

10.20.24

Galatians
Chapter 6 - Spirit Not Flesh
Rejects Fallacious Piety (vs.11-13)

Galatians 6:11-13: See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh.

One of the great verses that I learned early in life was, (2 Timothy 3:16) “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.”

I remember reading passages like the one that we're going to be reading today going, "All Scripture?" And that, "Every Scripture is necessary in my life?" One of the professors that I had was a professor of the Old Testament, and as he began to speak in Hebrew and began to share some of the wonderful truths of Scripture, I go, "All Scripture." I think one of the wonderful things as you begin to open up the word of God is to see just how inexhaustible it is and how many times some of the most obscure passages relate some of the deepest truths. You just have to be willing to dig, right? Proverbs 2 says if you'll search for it like you would for silver and gold, you'll find it. God will let you find it. He'll reveal it to you. It is not as much our ability to find truth because we can't find it. According to 1 Corinthians 2, it doesn't enter into our mind. Empirical reasoning won't get it, but the Spirit of God will reveal it to us. What God is wanting us to do is search, to have a desire, and as we have the desire, then He begins to unfold the wonderful truth to us. He goes, "Ok, you've earned it." And you can sense Him opening up wonderful doors to you.

When we come to the Book of Galatians, we are faced with that whole debate on flesh and Spirit; the whole debate on works, “Is it something that I do or is it something that the Spirit helps me to do?” So, “Is it works or faith?” And that's what the main thrust of the book is. We realize that the Law was declared by God, as it gives the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. As you go through different passages, like Deuteronomy 6, you see the Law of God being revealed to us and you can see the graciousness of God in a law. However, what is clear by the time you come to the New Testament is, though, the Law was wonderful in and of itself, man will not change by virtue of the Law. You can change his behavior with behavior modification or whatever. You zap them with electronics long enough, and they'll go, “Ok.” They'll acquiesce, but fundamentally, the heart does not change. So, the point of the Book of Galatians is that the Law can't change us. We read the Old Testament, and we go, “What's the purpose of the Law?” And in Galatians he says, “Well, the purpose of the Law was to be like a tutor, to lead you to Christ.” So, the whole Old Testament is this wonderful picture in living color of God saying, “You can't

do it.” So, you read in the Old Testament, and you're going, “So, how come Abraham failed? How come Adam messed up so terribly? And how come David, oh, wow, did the things that he did?” And God is writing all these things, and God goes, “Because the Law can't fix them.” These are men that had a heart that want to do the right thing, but you can see the weakness of the Law.

The Old Testament also is a picture of the maturation of the maturity of humanity. So, at the very beginning of humanity, you see Cain killing his brother and you go, “Why doesn't somebody arrest him?” And God goes, “Because there's not a law yet.” So, then the law comes around in the time of Exodus, and God goes, “Ok. Now, we have rules.” Well, if you think about the maturity process of a child at the very beginning stage, a kid does all kinds of things that are kind of rude, crude and uncouth. You know you can't sit down with a little infant and go, “You do know you were a little rude today?” In fact, you really can't go through a whole list of laws with them because they're going, “I don't care.” But as they begin to mature, then you go, “Ok, we've got to set some

rules for these kids.” So, you began to establish rules, do's and don'ts. Do the kids like them? No, they don't like them. Does it help them stay out of trouble? Yes, somewhat. So, the purpose of the Law is to kind of build a fence. Of course, Hebrews actually saw the Law of God as a wall that would build around. Our thought is that it's imprisoning us, but God's thought was it's keeping you from the dangers out there. So, that's the purpose of the Law, as you see in the Old Testament, and the Law is always very graphic and very real. Here again, you talk to a kid as they're coming into “terrible twos;” two, three, four, and as they begin to mature, you're telling them not to do stuff, and a two-year-old is really good at saying “no” and stuff like that. Then, when they don't do the right thing, what do you have to do? Yeah, well, you have to do something. People say, “time out,” but that didn't always work with one of our kids. Anyway, but you have to do something that says, “You've got to feel a little bit of pain here in order for you not to do this again.”

