

The Prayers of Paul: Paul's Prayer for Abiding Grace
"Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen." Galatians 6:18, NKJV

I. The _____ of the Prayer: The Judaizers were attempting to _____ the Gospel of Grace with the works of the Law of Moses. They disputed Paul's _____ and denied that Christ _____ was the way to salvation. They were basically trying to say that Christ was a good place to _____ a spiritual relationship with God, but to have "real salvation" you had to become _____ and keep the _____. Paul reminds them that this is a perversion of the Gospel (1:6-9) and anyone who preaches it should be _____. Given that this mixing of faith and works lies at the heart of both Roman _____ and much of _____ Christian thought, this epistle and its warnings are especially applicable for our times. Yet, of all Paul's epistles, Galatians seems to be the most neglected and unloved.

There are _____ prayers in Galatians. The first, the subject of last month's study, is in the beginning (1:3-5) and the second is at the very end (6:18). The subject of both prayers is _____. The first also details the proper response to God's amazing grace – the _____ of God. The second prayer, our focus for this week, is a prayer for _____ in the light of the full teaching of the Galatian Epistle. In order to get the full context of this prayer, we must understand the complete message of the Galatian Epistle. So, allow me, please, to briefly summarize the Galatian Epistle.

After a very short salutation, emphasizing Paul's _____ as an apostle, the Apostle Paul gives the brief prayer we studied last month. Then, rapidly turning to his subject, Paul expresses his amazement that the Galatian Christians have turned from the Gospel to another _____, which in fact is not a Gospel but a perversion of the Gospel. Pronouncing a curse upon anyone who would pervert the Gospel, Paul declares that he is not attempting to please man but to _____ God. He then launches into a long biographical passage explaining the transformation the Gospel made in his life, changing him from a persecutor of the _____ to a proclaimer of the _____. He explains that the Gospel he preached was not received from any man's teachings but directly from Christ, but he does explain that he did confer with the apostles in Jerusalem who approved of his teachings. All of this is a marvelous illustration of the transformative _____ of the Gospel and the grace of God extended to change a vile enemy into a valuable expounder of the _____ message.

Paul turns to a remarkable story of the duplicity of Peter who had been eating with the Gentiles but suddenly withdrew to the kosher table at the arrival of some of the saints from _____. Paul stood up to Peter reminding him that no man was saved by the keeping of the _____ and that he was wrong to make a _____ between Jew and Gentile. Paul made it clear that keeping the Law was not a ticket to higher spirituality and that as Christians, we are crucified with Christ and raised to walk in new life – a life of _____ not law. Paul then pivots to remind the Galatians that they _____ their Christian life by the grace of God and not the deeds of the Law. He pointed out that when Abraham came to faith in God, he was not yet a _____ but an uncircumcised _____. Therefore, Abraham was justified through grace by faith alone. Reminding the Galatians that the Old Testament clearly teaches that "the just shall live by faith" and that Christ, the promised Seed of Abraham, was made a _____ by being hanged on a tree for our sins, now offers full salvation without the works of the Law. Paul points out that the Law did have a great purpose in the Old Testament; it was a _____ (child conductor) to take us by the hand and bring us to Christ. The Law of Moses demonstrates that we are _____ and that we cannot save ourselves, forcing us to turn to the One who can save us: The Lord Jesus Christ! But once the Law brings us to Christ, all the _____ between Jew and Gentile, male and female, and slave and free are torn down by the grace of God.

Paul uses the illustration of a _____ to explain our superior position in Christ. When a child is _____ to a noble household, that child though heir of all is no better than a common slave until the day he is "adopted" (υιοθεσία placed as a son). Unlike our current practice of adoption which is placing someone else's child in our family to be our son or
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daughter, _____ in Paul's culture was to extend full rights of citizenship and _____ to a son and heir. It is more recognition of _____ than a change in family. The son is stripped of his childish tunic and presented with robes that indicate he has the status of an adult male _____. Before the adoption, any one of the slaves could have beaten him for failure to carry out tasks. Now he holds the same _____ as the father over life and death in the household and none dare touch him. How then, Paul argues, are you willing to leave your _____ position in grace and try to put on the _____ robes of the Law!

Paul reminds them that while he was with them, he preached Christ to them and they were so _____ that they, mindful of his _____ of eye disease, would have been willing out of gratitude to _____ out their own eyes for him. Yet, under the influence of the Judaizers, Paul was regarded as almost an _____ for telling them the truth that they were under grace and not the Law! He uses an _____ of the bondswoman, Hagar, representing the law, and Sarah representing grace and points out the son of the bondswoman was cast out in favor of the heir, who is Jesus Christ.

