

Galatians 1 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Galatians 1 opens Paul's defense of the gospel of grace against the distortion of legalism. Written to churches in Galatia influenced by Judaizers, the letter begins with an urgent rebuke: believers were turning from grace to a "different gospel." Paul declares that salvation is through faith in Christ alone — without law, works, or ritual. He defends his apostolic authority, showing that his message came directly from revelation, not from men. The chapter emphasizes the divine origin of Free Grace — a gospel that liberates from bondage and glorifies Christ alone.

1–2. "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father...)"

Paul asserts that his apostleship is of divine commission. Unlike Judaizers, whose authority rested in human tradition, Paul's call came directly from the risen Christ. Grace-based authority originates in revelation, not institution.

3–5. "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ..."

The greeting centers on *charis* (grace) and *eirēnē* (peace), the essence of salvation. "Who gave himself for our sins" proclaims substitutionary atonement — Christ voluntarily bore sin's penalty to deliver us from "this present evil world." This deliverance is spiritual, not political, rooted in the Father's will. Eternal security rests on Christ's self-giving act, completed once for all.

6–7. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel."

Paul's astonishment expresses sorrow, not disbelief. The verb *metatithes* (Gk.) means "to transfer allegiance." They were deserting grace for a legalistic counterfeit. "Another gospel" (*heteron euangelion*) was not truly another — it was no gospel at all. Adding requirements to faith nullifies grace and denies Christ's sufficiency.

8–9. “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you... let him be accursed.”

Paul invokes the strongest condemnation — anathema (Gk.), meaning “devoted to judgment.” This does not describe eternal damnation for believers but divine rejection of false teaching. Even angelic beings must not contradict the message of free grace through faith alone. Truth is final because its Author is divine.

10. “For do I now persuade men, or God?... if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”

Paul rejects people-pleasing religion. Grace offends human pride, while law flatters it. The gospel’s purity requires loyalty to God, not approval from others. The servant of Christ speaks truth even when unpopular.

11–12. “But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.”

Paul received the gospel “by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” His message was divine in origin and complete in content — independent of human systems. Grace is not a theological invention but a heavenly revelation of God’s mercy through Christ.

13–14. “For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion...”

Paul recalls his zeal as a persecutor of the church. “Profited in the Jews’ religion” shows how human effort and tradition blinded him to grace. Religion without Christ produces pride and persecution, not peace.

15–16. “But when it pleased God... to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen.”

Conversion was entirely God's initiative. "It pleased God" emphasizes sovereign grace — not determinism, but divine mercy responding to faith. Paul's commission to the Gentiles reveals the inclusiveness of the gospel: faith alone, apart from ethnic or legal distinctions.

17–20. "Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me..."

After conversion, Paul spent time in Arabia, receiving direct instruction from the Lord. He later visited Peter and James briefly. His independence from Jerusalem leadership confirms divine commissioning. The gospel's truth transcends institutional origin.

21–24. "Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia... they glorified God in me."

Paul's transformed life became a testimony of grace. Those who once feared him now praised God for his conversion. Salvation and ministry alike magnify divine mercy. Grace turns the persecutor into the preacher — proof of the gospel's power.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Charis (Gk., v.3): "grace," unmerited favor and divine enablement.

Metatithesthe (Gk., v.6): "to transfer, to desert," describing departure from grace.

Heteron euangelion (Gk., v.6): "another gospel," a distorted message opposing faith alone.

Anathema (Gk., v.8): "accursed," under divine disapproval, not loss of salvation.

Apokalypsin Iēsou Christou (Gk., v.12): "revelation of Jesus Christ," divine disclosure of truth.

Doctrinal Insight

Galatians 1 defends the divine origin and exclusivity of the gospel of grace. Salvation is by faith alone, without addition or modification. Any system that mingles law, ritual, or performance corrupts the message and dishonors Christ's finished work. The believer's assurance rests on revelation, not religion; on grace, not effort.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation is by faith in Christ alone, not by law or works.

Grace and peace flow from the completed work of Christ.

"Another gospel" is a counterfeit that adds conditions to grace.

Divine revelation, not human tradition, is the foundation of truth.

Eternal security is grounded in Christ's self-giving, not human performance.

Galatians 1 proclaims that the true gospel is unchangeable: salvation is free, finished, and forever by grace through faith in Christ alone.