Because by virtue of just discussing it and debating it with him, and maybe going through some kind of philosophy, they're not going to change. So, you put down the rules

and then you enforce the rules. Well, that's the Old Testament. It's very graphic, it's very real. Even when you consider that they would sacrifice animals, how do you cause somebody to think in terms of what you just did to that person was horrible? How do you get them to think that? Because people steal from people, they lie to people, they cheat people. They do all kinds of terrible things to one another, and they don't think anything of it. What do you do to get them to think, "That's a terrible thing?" You have them slaughter an animal. That sin hurts somebody, and your hope is that it gets etched in their minds. So, the Old Testament pictures are all these pictures of, and if you were to convey in some way, "How do I tell people that their heart is getting hardened?" Well, Scripture actually refers to the circumcision of the flesh in the Old Testament as the circumcision of the heart. So, it's a picture. All these things are physical pictures that you have to use when humanity is in its lower stage; in the sense of without a sense of strong right and wrong. There is a conscience that God had placed in their hearts, but they would oftentimes sear their conscience. So, how is it that you get people to think right

and do the right thing, love one another? You go through the Ten Commandments and if you think about it, there's not a one that you say, "Well, that's a terrible law." I mean, when it says, "Don't commit adultery" or when it says, "You shouldn't lie," "you shouldn't cheat," "you shouldn't steal," things like that, all of these are really to cause people to love one another. That's the reason why they're there, but for some reason man continues to push against those kinds of things. What is that?

So, the Law began to reveal this. As you go through the Law, of course you have a whole nation that elevates the Law of God, and they take it through thousands of years, and you go, "You have a law for thousands of years, maybe they get better." The perception is that we're going to create a euphoria, right? We're going to create a utopia, really, and in this process, everybody's going to get better. Through the years, we're going to get better. Technology is now our latest God, which is going to make us better. You know, people are going to love each other more and they're going to be more generous; they're going to be more communicable because we have cell

phones. Now, people are really talking to each other. We have all these wonderful plans to work and here again, the same thing was true with the Law, "The Law will make everybody better." Well, God was demonstrating it's not. When you're raising children, you realize as parents that you have to help them do the right thing. You have to tell them what the right thing is. I mean, you can't look at your 30- or 46-year-old son, and say, "Go to your room." It just doesn't seem to have the push that it used to. Your hope is that he'll do the right thing because he wants to. That's your hope, and that's what we would call Spirit.

So, in Galatians, he begins to say that the Law is a tutor lead us to Christ. Hebrews will say that the Law was a foreshadowing of the real. So, all the things of the Old Testament were pictures of real, but we didn't actually see real in person. Real is, of course, the heart, faith; it's a love for God. So, as we come into the Book of Galatians, he goes, "Look, if you work according to the flesh, if you work in the realm of shadows; "I do what I do because I have to. I do what I do because the Law told me to." It's like you're still in grade school. "Why'd you do the right

thing today?” “Mommy told me to.” Ok, you're 46 years old. You should be doing the right thing because it's the right thing to do. The Spirit ought to be moving you rather than the flesh.

So, his point in Galatians 6 is, if in fact you work according to the flesh, of the flesh, you'll just reap corruption. You'll be disappointed because the more you do stuff because you have to, the less you'll do stuff and the less you'll do stuff with the right attitude, the less you'll do stuff with the right heart. Galatians will say in Galatians 4, when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son and we walk out of the realm of childishness, and we stepped into the realm of adulthood. This is what the Hebrews would call “Bar Mitzvah,” a son of the Law, and you embrace the law as a grown up, you became a man. What made you a man? What made you a man was you had the spirit of a man. So, Galatians 4 will say we now have the Spirit of God's Son, in which we cry, “Abba! Father!” In other words, we do what we do because we love God, not because some rule or regulation tells us that we have to do what we do. So, Paul is writing to this church that is

struggling with this because the Judaizers have come into the church and have begun to say it's all about the Law. It'd be like me taking a grown up back in a grade school and go, "Let's learn the ABC's." And the guy goes, "I don't know how to read." "Well, let's go through the ABCs again." And by that particular process, you're not only frustrating people, but you're also bringing divisiveness because you're pulling them away from what is really important, the heart. You take them away from the things that really matter by virtue of concentrating on the punishment, concentrating on the regulations, the rules. Well, this is fundamentally what religion is. Religion focuses on the rules and the regulations, and they are oppressive, in fact, so oppressive that they actually persecute people that are walking in the faith, i.e. Christians.

