

Series: Galatians

Title: Confidence Through Christ

Text: Gal 5: 7-12

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Galatians 5: 7: Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? 8: This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. 9: A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. 10: I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. 11: And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. 12: I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

The churches at Galatia were entangled in the yoke of bondage. Some were sinning by putting themselves under law. Others who had not come under the law were sinning by being puffed up at their brethren who did. Each were doubting and disputing the other. A little leaven had entered and puffed them all up.

Yet, they were Paul's brethren, beloved of the Lord and loved by Paul. Paul preached the one message by which Christ brings about peace in the hearts of his people and between his brethren—the message of Christ crucified.

Paul declared that all God's elect have been crucified in Christ. Therefore, we, through the law are dead to the law. The life we now live in this flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God who abides in us and faithfully keeps us looking to him (Gal 2: 19-21).

Paul besought them to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal 5: 1) He encouraged his brethren to “wait for the hope of righteousness by faith” (Gal 5: 5). His word to them was to “walk by faith which works by love” (Gal 5: 6).

Then in our text Paul encouraged his brethren by telling them that he had confidence in them through the Lord that Christ that Christ would make them none otherwise minded. His confidence was Christ. His confidence was that Christ would make them of one mind, single for Christ. That is faith in Christ—trusting Christ to work in his people. That is faith working by love—laying down one's life, one's rights, to seek peace and comfort for sinning brethren by turning them back to Christ. This is what Christ works in his people. It is what our Sovereign Savior worked in Paul even when it appeared so bad at Galatia.

Proposition: Believing and having all confidence in Christ as Head of his church, faith works by love by seeking the good of brethren for whom Christ laid down his life.

A VERY BAD SITUATION

Galatians 5: 7: Ye did run well;

The Lord sent Paul preaching the gospel and the Spirit gave his redeemed at Galatia faith in Christ. They began running the race well because they ran looking to Christ by faith—that is running well.

But Paul knew they had been “*hindered*”—turned back. To turn from Christ to confidence in our works is not progressive sanctification. It is regressive. It is to go backwards. All sin is a

weight that easily besets us from running the race looking to Christ. All sin turns us out of the way. But prideful self-righteousness is the worst sin because it is sin we imagine to be righteousness. It is going backwards.

Paul said, “*A little leaven leavens the whole lump.*” It only takes a little leaven to make the whole lump of dough puff up. So it is with false doctrine, sin and self-righteousness.

The doctrine the Judaizer’s preached was the leaven of the Pharisee’s that Christ warned us to beware of. They made one thing necessary for a sinner to be a child of God other than faith in Christ. They did not vocally deny salvation by God’s grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. But by adding a little leaven the whole lump was only the doctrine of self-righteousness. It all was a lie.

They even accused Paul of preaching circumcision because he had circumcised Timothy. This caused some of the brethren to become puffed up against the apostle Paul, doubting if he were a true apostle.

Then there were the brethren who fell into the bondage of the law. They were breaking the whole law of God. When we go to the law to add our works to Christ’s righteousness it is spiritual adultery, murder, covetousness and so on. It is sin. It appears moral and pious to the carnal eye. But a motive of adding to Christ’s finished work is as lewd a sin as fornication. So these were puffed up by their self-righteous works.

At last there were those who did not come under the law. They too were puffed up. Their sin was being puffed up that they had not been circumcised. They were glorying that they were not under the law. Amazing that we can turn the good news of liberty into bondage. They were also judging their brethren who had sinned by coming under the law. Yet they too, were in sin.

So the whole lump was puffed up. By all thinking themselves justified in their stance, by all judging those who did not agree with them, they were all “*seeking vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another*” (Gal 5: 26).

Paul knew this persuasion did not come from Christ. The means used were unbelievers—legalists—who intentionally, maliciously turned them from Christ to their works. But Paul knew the old serpent was behind the will-worshippers with the goal of turning believers from having one mind set on Christ alone.

2 Corinthians 11: 3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Now, none of this sounds like reason to have confidence in these Galatian brethren. Most would doubt them and think they were not believers at all. As we are sadly fond of saying, “A believer wouldn’t do that?” Oh, yes we will and worse!

CONFIDENCE BY EXPERIENCE

Paul’s confidence in his brethren—as bad as their situation was—was from personally experiencing the power of the Lord Jesus who called him to faith when he was an ungodly sinner. He had witnessed the Lord Jesus do the same at Galatia through the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

Paul knew Christ's power in calling and correcting his child because Paul knew something of his own sinful heart. Yet, Christ had loved him and called him though he was an ungodly sinner. Paul had this confidence in his brethren because Paul knew Christ's power to convert him when he was a spiritually dead, vile, God-hating sinner. Before the Lord called him, Paul had been entangled in that same yoke of bondage. He was dead in trespasses and in sins but was putting confidence in the works of his flesh under the law. Paul was so convinced he was right that he persecuted the church. He held the coats of men as they stoned Stephen. But he experienced the power and grace and longsuffering of our all-powerful sovereign Lord.

1 Timothy 1: 14: And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 15: This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16: Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. 17: Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Paul knew it was not by his might but by the power and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who brought him down to the dust. He knew Christ alone gave him a new heart. It was the Spirit of God who granted him repentance and faith in Christ. Paul had preached the gospel to the Galatians and seen how the Lord did the same in them. So he had confidence in his brethren through the Lord.