Galatians 2 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Galatians 2 continues Paul's defense of grace by recounting his visit to Jerusalem and his confrontation with Peter at Antioch. Paul demonstrates that the apostles agreed on one gospel—justification by faith in Christ alone. His rebuke of Peter shows that even great leaders can err when yielding to legalism or fear of man. The heart of the chapter culminates in verse 20: "I am crucified with Christ." This defines the believer's position—dead to the Law and alive by Christ's indwelling life. Salvation is not maintained by works; it rests entirely on the finished work of Christ.

1–2. "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas..."

Paul recounts his second Jerusalem visit (Acts 15). He went “by revelation,” not human summons. His message to the leaders confirmed unity: both Jews and Gentiles are saved by grace through faith alone. No legal requirement adds to that gospel.

3–5. “But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised...”

Titus serves as living proof that Gentiles need not adopt Jewish law. False brethren tried to spy out their “liberty which we have in Christ Jesus.” Paul refused to submit “no, not for an hour.” Grace tolerates no compromise with legal bondage.

6–9. “But of those who seemed to be somewhat... they added nothing to me.”

Paul affirms equality among apostles. The pillars—James, Peter, and John—recognized his divine commission. Grace unites ministries across cultural lines: Peter to the circumcision, Paul to the Gentiles. The gospel remains one and indivisible.

10. “Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.”

Their only request concerned charity, not ritual. Grace inspires generosity, not obligation. Fellowship expresses faith’s love, not law’s burden.

11–13. “But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face...”

Paul publicly rebuked Peter for hypocrisy. Peter had eaten with Gentiles but withdrew when legalists arrived. His fear of criticism contradicted the truth of the gospel. Even Barnabas was “carried away with their dissimulation.” Grace demands consistency: no believer is superior by heritage or conduct.

14. “I said unto Peter before them all...”

Paul’s rebuke was not personal but doctrinal. “If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles... why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” Grace levels all distinctions; salvation’s ground is the cross, not culture.

15–16. “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ...”

This is Paul’s clearest declaration of justification by faith alone. The phrase *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou* (Gk.) means “through faith in Jesus Christ.” Three times Paul repeats it for emphasis. Law-keeping cannot justify; faith in Christ’s finished work does.

17–18. “But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners...”

Paul argues that justification by faith does not promote sin. Rebuilding the Law system makes one a “transgressor,” for it denies grace. Returning to works is rebellion, not holiness.

19. “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.”

The Law demanded death for sin. Through Christ’s substitution, the believer has died to that system’s claims. The Law can no longer condemn the one who has already died in Christ.

20. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

This verse summarizes positional truth. *Synestaurōmai* (Gk.) — “I have been crucified with” — is perfect tense, denoting a completed, ongoing state. The believer’s identity is inseparably united with Christ. The Christian life is Christ living His life through the believer by faith, not human effort.

21. “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

To add works to faith is to “nullify” (athētō, Gk.) grace. If human effort could earn righteousness, Christ’s death was needless. Grace and works are mutually exclusive—salvation rests entirely on divine provision, not human performance.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Eleutheria (Gk., v.4): “liberty,” freedom from the Law’s bondage.

Dikaioutai (Gk., v.16): “is justified,” declared righteous, not made righteous.

Dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou (Gk., v.16): “through faith in Jesus Christ,” the exclusive means of justification.

Synestaurōmai (Gk., v.20): “I have been crucified with,” perfect tense indicating a completed union with ongoing effect.

Athētō (Gk., v.21): “to nullify, set aside,” describing rejection of grace.

Doctrinal Insight

Galatians 2 exposes the incompatibility of Law and grace. Justification is by faith alone, apart from works. Sanctification proceeds by the same principle: Christ living through the believer. The Law cannot impart life; it only condemns. Grace liberates from bondage, providing both security and spiritual vitality through Christ’s indwelling presence.

Free Grace Summary

Paul’s gospel was independent of men and confirmed by divine revelation.

Titus’s freedom from circumcision illustrates liberty in Christ.

Peter's compromise showed that even apostles could fall into legalism.

Justification is by faith alone—never by law or performance.

The believer's life flows from union with Christ, not human striving.

Galatians 2 anchors eternal security in substitution: Christ's death satisfied the Law completely, making salvation final and irrevocable.

Galatians 3 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Galatians 3 marks the theological center of the letter, contrasting faith and law. Paul confronts the Galatians for abandoning the principle of faith for the bondage of law. He argues from experience, Scripture, and covenant theology that justification and the Spirit are received by faith alone, as illustrated by Abraham. The Law was temporary — a tutor until Christ came — never a means of salvation. The chapter climaxes with the believer's identity "in Christ," where all distinctions vanish, and every believer becomes an heir according to promise.