I was reading an article with Cato Institute, and they said that Christianity is the world's most persecuted faith. It shouldn't surprise you. Last year, alone, in 2023, 6,000 people were detained in prison, 4000 kidnapped, 5,000 churches were destroyed. 5,600 people were murdered

for the sake of Christ. The question is, why are people so angry? Well, it is strange to consider, but most of the anger and hostility is actually from religion itself against Christians, and you begin to realize that this has been happening from the very beginning. I mean, who was it that killed Abel? It was his own brother. Why did he kill him? Well, because Abel was more religious than Cain, and Cain didn't like that. God showed him some special treatment because of the fact that Abel actually came to God, and he really wanted to give Him a gift; whereas Cain comes in the process of time and with a kind of lethargic, apathetic attitude, and because he did that, God goes, "You know, I really don't regard your sacrifice because you didn't really give it because you wanted to." Sort of like the Book of Malachi, where it writes about the people coming to give their offerings and "How tiresome it is," they said. God goes, "Leave it. I didn't ask you to bring this." (Isaiah 1:12) "...Who requires of you this trampling of My courts?" "Who told you to come? I didn't tell you to worship this way." But man thinks in terms of the Law, and this is why we call it flesh, because this is something he can do and it's something he performs; it's

something he accomplishes. In his own mind, he's really a good person, even though in his heart he really could care less about all these things. He's going to put a good show on, and this is the way that he functions; this is the way fundamentally religion functions.

In the passage that we're looking at, one of the things that it shows us is really the difference between religion, or the flesh and the Spirit. Let me just give you a few examples. Religion goes for show; faith always goes for the heart. Even in the Old Testament, God was saying that. "Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart." Religion will always go for the show.

One of the statements that Paul makes in 2 Corinthians 5:12 is,

"...those who take pride in appearance and not in heart."

It's what religion is all about. It's about them glorying in appearance.

If you were to ever read Matthew 6 and do a dissertation of it, you'd begin to realize that's what that whole chapter is about. I mean, they do everything they do to be seen by

men. Actually, the chapter starts off by that. They fast, they pray, they give their alms, and they want to make sure that everybody sees them, but there's no real desire to do this. So, everything in the Old Testament was to kind of spur this sense of heart, but man just saw it as Law.

I think often about the great feast that God had designated for the Jews, and He goes, "Three times a year I want you to gather together, and I want you to come together with this feast to remember Me." In fact, the feasts were so designed like the feast of the Passover, where children would have to say, "What are you doing?" because it was so unique, and He says, "When your children ask you, 'What are you doing?' You tell them that I saved them out of the land of Egypt." And so, it goes through the whole Passover story. The point is that God designated these three feasts. "You go, "Well, maybe we should do the feasts." Yeah, ok, that's fine, but the reason for the feast was to incorporate a sense of, "God rescued us from slavery." That "God is the one that saves us." It's sort of like we have these times that we get together like

Christmas and Thanksgiving, and kids love these holidays and that's good. You want them to enjoy the holidays, but you know what you want to teach them? To be thankful all the time. You want to teach them to be givers all the time. So, the day of Christmas, the day of Thanksgiving is a shadow of something that they should be doing from their heart all the time, and yet some people still are living in those holidays; they're still living like kids. They've never grown up. They go, "This is the day I need to be nice. This is the day that I need to be thankful." And that's the way they think, but God is calling upon us to see these things as tutors, to lead us to Christ. So, all the fullness belongs to Christ, and this is what Colossians 2 will say, that all these people that are telling you you've got to go with the Law, he goes, "Don't you understand that if you have the heart of Christ in you, you do all of this all the time, even the Sabbath?" We were talking about this in our class. The Sabbath, we enter into His rest. When? "*Sabbatismós*," perpetual rest all the time. That is to say, we rest from doing our way and we do His way the rest of our lives, and that's the way we live. It becomes a part of us. This is the focus of the passage. Now, because Paul is

proclaiming this, you're naturally going to have people that have invested in the whole religious thing, angry. Once again, they're so angry that they're even persecuting us today. When you begin to tell people that Jesus is enough, and you don't have to depend on these people or these people or these people, people get mad. When you tell people that there's none righteous, no, not one, then all these sanctimonious people really get hostile. They get very upset because they've invested a lot of money in just the garb that they wear. It's very expensive. So, just think about that. I mean, if you invested that much money, you'd be upset too. So, religion goes for show, faith goes for the heart. Religion will always drive and dictate, faith will always beckon and inspire. Our faith is about proclaiming the wonderful, good news of Christ, and it is the cross that inspires us to change. It is not the threats that will move us to change, but religion will always go that route. In fact, through the years, whether the selling of indulgences or even the Crusades, man will go those routes to force people to do it, but that's just the Law. They should have read the Old

Testament where it already said that's not going to work. Religion is always sanctimonious. It's always hypocritical. In this particular passage, if you look with me in Galatians 6, which I've already kind of alluded to,

(Galatians 6:12) “Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.”

