

Series: Galatians

Title: A Contrast Between Law and Grace

Text: Gal 2: 1-21

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The lie by which the Galatians were being deceived was that sanctification/holiness is by the works of the law. Those we commonly call Judaizer's or Pharisee's insisted that after a sinner believes on Christ, professing to have been justified by Christ, then we have to keep the law to be holy, to be sanctified and to grow in holiness. This is the subject Paul deals with throughout this letter for it was the problem at Galatia. We see that it was after they had begun in faith that they were being told they must keep the law.

Galatians 3: 2: This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3: Are ye so foolish? HAVING BEGUN in the Spirit, are ye NOW made perfect by the flesh?

Galatians 3: 23: But BEFORE faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up [until] the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ [or until Christ], that we might be justified by faith. 25: But AFTER that faith is come, we are NO LONGER under a schoolmaster. 26: For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul gave the illustration of a child who is an heir being a servant under tutors until he grows up. Then he is no longer a servant under tutors. Then is the heir as a son. He applies that illustration to believers who were once under the law but are now under grace resting in Christ by faith.

Galatians 4: 8: Howbeit THEN, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods [men, law, flesh, traditions]. 9: But NOW, AFTER that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye AGAIN to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire AGAIN to be in bondage? 10: Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. 11: I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

Some say the above passage was written to Gentiles only. They say the days, months, times and years referenced the Gentile's pagan worship rituals. It certainly applies to Gentile believers. But there were also Jewish believers at Galatia who were engaging in observance of days, months, times and years included in the law.

Others use the above passage to try to prove that Paul was only speaking of the ceremonial law. Fact is the scripture never divides the law. Some speak of the law being divided into three divisions: the moral law comprised of the Ten Commandments, the civil law governing daily life, and the ceremonial law governing religious life. They do this to insist that the moral law is yet binding while the civil and ceremonial laws are not. But the scriptures make no such distinction. All the commandments in the Law of Moses, including the ten commandments and the "judgments" comprise one legal code. Even within the ten commandments is moral law, as well as civil (see the last six), as well as religious (see the first three) and ceremonial (see the fourth). When scripture speaks of law it speaks of one law. This one code of law given at Mt Sinai governed the entire lives of those under the law. There are some 613 commandments (depending on how they are numbered). Of those laws, 248 are positive requirements and 365 are negative prohibitions. But all these

commandments comprise one legal code. Paul calls it in this epistle to the Galatians “the whole law” (Galatians 5:3). The sinner who puts himself under one commandment is required to keep the whole law (Galatians 5:3). To break one commandment is to break the whole law (James 2:10). The obedience required by God is not only in the letter (keeping the law outwardly) but also in spirit in the heart and mind. The sinner who even looks upon a woman with lust in his heart is guilty of adultery and therefore guilty of breaking the entire law (Matthew 5:27). So the above passage, whether speaking of Gentile pagan laws or God’s law given at Sinai is still turning from Christ to bring oneself back under bondage.

Why does Paul warn that we are not justified by the law if he is warning of not being sanctified by the law? It is because if we go to law for holiness we also reject Christ for justification. Christ is both holiness and righteousness to the believer.

Galatians 5: 1: Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ HATH made us free, and be not entangled AGAIN with the yoke of bondage. 2: Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing...6: For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Proposition: In the two accounts given in chapter 2, Paul contrasts a walk by law and a walk by grace—we see that the believer walks under grace, not law.

GRACE IS TO BE LED OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 2: 1: Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. 2: And I went up by revelation,...

We saw Paul was brought to faith and obedience by the revelation of Christ in his heart. The Pharisee’s came down from Jerusalem to Antioch by the flesh, compelled by law, compelled by men and they came to compel men. But Paul went up to Jerusalem about this matter by the revelation of Christ. He was led of the Spirit of God. Christ moved the church at Antioch to say they thought he should go up. But Paul went by revelation. Christ led him there.

Being under grace is to be led of the Spirit of God rather than flesh or law.