1–3. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you... having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

Paul's rebuke exposes their deception. *Anoētoi* (Gk.) means "unthinking." "Bewitched" (*baskainō*, Gk.) refers to spiritual fascination or false influence. They had received salvation and the Spirit by faith, yet now sought sanctification by works. The Christian life that begins in grace must continue in grace.

4–5. "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

Paul appeals to their experience of the Spirit's power. Miracles, ministry, and sanctification all operate by faith, not law. The phrase "hearing of faith" (*akoēs pisteōs*, Gk.) signifies receptive belief, not performance.

6. “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

Quoting Genesis 15:6, Paul establishes faith as the basis of justification. “Accounted” (elogisthē, Gk.) means imputed — righteousness credited, not infused. Abraham’s justification predated the Law, proving salvation has always been by faith alone.

7–9. “Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.”

Faith, not lineage, determines spiritual sonship. God promised Abraham that “in thee shall all nations be blessed.” The blessing is justification by faith and reception of the Spirit, shared equally by Jews and Gentiles.

10–12. “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse...”

The Law demands perfect obedience. Failure in one point brings condemnation (Deut. 27:26). “The just shall live by faith” (Hab. 2:4) reveals the opposite principle. “The law is not of faith” — they are mutually exclusive systems: one demands, the other receives.

13–14. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”

Exēgorasen (Gk.) means “bought out of the marketplace,” emphasizing full release. Christ bore the curse of the Law to secure blessing for believers. Through Him, Gentiles receive the promise of the Spirit by faith — not by works or ritual.

15–18. “Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth...”

Paul uses covenant logic: God's promise to Abraham preceded and supersedes the Law by 430 years. "Seed" (sperma, Gk.) is singular — pointing to Christ. The inheritance depends on promise, not performance. Grace cannot be annulled by a later system of law.

19–22. "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions..."

The Law exposes sin but cannot remove it. It functioned as a temporary guardian "till the seed should come." The Law was mediated (diatageis, Gk.) through angels by Moses, while the promise came directly from God. "Scripture hath concluded all under sin" — revealing the universal need for grace.

23–25. "Before faith came, we were kept under the law... the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."

The Law acted as a paidagōgos (Gk.), a tutor or disciplinarian guiding children until maturity. Once faith has come, the believer is no longer under the tutor's authority. Grace, not Law, governs the believer's relationship with God.

26–28. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Spiritual sonship arises from faith alone. "Baptized into Christ" refers to Spirit baptism — union with Christ at salvation. All distinctions of ethnicity, gender, or status disappear in spiritual position: "ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

29. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Believers share in the Abrahamic blessing — justification and spiritual inheritance through faith. The promise ensures eternal security: what God began in grace cannot be undone by law.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Anoētoi (Gk., v.1): “foolish, unthinking.”

Baskainō (Gk., v.1): “to bewitch, deceive by influence.”

Akoēs pisteōs (Gk., v.5): “hearing of faith,” receptive belief.

Elogisthē (Gk., v.6): “accounted, imputed,” credited righteousness.

Exēgorasen (Gk., v.13): “redeemed out of,” full deliverance by payment.

Paidagōgos (Gk., v.24): “schoolmaster, guardian,” temporary moral custodian.

Doctrinal Insight

Galatians 3 reveals the incompatibility of Law and grace. The Law was never a means of salvation but a mirror revealing sin and pointing to Christ. Faith unites the believer to God’s promise and grants full sonship. The Spirit’s work in justification and sanctification proves grace’s sufficiency from beginning to end.

Free Grace Summary

Justification and the Spirit are received by faith, not works.

Abraham’s example confirms salvation by grace apart from law.

Christ redeemed believers from the curse completely and permanently.

The Law served a temporary, preparatory role only.

Faith makes all believers equal heirs of promise.

Galatians 3 anchors eternal security in divine promise: salvation begins, continues, and is guaranteed by grace through faith alone.

Galatians 4 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Galatians 4 continues Paul's contrast between law and grace through the imagery of heirs and slavery. He explains that before Christ, Israel was like a child under guardianship — not yet enjoying full rights. The coming of Christ ended that servitude, ushering in adoption and the indwelling Spirit, by whom believers cry "Abba, Father." Paul pleads with the Galatians not to return to legal bondage. He uses the allegory of Hagar and Sarah to illustrate the incompatibility of law (bondage) and grace (freedom). Every believer is a child of promise, not performance.