In other words, they're afraid of what everybody else is thinking. So, they're going to hop on the bandwagon, and use something in the Old Testament to force people to do something that maybe puts a notch in their belt, makes them look really good. Remember when you were young, and you did something really good in your Sunday school class? Maybe some of you didn't go to Sunday school when you were little. I actually have my graduation from the nursery, but if in fact you did do something good, remember getting a sticker? I remember they would actually have stars on the board and the gold one was the best. But if you're still doing stuff for the gold star, you miss the point. The whole reason why you should be

doing what you're doing is because you love God. So, it shouldn't be for show; it shouldn't be to have a good showing.

His statement is,

“Those who desire to make a good showing...”

See that?

“...try to compel...”

And they're trying to get bonus points; they're trying to get recognition.

As Paul will even make mention of in Philippians 3, where he had all these trophies. I mean, we graduate, we get degrees, we get pedigrees. We get all kinds of things that are really impressive to people, and I'm not sure that they're really that impressed, but we feel like they are because we go through all that for them. Yet, Scripture is revealing that none of these things made you a better person. People aren't more loving because they have more schooling. You put a thief in school, and you have a better thief. He's just smarter. So, you realize that the

only thing that can really change this person is their heart has to change. Paul continues to push this.

Now, it's in the context of this that he writes this very obscure verse, and I want you to pick up with me in verse 11. See how he kind of ends this text as we're coming to the close of the book?

(Galatians 6:11) “See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.”

That's very poignant. I mean, Paul's not wanting us to say, “We're very proud of you. You can write really big, very good.” It has nothing to do with it. Paul is alluding to focusing on the trials that he had when he was with them, and he's been so damaged physically that he's not only having a hard time seeing, but he's also having a hard time even moving his hands.

You have to go all the way back to Acts. If you look with me in Acts 13, and in Acts 13, Paul heads in this particular direction of the Galatians. Now, Galatia is a region which is now modern-day Turkey, and in this area, at this time, it was being greatly populated by the Gauls, but also had population of the Jews, the infiltration of them as well.

The Gauls had come in about 300 years prior to Paul coming into the place. So, that was at their peak. The Gauls would be the Celts. Maybe you know some of this? Maybe you guys are related. I don't know. They were coming in and they were at their peak about 300 years before Paul, but then the Roman government came in, and so it kind of incorporated some of these areas. So, the Galatians were in this area. We have actual stone writings of that particular time, and it helps us describe where Galatia actually was, and for a long-time people didn't think it went all the way down to Mediterranean, but we actually have a stone that says that they had actually taken in Pamphylia, which we'll look at just briefly, but it took in that whole area. So, it's a really big area in which Paul was visiting and as he begins to visit, he begins to go into the Jewish synagogues, and he begins to proclaim the message. There's kind of an irony that kind of goes through this because one of the great messages that are recorded is recorded here in Acts 13, and I won't read the message, but one of the things that he repeats over and over again is that God had raised Christ from the dead.

You see it in Acts 13:30,

“But God raised Him from the dead.”

(Acts 13:33) “that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus...”

(Acts 13:34) “As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead...”

So, we can kind of see a theme and I'm not real sure at that juncture that Paul knew his audience very well, but you know how God compels you to say something? So, God was compelling him to say this and so he does. So, as he begins to preach in this particular region, we know, if you look in Acts 13:14, that he was “going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch,” which there are two Antioch's in Scripture. It's a little confusing, but this one's in Turkey. So, when he mentions this, we know exactly where it is. It's almost in the middle of Galatia. So, we're now in Galatia, just to let you know. As he goes on through the area, the Jews are getting kind of upset because, of course, he's preaching the gospel, which is basically saying it's all Christ. It's not your works. It's not the glory in and of yourself. So, they're thinking, “He's

assaulting us.” So, they're gathering people and they're saying, “We’ve got to get this guy out of here.” He then turns to the Gentiles in the area, and he goes, “Ok. So, I'm coming to you guys.” and they just start rejoicing. Just really ecstatic.