Paul calls on the Galatians to stand fast in _____ and His grace and not to trust in circumcision. He points out that circumcision does nothing to commend us to God in this age of Grace and that adherence to Jewish Law and ordinances is certainly not what he was preaching. In fact, he was being attacked by the Judaizers precisely because he was not preaching this _____ of the Gospel of Grace. Rather than love, which is the mark of true Christianity, the outward conformity to Jewish Law was an area of contention and _____. He urged the Galatians to allow the Holy Spirit to produce the fruit of the Spirit in their lives rather than the works of the flesh.

Finally, Paul points out that true Christian behavior is marked by _____: helping those who are spiritually struggling rather than tearing them down, bearing their own burdens rather than demanding others to wait upon them, giving to those who teach the truth out of a heart of _____, and not sowing to the flesh but to the spirit. All of these are marks of the grace of God and not the keeping of the Law. Proving that he himself wrote this letter by the size of the letters (because of his eye condition) and urging the Galatians to glory in the cross rather than the Law, Paul now comes to his _____ at the conclusion of the Epistle:

II. The _____ of the Prayer: Notice three simple ideas in this prayer. **“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.** Amen.” Galatians 6:18

- A. *First, it is a prayer for those who are truly his spiritual _____.* While the prayer is clearly to God it is for Paul's "brethren." We need to understand this. Not everyone who claims to be a Christian is really a child of God. Throughout the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul has been dealing with those who have deliberately and unquestionably rejected the true Gospel and have attempted to replace it with _____ Gospel – of works, of law, and not of grace. We do have an obligation to do good to those who are our enemies and pray for those who spitefully use us, but our prayer for them is primarily that their work would _____, and their deceptions would be discovered. We want them to come to Christ, but most of all we want our true brothers and sisters in Christ to be delivered from their false teachings. We are living in an age of _____ and doctrinal deviations. I search online bookstores continually, and I am deeply saddened by the great number of publications presented for sale that are pure doctrinal poison. Others are filled with theories of men stuffed in Scriptural shells and presented as truth. If there ever was a time we need to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ to have true Biblical and Scriptural _____, it is now!
- B. *Second, it is a prayer for the _____ grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.* The solitary prayer request of the Apostle Paul as he closes this key epistle is that the Galatians, and by extension you and I, would experience the abiding grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must have the grace of Christ to truly _____ the Christian life. Salvation is what Christ graciously did for us on the cross of Calvary and through the empty tomb. It is not the

works of our hands or our willingness to surrender or feel sorrow for our sins. Salvation is _____ by the grace of God through the finished work of Christ. The Christian life is a life of grace. We are not living by a set of rules or commandments. We do not work to keep ourselves saved. The same _____ that saves us gives us the ability to live for Christ in the face of a hostile world. The grace of God helps us to love the brothers and sisters in Christ who will, from time to time, hurt us and disappoint us. The grace of God will _____ us to stand firm against false teaching and to _____ favorably toward good teaching. The grace of God controls our giving, for we give in proportion not to some set of rules, but as God, in grace, has given to us. The grace of God _____ our conduct toward our brothers and sisters and toward those who are in the world around us. The grace of God will _____ us in the hour of our trials and troubles. And the grace of God will _____ us in the hour of our death and lead us safely home.

- C. *Third, it is a prayer dealing with the _____ realm.* In case we miss it, Paul concludes this prayer reminding us that this grace would be with our “_____.” We Christians are far too focused on the flesh and on the earthly things around us. But God, in this age of Grace, wants us to think more about that which is real. When we talk about spiritual things such as grace, mercy, peace, and joy we tend to _____ of these things as unreal. We think in terms of leaky roofs, cars that do not run, bodies that are not functioning or malfunctioning. These things seem _____ to us. But we need to place our eyes of faith on spiritual _____. After all, in 100 years that house may be gone, the car a twisted piece of scrap metal all rusted and ruined, and the body dead and buried. However, Christians who have been saved by the grace of God, _____ by the grace of God, and ushered by the grace of God into His presence will “have no less days to sing God’s praise than when we first begun!”

III. The _____ of the Prayer: “Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. _____.”
Galatians 6:18 This is very simple. AMEN – Let it be! Make it so! May these lessons live in our souls!

Let’s PRAY!