1–3. "Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant..."

Paul uses inheritance imagery to describe Israel under the Law. Though an heir by promise, the child lived under *epitropoi* (guardians) until maturity. Similarly, humanity under the Law was in bondage to "the elements of the world" (*stoicheia tou kosmou*, Gk.) — external ordinances and ritual regulations.

4–5. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law..."

At the perfect moment in history, Christ entered humanity to redeem those under the Law. *Exagorasē* (Gk.) means to purchase out of slavery permanently. Through His redemptive work, believers receive "the adoption of sons" (*huiiothesia*, Gk.) — full adult status in God's family, not probationary membership.

6–7. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

The indwelling Spirit confirms sonship and intimacy. "Abba" (Aram.) expresses childlike dependence; "Father" (Gk. *patēr*) emphasizes authority and relationship. This dual cry signifies both confidence and reverence. The believer is no longer a servant but an heir of God through Christ — permanently secure in grace.

8–11. “Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.”

Before salvation, Gentiles were enslaved to idolatry; returning to legalism repeats that bondage. “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years” refers to ritual calendar observances. Paul fears they are forfeiting spiritual joy, not salvation. Legalism always produces fear and loss of fellowship.

12–16. “Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are...”

Paul appeals personally: once they welcomed him joyfully, despite his “infirmity of the flesh.” His illness (possibly an eye condition) did not hinder their affection. Now, influenced by Judaizers, they view him as an enemy for telling the truth. Grace restores affection; law breeds suspicion.

17–20. “They zealously affect you, but not well...”

The false teachers courted the Galatians for selfish gain. “They would exclude you, that ye might affect them.” Legalism isolates believers under performance control. Paul likens his concern to labor pains — yearning for “Christ to be formed” in them, meaning experiential maturity, not re-salvation.

21–23. “Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?”

Paul uses an allegory from Genesis: Abraham’s two sons — Ishmael (born of Hagar, the bondwoman) and Isaac (born of Sarah, the freewoman). Ishmael represents human effort; Isaac represents divine promise. Law produces bondage; grace produces freedom.

24–27. “For these are the two covenants; the one from mount Sinai... which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.”

Mount Sinai symbolizes the covenant of law and slavery. “Jerusalem which now is” represents Judaism under bondage; “Jerusalem which is above” represents grace and freedom. Believers belong to the heavenly city of promise, not the earthly system of works. “Rejoice, thou barren” (Isaiah 54:1) foretells the miraculous fruitfulness of grace.

28–31. “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.”

Just as Ishmael persecuted Isaac, legalists oppose grace. “Cast out the bondwoman and her son” signifies separation from the Law’s system. The believer’s identity is not based on human striving but divine promise. “We are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.” Grace and law cannot coexist as co-sources of blessing.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Stoicheia tou kosmou (Gk., v.3): “elements of the world,” basic ritual principles or external observances.

Exagorasē (Gk., v.5): “redeem, buy out,” total emancipation from bondage.

Huiothesia (Gk., v.5): “adoption as sons,” full heirship and adult standing in God’s family.

Abba (Aram., v.6): “father,” intimate and dependent address of a child.

Mētēr / paidiskēs (Gk., v.22): “bondwoman,” symbolic of law’s slavery.

Doctrinal Insight

Galatians 4 explains that believers are no longer under the Law’s guardianship. The Son’s redemption brings full adoption and the indwelling Spirit, securing intimate fellowship. Legalism enslaves the believer to fear; grace liberates to sonship. The allegory of Hagar and Sarah

dramatizes the incompatibility of the two systems: one of works and bondage, the other of promise and freedom.

Free Grace Summary

Believers are redeemed and adopted as sons, not servants.

The Spirit's indwelling confirms relationship and eternal security.

Legalism replaces intimacy with fear; grace restores joy and liberty.

The allegory of Hagar and Sarah affirms the permanence of grace's covenant.

Salvation is not maintained by law but rests on divine promise.

Galatians 4 establishes that all who believe are heirs of God — eternally secure children of promise, free from every legal chain.