In fact, it says,

(Acts 13:46) “we are turning to the Gentiles.

(Acts 13:47) “For so the Lord has commanded us, ‘I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.’”

(Acts 13:48) When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing...”

“The Gospel’s for us!” Pretty excited.

(Acts 13:50) “But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul...”

Now, what is he doing? Has he hurt anybody? No. He's preaching good news, “God came to save all of you.” And they go, “Uh, we don't like that.” Because that takes away

their exclusivity, that takes away their esoteric perception of how wonderful they are. Anyway, so Paul goes, “Ok, so, we have to leave” as they begin to drive them out of their own district.

(Acts 13:51) “But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.”

Iconium is about 70 miles away, still in Galatia.

Then you go into Acts 14 starts, it starts off with him being in Lycaonia. He then drops down to Lystra, basically maybe 40-50 miles away.

(Acts 14:8) “At Lystra a man was sitting who had no strength in his feet, lame from his mother’s womb, who had never walked.”

Paul fixes his gaze on him. He’s made well. He stands up. The Laconian language is really to this day, kind of an unclassified language that we don't know anything about. We seem to think that they're from the Luca people, which are basically from the region of the Hittites. I’m not going to go into too much depth there. When Paul did what he did, they began to worship him like gods and

they called him “Hermes,” which once again, Hermes was the god of the Greeks that had a staff with the two serpents around it and the wings. You still see it today. So, they were declaring him as the god of Hermes. Paul finally figures out what they're saying, and obviously he did not know this at the very beginning, but if you drop on down to when he does realize what they're saying,

(Acts 14:14) “But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out.”

They go, “Not us. God, the One who made the heaven and the earth. He’s the One you should be worshipping, not us.” And let me just say this too, the whole thing with the medical field, don't elevate the staff of the medical field. I mean, God uses them and helps us, and we live another day, but don't give glory to them. Tear your robes and go, “I give glory to God.”

He says, “... God, WHO MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM.” This is who we should worship.

(Acts 14:18) “Even saying these things, with difficulty they restrained the crowds...”

I kind of want you to focus on this with me,

(Acts 14:19) “But Jews came from Antioch...”

That’s Antioch, the city which he already spoke of, which is in Galatia. So, the Jews came from Galatia.

“... and Iconium...”

That’s 70 miles. That's still in the providence of Galatia.

“... and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.”

(Acts 14:20) But while the disciples stood around him, he got up...”

I wonder why he was doing that sermon about “God raised Him. God raised Him. God raised Him”? And you’d think they’d remember, “And He arose.” They’re just watching. I mean, can you just imagine, here’s this guy, stoned to death, blood coming out probably all over the place; he's probably twisted in all kinds of different ways and all of a sudden, he gets up?

“...while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe.”

Still in Galatia.

(Acts 14:21) “After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

(Acts 14:22) strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.””

The thing about religion is religion persecutes, but those who are of the faith, are persecuted. That's the difference between us. We don't go around persecuting people. We are the persecuted and we do that willingly because we follow Christ. The world will, through religion, try to invent ways to persecute. Even in their religion, they try to invent ways to tear down.

So, let me give you an example. Turn with me to Colossians 2, and it shouldn't surprise you that this whole text really parallels the Galatians.

(Colossians 2:8) “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

(Colossians 2:9) For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

(Colossians 2:10) and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;

(Colossians 2:11) 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.”

In other words, he's saying, “They're trying to show you that it's through the outward appearance. I'm showing you that God is the one that does the cleansing.”

It says, “So, don't let anyone act as your judge.” (Verse 16)

(Colossians 2:18) “Let no one keep defrauding you...”

Then drop down,

(Colossians 2:20) “If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world...”

That is to say, your ABCs, your dos and your don'ts.

“... as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,

(Colossians 2:21) “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!”

(Colossians 2:22) (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?

(Colossians 2:23) These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.”

You mean, if I give more money to the church, God's not going to like me more? No, He's not going to like you more if you give more money. Anything physical that you do is not what God is looking for. God is looking for the heart to change and the only way your heart is going to

change is if you receive His Son. Faith is not a religion. It's that relationship with God that we come into. As Paul will say in Galatians, it's faith working through love. We fall in love with God as we come to the cross of Christ, and we realize everything that He's done for us, and then we go, "Can I do something for Him?" And He goes, "Yeah." I mean, it literally changes us.