So as sinful as his brethren were, Paul believed they were brethren bought with the precious blood of Christ, even as he. His confidence was that they were everlastingly loved of the Father in Christ in divine election by grace. The confidence that constrained Paul in love is that he believed Christ had laid down his life for them. They were Christ's purchased possession like all those Christ redeemed with the price of his blood. Therefore, Paul knew that though we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter our confidence is Christ.

Romans 8: 37: Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38: For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39: Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So Paul encouraged his brethren while they were in this sinful bondage. How else would they be delivered except by the gospel of Christ through which Christ continually frees those he redeemed? So Paul strengthened the feeble knees. He picked up the hands that hang down. He did it by letting them know that he had confidence in them through the Lord.

Even now that they were believers fallen into this sin, Paul had confidence in them through Christ. It is because after faith came to Paul, he experienced that "*in my flesh dwelteth no good thing.*" He had experienced how his own sinful flesh brought him into captivity to the law of sin.

Yet he had experienced the power and grace of the Lord Jesus to turn him and keep him believing on Christ in spite of himself. So having his brethren in his heart, Paul had the same confidence that the Lord Jesus would work in them so he strengthened the.

Philippians 1: 6: Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ: 7: Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart;

Knowing Christ is present and working in the midst of his church, Paul trusted them to Christ because he would not offend the Lord Jesus or interfere in Christ's work.

Philippians 2: 12: Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13: For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Paul's confidence was that Christ was their Master and they were Christ's servants. Therefore, to their own Master they stood or fell. So he encouraged his brethren saying, "yea, ye shall be holden up: for God is able to make you stand" (Rom 14:4).

Paul said, "*I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded.*" He had hope in Christ so he waited on Christ by faith for the Lord Jesus to make them of one mind. Only Christ can make us single for Christ alone to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries" (Php 1: 27).

He not only had this confidence—he *made sure they knew it*. He strengthened them by encouraging them that he had confidence in them through the Lord. He let them know he believed they had "consolation in Christ, comfort of love, fellowship of the Spirit, bowels and mercies." His confidence was that Christ would make them "likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind." So that they would "*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind each [would] esteem other better than themselves. Looking] not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*" (Php 2: 1-8) In other words, Paul was confidence Christ would give them the mind of Christ.

So as bad as things were in the churches at Galatia, Paul called them "brethren." He did so in all the churches no matter how bad the situation. His word to them was the same.

Hebrews 12: 1: Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2: Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Philippians 3: 13: Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

PROUD TROUBLERS

Galatians 5: 10...but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be....12: I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

As for those who intentionally troubled Christ's church, who turned them from Christ in their insistent self-willed obstinacy, maliciously attempting to separate the brethren from Christ, Paul also trusted them to Christ.

Faith which works by love does not seek to cut off brethren but to edify by turning them to Christ. This was not Paul's heart toward his brethren—not even while they were puffed up. But this was his heart toward those who refused to repent from this wickedness and submit to Christ and edify brethren in Christ. This is the Spirit of God speaking in Paul. This is God's heart toward all who insist on biting and devouring God people by judging and condemning them for their sins. Paul's confidence was that his same sovereign Master will deal with them, too.

The Lord Jesus was stern toward the haughty Pharisees. The obstinate who had not rather mourned and sought mercy at Christ's feet, Christ rejected (1 Cor 5: 2). Those who stiffened their neck at his word, intent on uncovering sin to judge and divide the Lord's people at all cost, were rejected by Christ. That is the leaven Christ warned to beware of.

Isaiah 58: 3:...in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labors. 4: Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. 5: Is it such a fast that I have chosen?

Yet, Christ was tender toward sinners and toward his disciples when they sinned.

Isaiah 58: 6: Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7: Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

It is only when men are puffed up with a spirit to accuse and condemn and divide, rather than submit to Christ and show mercy to brethren and seek peace, that they have to be cut off from the church. The church is where wounded sinners find the great Physician. Take an emergency room as the illustration. If a man came wounded into an emergency room but began wielding a gun then he must be cast out. But if he submits to the doctors then they do not cast him out. The physician tend to his wounds. In the church, believers are even more merciful and careful because we have the wound ourselves. Even when we were his enemies, Christ said,

Psalm 35: 14: I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.

Christ bore our burden and “loosed the bands of wickedness and the heavy burdens, and he let the oppressed go free.” He “dealt his bread to the hungry.” Christ “brought us—the poor that are cast out—to his house?” Christ found us “naked and covered us in his own righteousness.” Christ “hid not himself from his own flesh.” And he continues to do so as we run the race.

Colossians 1: 21: And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22: In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: 23: If ye continue in

the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, ..

When brethren sin the goal is to restore—to edify—not to destroy. This is to fast from our sinful flesh. Mercy to a guilty sinner is contrary to the lusts of our sinful flesh. A true spiritual fast is to starve our flesh of its judgmental lusts as we deal in mercy and grace to fallen brethren. May God give us grace to encourage brethren that we have confidence in them through Christ. He shall make his people of one mind set on Christ alone.

Amen!