Galatians 5 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Galatians 5 turns from doctrine to application — from the believer's position in grace to the practice of Christian liberty. Paul urges the Galatians to “stand fast in the liberty” Christ purchased, warning that legalism enslaves the soul. He contrasts the futility of law-keeping with the power of the Spirit, showing that love fulfills what the Law demanded but could never produce. The “works of the flesh” and the “fruit of the Spirit” reveal two contrasting ways of living: bondage or freedom. This chapter celebrates the believer's walk in the Spirit as the natural expression of a secure relationship, not a condition for maintaining it.

1. “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free...”

Believers are commanded to remain firm (stēkete, Gk.) in the freedom provided by grace. “Entangled again with the yoke of bondage” refers to submission to the Mosaic system. The liberty Christ provides is freedom from law's condemnation, not license to sin.

2–4. “If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.”

Ritual circumcision as a means of justification nullifies grace. To seek righteousness by law obligates one to “keep the whole law.” “Ye are fallen from grace” means falling from the sphere of grace’s influence, not losing salvation. It describes regression from grace-living to legal performance.

5–6. “For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”

The believer’s confidence rests in future glorification — the full realization of righteousness. “In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” Love is the outflow of grace, not a prerequisite for it.

7–9. “Ye did run well; who did hinder you...?”

Paul likens the Christian life to a race interrupted by false persuasion. “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” warns that one small legal requirement corrupts the whole message of grace. The gospel cannot be mixed with works without being destroyed.

10–12. “He that troubleth you shall bear his judgment...”

Paul expresses confidence that the Galatians will return to truth and that those spreading legalism will face divine correction. His sarcastic remark (“I would they were even cut off”) reveals his indignation toward any doctrine undermining grace.

13–15. “Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh...”

Freedom is not an excuse for indulgence but an opportunity for love. “Serve one another” (douleuete, Gk.) means voluntarily minister through grace. The entire law finds moral fulfillment in love, which flows from the Spirit, not compulsion.

16–18. “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

The verb peripateite (Gk.) means continual conduct under Spirit control. The “flesh” (sarx, Gk.) opposes the Spirit, but believers are not under law. Spirit-led living produces practical righteousness without legal constraint — the Spirit, not law, empowers sanctification.

19–21. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest...”

Paul lists fifteen expressions of the sinful nature — moral, religious, relational, and social. These deeds characterize the old nature, not the believer’s new standing. “They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” refers to loss of reward and inheritance privileges, not loss of eternal life. Inheritance pertains to ruling and reward (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9–10).

22–23. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering...”

The Spirit produces inner transformation, not external regulation. Karpos (Gk.) — “fruit” — is singular, showing unity of these qualities in one spiritual life. “Against such there is no law” — the Law has no power to condemn such living because grace fulfills its moral intent.

24–25. “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

Positionally, the old nature was judged at the cross. “Crucified” (estaurōsan, Gk.) points to decisive action through identification with Christ. Experientially, believers are called to “walk in the Spirit” (stoichōmen, Gk.), aligning conduct with position.

26. “Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.”

Grace produces humility and harmony, not competition. Legalism breeds pride; Spirit-walk produces peace.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Stēkete (Gk., v.1): “stand firm,” command to remain fixed in freedom.

Dikaiouthe (Gk., v.4): “to be justified,” to be declared righteous — never achieved by works.

Peripateite (Gk., v.16): “walk,” habitual conduct or lifestyle.

Sarx (Gk., v.16): “flesh,” the fallen human nature opposing the Spirit.

Karpos (Gk., v.22): “fruit,” the unified result of Spirit-led living.

Stoichōmen (Gk., v.25): “keep in step,” live consistently with one’s position in Christ.

Doctrinal Insight

Galatians 5 teaches that true freedom is found only in grace. The Law demands but cannot empower; the Spirit empowers without demanding. Legalism enslaves; grace liberates to love. Sanctification flows from union with Christ, not external codes. The Spirit’s fruit is evidence of fellowship, not proof of salvation — eternal life remains secured by faith alone.

Free Grace Summary

Liberty in Christ must be guarded against both legalism and license.

“Falling from grace” means abandoning grace-living, not losing salvation.

The believer’s walk depends on the Spirit’s power, not human willpower.

The “works of the flesh” bring temporal loss; the “fruit of the Spirit” brings fellowship joy.

Eternal life is secure; Spirit-led living produces experiential victory.

Galatians 5 celebrates freedom’s balance: grace liberates from law, empowers through love, and anchors security in Christ’s finished work alone.