So, if you go back with me to Galatians, I want to show you how Paul makes reference to this, because once again, it is the tie to what he's sharing with them.

(Galatians 4:12) "I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong."

In other words, "I haven't come demanding things from you. I've just come sharing the gospel." And I would trust that when people walk in the door, they realize we're not trying to get anything from you. We just want you to receive Christ. You love God; we're good. We're all together with that.

(Galatians 4:13) "but you know that it was because of a bodily illness..."

The translation kind of mixes up here, but it just means any kind of malady, any kind of problem that a body has. So, was he sick? Was he ill? No, not sick as far as the flu or something like that, but his body was hurt when he was with them. He'd been stoned.

“... it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time.”

Here again, you can see Him with the disciples, “Through many trials, you're going to go through them for the sake of the gospel.” They're going, “Does this happen to everybody?” He's not promising them anything. “It's not going to be easy, but we're not the ones that do the torturing, they do.” This is the problem with the whole monastery concept. It's not our job to go torture ourselves. We as Christians, we're not in love with torturing ourselves. We would rather not be tortured. I just want to throw that out, but we know and are willing to be for the sake of the gospel, because He loved us, but it's the love of God that compels us.

(Galatians 4:14) “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.”

(Galatians 4:15) Where then is that sense of blessing you had? ...”

He's trying to convey, “When you first saw me, and you saw the pain and the suffering I was going through, you didn't go through any kind of law to try to figure out what you should do. You embraced me because of the message that I had. You fell in love with me, and you ministered to me, and you helped me with my eyes and with my hands, and whatever parts of my body because we were drawn together in love.” He goes, “You’ve got to stay there. That's where you have to stay. You can't get into the whole realm of regulations and rules again.” Don't ever go back there again. If you've grown up, you've had the Spirit of Christ in you, don't ever go back to that again. See, we've left that, and we now walk into this wonderful world of Spirit.

(Galatians 6:7) “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”

If you sow according to the flesh, of the flesh, you're going to reap corruption. You'll never get there; you'll never fix yourself; you'll never do anybody any good. But if you sow according to the Spirit, of the Spirit, you'll reap life and you'll demonstrate life to everyone and life will come into you.

Can you just imagine the people around him as they began to minister to him and fell in love with this message of this glorious gospel? I want you to note this, the way that he puts it in Galatians 3, he goes, "Who caused you to turn back? Have you been bewitched again?" We know that they may be a little superstitious anyway, but he says, "Has somebody bewitched you?"

(Galatians 3:1) "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?"

You know what he's doing, don't you? I mean, they weren't there at the crucifixion. Some may have been. That's not what he's referring to, though. He's referring to Paul being crucified, killed in front of them and when he began to preach the message of Christ being crucified.

If you look in Galatians 2:20, what does he say?

“I 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...”

I do what I do because I desire to do it. It's the Spirit of God that lives within me. What is his motivation?

“... I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

See, that's the impetus that we have now. You don't have to give us any law. As Scripture says, “Love fulfills the Law.” We don't need any law anymore. We do what we do because we want to, and the love of Christ compels us. What an interesting picture as he begins to write that letter, “You know this is me, and it's a reminder to you of what it was like when I was there and how I demonstrated the love of God through all the torture, all the trials.” And the wonderful thing about that picture is it literally separates religion from faith in just a moment's thought; and that is, religion is torturous, it's oppressive, it hates. Faith walks in love and inspires. It's a big difference, isn't it? We're always trying to encourage

people to walk according to faith. We live by faith, not by sight.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and it's our desire to walk in this faith, to walk in the Spirit, no longer in the flesh, not to try to do things because we have to or because somebody has pressured us to or because we're worried about what man is thinking. Do we seek to please man? Do we seek to please God? If we sought to please men, we wouldn't be Your bondservant. How freeing it is to come out of the realm of Law and into the realm of adulthood, into the Spirit of Christ.

Your head's bowed and your eyes closed. We're asking you just to examine your heart and simply ask, why are you here and what is it that motivates you? We're not going to try to push you into it. We're not going to try to make you feel guilty. Scripture can do that, the Law can do that, but we're going to preach the gospel that says,

“For God so loved you,” and the truth of the matter is that He longs to be gracious to you; the truth of the matter is that if you'll confess, He is faithful and just to forgive. He died for you. He loves you. He has wonderful things in store for you.