Galatians 2: 19: For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 20: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

GRACE PREACHES CHRIST CRUCIFIED

Galatians 2: 2: And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

Being under grace means we preach Christ crucified as we trust Christ to work in the hearts of his people in Spirit. Grace makes us walk by faith and work by love. We see it here in Paul. Paul knew the Judaizers came from Jerusalem so he went to the apostles and elders first. He gave honor where honor was due. But Paul did not compel by force, insisting on his way. He sought peace rather than unnecessary division. Paul wanted to see, first, if the apostles were preaching truth or if the legalists had gained a footing with them. That was very gracious and loving, longsuffering and patient. Grace makes us walk by faith and work by love.

Therefore, grace has only one weapon. We have only one way to discern truth from lies. Paul preached *that same gospel that he preached to the Gentiles*. There is but one gospel of Christ to Jew and to Gentile. All sinners who God saves are saved by *that same gospel*. Salvation by the Lord by grace through faith alone applied to the heart in regeneration is of God through the preaching of Christ and him crucified.

In order to preach the gospel we must preach God's electing grace which is not based on any merit or work in us. The gospel declares God's redeeming grace by Christ alone. We must preach the regenerating grace of God by the Spirit alone. All sanctifying grace worked experimentally in us is by Christ through the Spirit, according to God the Father who sanctified his people in election in eternity in Christ. Salvation is all of God's grace, all of our triune God, all in Christ. He preached that same gospel in private as to the whole Jewish church. Paul's message was that Christ is both his Righteousness and his Holiness.

Galatians 2: 19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 20: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: [my Holiness] and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

GRACE IS TO BE CONSTRAINED BY CHRIST

Galatians 2: 3: But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

To be under grace is to be constrained in power by Christ by love not by man's compelling. The same sect that went down to Antioch, now arose again in Jerusalem with the same lie of sanctification by the works of the law. They compelled Titus, a Greek, to be circumcised but grace constrained him not to submit to the fleshly will of men who desired to bring him back under the bondage of the law. They did this back at Jerusalem,

Acts 15: 4: And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and *of* the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. 5: But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses. 6: And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

These were men who professed to be justified by Christ alone through faith alone by grace alone. They did not have a problem with Gentiles professing faith in Christ. But then and now, after faith is come, they *compel* believers to keep the law for purification, holiness, sanctification. The Holy Spirit moved Peter to tell them that God had already beat them to it.

Acts 15: 9: [Peter said, God]...put no difference between us and them, PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH.

We are made holy by God purifying the heart. He creates a new spirit, a new man within his child in regeneration which is holy. Peter says that to bring a professing believer back under law—insisting he must keep the law—is to tempt God.

Acts 15: 10: Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11: But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ WE (Jews) shall be saved, even as THEY (Gentiles who were never under the law). 12: Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

Galatians 2: 3: But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Christ makes a believer holy and Christ makes a believer walk in holiness. It is not by the compelling of men. It does not matter what it is you are doing, if you make a profession of faith in Christ because men compelled you then you are not believing on Christ. If our walk is due to men compelling us then it is not sanctification of the Spirit. The believers only motive, only constraint, is Christ's love. It is his grace and his power that makes us willing to honor him by believing on him and walking in love in honor and glory to him. Everything else is bondage. When we are brought into the bondage of the law then the truth ceases.

Self-sanctifiers make you become vested to join their church with classes, contracts, a long time span full of requirements. It is hazing like in a fraternity or sorority. They think the more they make you do the less likely you are to leave. Then they shame you if you try to leave. Some make you stand in front of the congregation and give your reason. But they usually draft what you are to say so that it sounds like you are wrong for leaving such a splendid church of holy folk. In between joining and leaving they burden you with all sorts of works. They watch you. They compel you. They shame you. It is called bondage.