Galatians 6 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Galatians 6 concludes Paul’s defense of grace by applying it to practical relationships. True spirituality expresses itself in restoration, humility, and generosity — not pride or performance. Believers are to bear one another’s burdens while also taking personal responsibility before God. The law of sowing and reaping warns of temporal consequences for living in the flesh versus walking in the Spirit. Paul’s final emphasis on the cross underscores that boasting belongs only in Christ’s finished work. The believer’s identity and peace are grounded in grace, not ritual or reputation.

1–2. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one...”

Restoration, not condemnation, marks true spirituality. “Restore” (katartizete, Gk.) means to mend or set in joint again. Restoration requires gentleness (prautēti, Gk.) and self-awareness — “considering thyself.” “Bear ye one another’s burdens” fulfills the law of Christ — the law of love, not the Mosaic code.

3–5. “For if a man think himself to be something... let every man prove his own work.”

Grace excludes pride. Each believer evaluates his own life before God rather than comparing with others. “Prove” (dokimazetō, Gk.) means to test or approve after examination. Verse 5 clarifies personal accountability: “Every man shall bear his own burden” — phortion (Gk.), a manageable load distinct from another’s heavy burden in verse 2.

6. “Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.”

Material support for teachers reflects gratitude for spiritual instruction. Grace-based giving is voluntary, never compelled.

7–8. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

This universal principle applies to believers. “Soweth to his flesh” refers to living for temporal pleasure or pride; “soweth to the Spirit” describes walking in dependence upon God. The result is experiential blessing and eternal reward, not the gaining or losing of salvation. “Everlasting life” (zōēn aiōnion, Gk.) here denotes quality of life and future reward for faithful living.

9. “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

Grace motivates perseverance without compulsion. The harvest refers to reward at the judgment seat of Christ, not eternal destiny. Endurance in service receives divine recompense (misthos, Gk.).

10. “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

Believers should actively practice grace toward others, prioritizing fellow believers. Grace-based service extends God’s love to all without partiality.

11–13. “Ye see how large a letter I have written... as many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh...”

Paul’s large handwriting may indicate personal emphasis or poor eyesight. He warns against those promoting circumcision for outward approval. Legalism boasts in external conformity

rather than inward faith. “They constrain you... lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.” Works-religion avoids the offense of grace.

14. “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

Paul’s boast is in the cross alone. “Glory” (kauchaomai, Gk.) means to boast or take confidence. Through the cross, the world system has been crucified to the believer — its values no longer define him. Grace shifts confidence from performance to the finished work of Christ.

15. “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.”

What counts is the new creation (kainē ktisis, Gk.) — spiritual life through faith in Christ. External marks have no spiritual value; regeneration defines eternal identity.

16. “As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy...”

The “rule” (kanōn, Gk.) is the principle of grace — salvation and life by faith alone. Peace and mercy flow from this rule, uniting all who rest in Christ’s sufficiency.

17. “From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”

Paul’s physical scars (stigmata, Gk.) testify to his suffering for Christ. Unlike circumcision, these marks signify genuine devotion springing from grace, not obligation.

18. “Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”

The letter closes as it began — with grace. This benediction reaffirms that the believer’s life, growth, and security rest entirely on God’s unmerited favor.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Katartizete (Gk., v.1): “restore,” to mend or make complete again.

Dokimazetō (Gk., v.4): “prove,” to test and approve.

Phortion (Gk., v.5): “burden,” individual responsibility.

Zōēn aiōnion (Gk., v.8): “eternal life,” quality and reward, not the gift of justification.

Kauchaomai (Gk., v.14): “boast,” to exult in or place confidence upon.

Kainē ktisis (Gk., v.15): “new creation,” regenerated identity in Christ.

Doctrinal Insight

Galatians 6 demonstrates that grace governs relationships, service, and reward. Restoration replaces condemnation, Spirit-led giving replaces compulsion, and sowing to the Spirit brings blessing now and reward later. The believer’s life revolves around the cross — the end of self-effort and the beginning of spiritual freedom. Law seeks to control; grace transforms from within.

Free Grace Summary

Restoration, not rejection, defines spiritual maturity.

Sowing and reaping concern fellowship and reward, not salvation.

Eternal life as reward is quality of experience, not duration of possession.

The cross nullifies every ground of boasting except Christ’s finished work.

Grace motivates humility, generosity, and service without fear.

Galatians 6 seals Paul's argument: salvation is free, secure, and final; sanctification and reward flow from walking in the Spirit, not from striving under law.