to a scribe, after which Paul took the pen in his own hand and finished the letter. Most likely Paul's handwriting was noticeably inferior to the penmanship of the professional scribe, since Paul was accustomed to the task of a tentmaker, which included working with canvas sails and large ropes (hawsers [cable by which a ship is anchored]) for ships."**
- 2. From perhaps a more personal standpoint, inherent in these words we see the love that Paul has for the Galatians. Luther says, "He says this to persuade them and to show them his material feelings for them, as though he were saying: 'Never have I written such an epistle with my own hand to any church as I have written to you.'" (p. 129) Paul cares for them and loves them a great deal. This is the fundamental mark of a servant of the Lord.**

B. 6:12

NASB: “Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.”

NIV: “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.”

ATT: “These men who want to be popular in a worldly way are insisting that you have yourselves circumcised only to keep themselves from being persecuted for the cross of Christ.”

1. This verse and the next reveal the true attitude and heart of the false teacher. The false teacher is not simply identified by false doctrine, but also identified by the fact that he does not truly care for those he is “serving.” Why? He serves only for himself. He is “in it” his own benefit and glory. According to this verse, the reason they put on their outward show and compel others to be as them is for the purpose of avoiding persecution.
2. Implicit in this statement, however, is yet another reminder that to preach the cross of Christ is to know persecution. There are at least two things that will always take place if the cross of Christ is preached:
 - A. We will hear the Law to reveal our sin for which Christ went to the cross to cover with His blood.
 - B. We will hear the Gospel that reveals that in Christ alone we are saved and this robs men of all their pride and accomplishment.
3. Notice that our three English translations present the Greek *en sarki* in different ways: NASB: “in the flesh”; NIV: “outwardly”; and ATT: “in a worldly way”. The point is for the sake of appearance and image. This is driven by the flesh/sinful nature for pride, selfishness, reward, etc. and is concerned with how to please men. In this case, the false “Christian” teachers – the Judaizers – desired to avoid persecution by the Jews.

C. 6:13

NASB: “For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh.”

NIV: “Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh.”

ATT: “Why, these who are circumcised don’t keep the Law themselves, but they want you to have yourselves circumcised so that they can boast of that physical fact about you.”

- 1. Fascinating fact that those who are not led by the Holy Spirit, who reject Christ and the Gospel, do not even keep the Law. “Legalism” is not simply an emphasis on the Law at the expense of the Gospel, but also a misuse of the Law itself. Since for the Judaizers have reduced their “faith” to what they do and keep, it is not surprising to discover their own inability to properly keep the Law...they were missing the point and failed to confess their sin.**
- 2. Luther: “For the Law cannot be fulfilled without the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit cannot be received without Christ. Unless He has been received, the human spirit remains unclean; that is, it despises God and seeks its own glory.” (p. 131)**
- 3. They want to boast “about your flesh” or “of that physical fact about you”...that is, the Judaizers wanted to take pride in the actual, physical circumcision upon the body itself (like a brand of their accomplishment). But this is not only gross and disgusting, but it shows the preoccupation of those who are not interested in giving glory to Christ, but interested in taking inventories and counting numbers and heads. We are not here to grow for the sake of growing, yes we pray for more and more to come to Christ and even to come to the Lord’s church in this place, but we do not take a census for our pride, we seek to be faithful to Christ. To please Him and not to please men who take great pride in what they outwardly build.**

D. 6:14

NASB: “But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

NIV: “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.”

ATT: “May I never boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world.”

- 1. Read also James 4:4 and 1 John 2:15.**
- 2. There is nothing to boast in, except for Christ. Everything else will pass and fade away, except Christ and His Word, so God forbid that we would boast and in this way apparently trust in things that are passing. And yet, this is the tendency of the flesh, so Paul runs to the cross of Christ.**

3. In this “world” (*kosmos*) sin, death and the devil are dominant forces. Paul is reminding us of the spiritual forces working in the world. Bultmann: “Once and for all time and eternity the power which is opposed to God has been crucified so far as Paul is concerned and vice versa. Because of what Jesus did and suffered, all association between the world and Paul has ceased. They are dead to each other. Luther interprets Paul thus: ‘I curse all the righteousness, the doctrine, and the works of the world as venom of the devil. The world, in turn, curses my doctrine and my deeds and judges me to be a dangerous man, a heretic, a seditionist, etc.’” (p. 73)
4. The mention of the “cross” here has been interpreted in different ways. Luther took it to mean the cross of the Christian – the one that Christ has given us as we go through this life following Him – that is, per the meaning of Matthew 16:24 “take up your cross and follow me”...the suffering we endure as we follow our Savior, Christ. Many others, however, take it to mean the symbol of our salvation. So, is it I will boast only in that the Lord allows me to carry the cross, that is remain in Him confessing my sin, remaining active in the battle, and crucifying my flesh...as He leads me through life until I see Him face-to-face OR is it I will boast only in the cross of my salvation, when Christ bore my sin and set me free from my sin, death and the devil. I will boast only of what Christ did for me on the cross of Calvary?
5. Either way, this is offensive to the world (Bultmann, p. 73)!

E. 6:15

NASB: “For neither is circumcision anything, or uncircumcision, but a new creation.”

NIV: “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.”

ATT: “No circumcision or the lack of it is anything, but only the new life that is created.”

1. Not the works of man, but the work of God.
2. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.
3. The Lord identifies you, the Christian has His new creation. Luther is again worth quoting here: “A new creation is a work of the Holy Spirit, who implants a new intellect and will and confers the power to curb the flesh and to flee the righteousness and wisdom of the world. This is not sham or merely a new outward appearance, but something really happens. A new attitude and a new judgment,

namely a spiritual one, actually come into being, and they now detest what they once admired.” (p. 140)

F. 6:16

NASB: “And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.”

NIV: “Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.”

ATT: “Peace and mercy on all who follow this rule, that is, on God’s Israel.”

1. The Christian Church, created by the Holy Spirit is the Israel of God, the children of Abraham who was justified by grace through faith.

G. 6:17

NASB: “From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.”

NIV: “Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.”

ATT: “From now on no one should make trouble for me, because I have on my body the scars of Jesus.”

1. See Paul’s suffering as recorded in Acts 14:19, 16:22, 2 Cor. 11:25, 2 Cor. 12:7, Gal. 4:13-14, these marked him as Christ’s servant who suffered for the Gospel.

H. 6:18

NASB: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.”

NIV: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.”

ATT: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, my fellow Christians. Amen.”

1. He ends with grace!

