

Sing It Over Again To Me

Text: Galatians 1–6

Theme: God's gracious provision of forgiveness through Jesus Christ is the only way to eternal life

Introduction — our culture speaks often about freedom

- but what it appears to value and desire most is freedom to do whatever each person wishes
- in midst of this, God's Word has strong, clear voice:
 - **Galatians 5:1 — For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.**
- freedom offered by Jesus Christ is freedom that leads to an abundant life, an eternal life

What does that life look like?

- how do we come by it?
- it is only through Jesus Christ, as we've seen in Paul's letter to Galatian church
- Jesus' sacrifice alone is sufficient to set us free from sin and guilt so we may now obey God's law by God's grace
- that has been the song of Galatians
- it is not by doing certain things
- it is not by trusting Jesus and adding things to His work on our behalf
- this complete forgiveness, solid-rock assurance relief from guilt, and eternal life come by...
- God's gracious provision through Jesus Christ alone

It's been 43 weeks since we started Galatians; 35 sermons plus today's

- want to simply review & highlight each of six chapters of this book
- by doing so, it will drill this further into our minds and hearts
- by doing so, each will understand it better
- by doing so, we will believe what God has promised, receive it, and then live it out
- all this will be to the praise of His glorious grace

So, let's begin with chapter 1 where we see...

I. THE ONLY MESSAGE OF HOPE, CH. 1

- Paul wastes very little time with introductions
- he jumps right to the problem at hand because it is so serious

1. Trouble-makers

- Christianity, as it is recognized in NT, is not very old by this time
- even though roots in OT, back to beginning, thru Jesus' time on earth, relatively new
- Paul was one who was impacted greatly, completely changing his life
- he now wants to see it happen to as many others as he can reach
- so he has traveled to cities in southern Asia Minor: Lystra, Iconium, Derbe, for example
- arriving back in Antioch, receives disturbing news however
- Jewish believers from Jerusalem came in after him and stirred things up
- these men sounded sincere, seemed legit, but were disturbers of the peace
- they questioned Paul's authority as an apostle
- this undermined his teaching on the gospel
- give them room to add something to the gospel
- "Believe on Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection," they said
- "but not enough, not sufficient; need something more"

- and that something more was circumcision
- more precisely, not simply the act, but the adherence to OT law to achieve salvation

2. Jesus plus anything is not the gospel

- Paul defends his apostleship in ch. 1 & 2
- he does so not because feeling have been hurt
- but the gospel is at stake here
- the gospel is central to our faith, our salvation, our justification
- get it wrong and not saved, not justified, not right with God
- legalizers got it wrong by trying to make glawspel, not gospel
- Paul said, “If it’s not pure gospel, it is to be accursed eternally”
- and those who teach this are to be under curse of God as well
- we must never alter or adjust the gospel message to make it more palatable
- so, we commit ourselves to preaching the gospel of God in Christ Jesus

Paul keeps on his own defense so we can see power of...

II. THE REAL GOSPEL, CH. 2

- Paul gives us a biographical history lesson here
- he defends his authority in order to uphold authority of gospel, indeed, God’s Word
- reject this, mess with this authority of the Word of God and lose the gospel

1. Recognized authority

- Paul gives short version of his conversion, dramatic as it was
- but then also notes: Jerusalem apostles, eleven remaining & newly appointed confirm him
- those who were with Jesus affirm that Paul has spent time in risen Lord’s presence
- he has been given teaching they had been given
- and they support him as he goes out to start and strengthen church

2. Trouble-makers in trouble

- in midst of this, Paul relates how he had to even correct Peter, spokesman for apostles
- Peter has compromised himself and the teaching given by Jesus
- he has bent to fear of man instead of standing firm in fear of God
- Paul confronts Peter on this in order to defend the purity of the gospel
- “Peter, if you cut off non-circumcised believers because of law, think they’re still under law”
- He reminds Galatians, and us, in v. 21
- **Galatians 2:21 – I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.**
- we don’t use the old law to make us acceptable to God; it hasn’t ever worked that way
- and there is no new law given that will do it either way
- it is only thru Christ that we have freedom to now live for God
- **Galatians 2:20 — I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.**

3. Justification now takes center stage

- the great apostle knows he must know reiterate what the gospel is
- Galatians must keep reminding themselves of this great truth
- justification—being declared perfectly obedient, completely righteous before God—is by faith
- the law cannot do this; wasn’t designed to

- law important, necessary, but only if you see it used biblical
- to point out your sin and falling short of God's glory
- to show your great need of someone else who can obey law perfectly
- and then, only after grace thru faith has worked in you, can you now obey & keep it
- not to be acceptable to God, but to live holy life of gratitude for Him

In chapter 3, we now learn about...