But those truly sanctified do not submit to such legalists because we submit only to Christ—*To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.* Believers willingly serve Christ by Christ living in us. We will lay aside our liberty to help others hear the gospel any time as Paul and Timothy did. But when compelled by men—*to whom we gave place by subjection no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.* When our motive is man compelling *the gospel ceases.* When works are a necessity for salvation the truth of the gospel does not continue. Then it is bondage; the gospel has ceased. Christ cannot be all our Righteousness and Sanctification if we contribute some part—a little leaven leavens the whole lump. Paul is speaking of bringing the law back in as a requirement in verse 18. It is sin. It is not of Christ. It is of man's sinful fleshly lusts.

Galatians 2: 18: For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19: For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

GRACE FEARS GOD NOT MAN

Paul knew Peter, James and John were famous apostles of the day. James was the Lord's half-brother. Peter and John walked with the Lord. At that time, Paul was better known for persecuting the church than for preaching Christ. But Paul did not compromise the gospel, nor engage in legalism, or do anything from fear or respect of persons.

Galatians 2: 6: But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

On the contrary, *they perceived the grace of God working in Paul and* agreed that it was unnecessary for any believer to be brought back under the bondage of the law.

Galatians 2: 7: But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8: (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles) 9: And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

Yet, we see a contrast. The church at Jerusalem sent Jude and Silas down to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas to renounce these false brethren and assure Gentile saints of liberty in Christ. But then the apostle Peter himself fell into legalism. This was temporary. But it shows us a contrast between law and grace.

Galatians 2: 11: But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12: For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13: And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14: But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Do you see this was law not grace? Peter separated himself; it was not sanctification of the Spirit. The motive was fear of man; it was not reverence for God, not love of Christ; it cannot be both. Peter compelled his brethren to bondage of law; it was not liberty of grace; he turned them away from Christ not to Christ. The result was division not unity, a lie not truth. So Paul gives Peter the very argument Peter just gave the Pharisees.

Galatians 2: 15 We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16: Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. 17: But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners [by self-sanctifying using law], *is therefore* Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. 18: For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

If while I profess justification is only through faith in Christ, I then attempt to sanctify myself by my works to the law, I make myself a transgressor. Christ is become of no effect to me for justification or sanctification. And Christ did not minister that. It is of man's own sinful flesh. He makes himself a transgressor.

Self-righteousness and self-sanctification are more sinful to God than the most profligate immoral sinner. It is counting the blood of Christ vanity. It denying Christ is All! One indication a sinner is not dead to the law is he compels others to do. The lusts of our flesh is

to be self-righteous, holier-than-thou, judge and jury, morally superior. It is lewder to God than the worst immorality—Christ said the harlots go in before the Pharisees.

THE CONFIDENCE OF GRACE

Galatians 2: 19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Paul was dead to the law. So is every true believer. Dead to the law because we have died under the law's penalty. Paul was crucified with Christ. He said the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. My body of sin has been destroyed. I have been crucified with Christ. My fleshly old nature, with its affections and lusts, have been crucified/mortified by Christ living in me.

Christ did this "That I might live unto God." Law lives unto self. Grace lives *unto God*. Grace does not live unto men, not unto law, not unto Moses, not unto our flesh, but unto God. Attempting to keep the law, compelling others and being compelled, is living to the lust of our sinful flesh. Grace lives unto God BY CHRIST LIVING IN ME!

Galatians 2: 20: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Christ in Paul made him go up by revelation; the Pharisee's went down to Antioch by the lusts of their flesh. Christ in Paul made him preach the truth waiting on Christ to work; the lust of the flesh made Pharisee's sneak in, spy out, compel with law. Christ in Paul made him fear God and walk in liberty; the lust of the flesh made Peter fear men, separate himself in bondage and divide brethren.

Galatians 2: 21: I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Sinner get you a penny and shine it up. Go over to one of these million-dollar homes for sale and plop that penny down to the homeowner and tell them you want to buy their house. It is no different to approach God with all our works expecting to purchase righteousness or holiness by our doing.

Martin Luther said, "If my salvation was so difficult to accomplish that it necessitated the death of Christ, then all my works, all my righteousness of the Law, is good for nothing. How can I buy for a penny what cost a million dollars?"

Paul concludes this epistle by declaring the believer's rule of life:

Galatians 6: 14: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16: And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

Amen!