

I. Introduction and review.

II. Beware of the false teachers who corrupt the gospel. v. 7-9

A. They seek to knock you off course. v. 7

1. You were off to a good start. 3:1-3 4:4,14-15 2:2 Heb. 12:1ff 1 Co. 9:24-26
2. Then these heretics cut in on you and tripped you up. Mt. 7:13-14
3. They are influencing you to disobey the truth (of the gospel). 2:5 John 6:28-29
Ro. 1:5 2:8 16:26 Acts 17:30 5:32
4. Paul is trying to get them back on course.
5. Application: We all need accountability.

B. What is the source of this legalistic error? v. 8

1. These teachers did not come from God.
2. God called you through a very different message (grace). 1:6,15 5:13 Jo. 10:4-5,27
3. A teacher may be persuasive, sincere, passionate and successful, but if he is not proclaiming the gospel of grace he is NOT of God. 1:8-9
4. The one who is not of God is of the devil. John 8:44 Mt. 13:25,28

C. The corrupting influence of error spreads rapidly. v. 9

1. Leaven (yeast) in bread dough illustrates how something large can be quickly permeated by something very small. Ex. 12:15,19 13:7 Mt. 13:33 16:6,11-12
2. A few false teachers can disturb an entire church. Acts 15:1,5 20:29-30
3. An error on one point of the gospel severs a church from Christ. 5:2,4 2:16
4. There are many who call themselves Christian and affirm many of the doctrines of Scripture, yet they mix the leaven of human works with God's grace.
5. Satan's strategy is often to mix a little bit of error with a lot of truth, thus destroying the gospel. 2 Cor. 11:14-15
6. Leaven also illustrates how sin can spread in the church. 1 Co. 5:6-7
2 Ti. 2:16-17 Deut. 21:21
7. We need leaders who will fearlessly and faithfully defend the purity of the gospel. 1:7-9 2:11ff Acts 20:28-30 2 Tim. 1:13-14 Titus 1:9

III. The legalists will not succeed. v. 10

A. True believers will persevere. v. 10a

1. Paul finally declares the outcome he anticipates – the Galatians will come back. 1:11 3:15 4:12,28,31 5:11,13 6:1,18
2. His confidence is in the Lord. Phil. 1:6 2 Th. 3:4 John 10:27-29 1 Pet. 1:3-5

B. The troublemakers will be judged. v. 10b 2 Co. 11:14-15 Js. 3:1ff

1. This judgment is also a work of God Who judges impartially. Rom. 12:19
2. Jesus' sharpest words of condemnation are reserved for false teachers who lead others astray. Mt. 18:6-7
3. Let this be a warning to false teachers who would dare to disturb the church. Js. 3:1ff 1 Pe. 4:17

IV. Imitate Paul's great zeal for the gospel. v. 11-12

A. Paul is uncompromising in his declaration of the gospel. v. 11a

1. Paul could have avoided persecution if he had been willing to compromise with the Jewish legalists. Acts 9:22-23 13:45 14:19 17:5,13 18;12 21:27ff 23:12 26:21 2 Co. 11:24-26
2. Many throughout history have compromised in order to please men. Pr. 29:25
3. Do we want to be popular or do we want to be faithful? Acts 4:12 John 14:6

B. Why is the cross such a stumbling block (offense) to so many? v. 11b 1 Co. 1:18ff

1. The Jews were offended by the idea of a suffering Messiah Who was cursed of God. 3:13 1 Co. 1:18,22f
2. The Greeks/Gentiles sought a more sophisticated system of earthly wisdom.
3. The cross reminds us that we are sinners who have no righteousness of our own.
4. People feel insulted when they are told that God rejects their works.
5. People are disturbed when they are told that their sin deserves God's curse and that the only way they can be reconciled to God is through Jesus Christ being made a curse in their place. 3:10,13 Ro. 9:32-33 1 Pet. 2:6,8 Ps. 118:22 Mt. 21:42
6. People are upset when they are told that there is nothing they can do except to repent and believe. 2:16 2 Ki. 5:9-14 John 3:14-15
7. There are many enemies of the cross in our day. Phil. 3:18

C. Paul pronounces a curse on those who trouble God's people by corrupting the gospel. v. 12

1. Let those who would mutilate the gospel by adding works mutilate (castrate) themselves. Deut 23:1-2
2. Does Paul go too far? 1:9 Phil. 3:2 1 Co. 16:22
3. Jesus was harsh with those who led others astray and wasn't afraid of offending them. Mt. 15:12-14 Luke 17:1-2
4. Paul is zealous for the gospel and has righteous anger against those who would corrupt it, thus dishonoring God and harming His people.
5. It is interesting that Paul makes such a strong condemning statement just as he begins to develop his theme of the gospel producing love. 5:6,13ff
6. Do we share Paul's passion for the gospel and the people of God?
7. We should also remember that there are other issues not worth fighting over. Phil. 1:15-18 Rom. 14-15

V. Concluding applications. 5:1,10 Luke 18:9-14

Discussion questions for family worship

1. How did the Galatians get knocked off course?
How do people today get knocked off course?
2. What does Paul do to restore the Galatians?
What should we do when we see people straying from the gospel?
3. What is the source of legalism (justification by law)?
4. What kinds of leaven threaten churches today?
5. What can be done to protect the church from spiritual corruption?
6. Why does Paul think that the Galatians will return to the truth?
7. Why was the cross offensive in Paul's day?
8. Why is the preaching of the cross still offensive in our day?
9. Does Paul go too far to suggest that the disturbers of the church mutilate themselves?
How can we apply verse 12 in our day?