III. RECEIVING THE GIFT, CH. 3

- law and faith; righteousness and grace—how do these work together to save us?
- this is what Paul works on in chapter 3

1. Father Abraham

- taught that Abraham, father of all Jews, was saved, not by his own works, but by faith
- law came after this, so not law that saves, but faith, believing, receiving God's word
- this justification—declaration of righteousness—comes thru faith
- when you are justified, it is just as if you obeyed all God's law perfectly
- “just as if” is key here
- only Christ has ever obeyed law completely, perfectly, all the time
- this is what God requires
- tracing this from Abraham, he wants to make point
- it is by faith you are saved, not works of obedience

2. Law was added

- law is good; comes from God
- but is good if it lives out purpose: point out sin, how far we have fallen from God's glory
- and it does this quite well
- what does God require? Personal, perfect, perpetual obedience all the time
- thru this, we now hear the promise of God
- look to Me thru My Son, Jesus Christ
- He bore your curse, He took your punishment, He died in your place
- only by looking to Him can you be saved—in a right relationship with Him
- now, by faith, all who believe are connected thru Abraham's example: faith

Having seen the promise, in chapter 4 we are told about...

IV. BECOMING CHILDREN, CH. 4

- Paul talks about being sons and heirs of salvation
- law was given, not to make us sons, but point to One who would do so

1. Hagar and Sarah

- this is an allegory to illustrate the powerful new beginning new life in Christ brings
- but Hagar & Mt. Sinai only represent man's attempts to be right in God's eyes
- must look to Abraham and Sarah, recipients of God's promise thru faith

2. Don't turn back; instead press on

- Paul warns Galatian believer that disrupters only take them back & bind them up
- this will never save them grant them forgiveness, justify them
- instead, we have received grace from God in Christ Jesus
- He obeyed where and when we could not
- He died to take our curse and to give us His righteous obedience

- when this happens, we are gloriously adopted into God's family
- we become joint heirs with Jesus
- indeed, all His promises become ours thru Jesus
- indeed, we are children of promise

From the meat of true righteousness in Christ we learn of...

V. SPIRITUAL FREEDOM, CH. 5

- **Galatians 5:1 — For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.**

- if we are truly set free in Christ, free from sin, death, and the devil, what does this look like?
- legalizing trouble-makers would make Paul—and us—out to be profligates
- flaunting our freedom, abandoning the law and living any ol' way we want to
- Paul shows nothing further from the truth

1. Law now helps rather than hinders

- in Christ Jesus, you are free to live however you want
- but since your wants have changed, this is a good thing
- once, when dead in trespasses and sin, you only wanted to do what you wanted to do
- now, set free in Christ from that slavery, our desires—out “want to's” have changed
- God gives us His very Spirit to live within
- so don't abuse your freedom by living for yourself
- instead, let liberty & freedom in Christ shine by living by the Holy Spirit's leading

2. Walk by the Spirit

- this looks just like it sounds
- all those old sinful, selfish desires are to be put off, put away, put to death
- now, by God's grace thru Holy Spirit, we see fruit of that same Spirit
- yet, in God's economy, this fruit doesn't just magically appear
- Spirit produces it, but we have to cultivate it
- “how?” you may ask
- by living by the Spirit, walking by the Spirit, being led by the Spirit
- God works in us and thru us by His Spirit
- but we must do the living, walking, and following

In chapter 6, Paul shows us that we are truly...

VI. FREE TO LIVE, CH. 6

- Paul anticipated questions about this living by the Spirit
- so he shows them what this looks like
- does so in context of body of Christ
- this is where we are to live this out most prominently

1. Help a brother out

- when one sins, stumbles around in, we, filled with Holy Spirit, go help him or her
- we re-set the break and see them restored to joyous fellowship
- and when others need help living Christian life, we come alongside
- we bear them up, especially those younger in faith, or weaker in their faith

2. Doing good to all, but especially the church

- you cannot live the Christian life by yourself

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- let me say that one more time: you cannot live the Christian life (listen with ear) by yourself
- we need each other, depend upon each other, help each other, and serve each other
- we are to do this good thing to any as we have opportunity
- but, Paul exhorts, priority given to fellow members of church
- after all, if you can't love fellow believers, really can't love outside genuinely

Conclusion – A new creation in Christ Jesus

- so, live your life under the cross
- *Jesus, keep me near the cross—
There a precious fountain,
Free to all, a healing stream,
Flows from Cal'vary's mountain.*

*In the cross, in the cross
Be my glory ever,
Till my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river.*

*Near the cross! O Lamb of God,
Bring its scenes before me;
Help me walk from day to day
With its shadows o'er me.*

*In the cross, in the cross
Be my glory ever,
Till my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river.*

Living in this way will cause us to be for the praise of His glorious grace

- it is His grace that saves us
- it is His grace that holds us
- it is His grace that brings us home
- it is all of His grace

To the Praise of His Glorious Grace