

# Note

## Galatians – Part 1 of 1

### Summary

#### **Galatians - Part 1 of 1** .....2

Paul's letter to the Galatians defends the authenticity of his message and his authority as an apostle, commissioned by the risen Jesus himself.

Galatians reveals the subversive betrayal of the Gospel; justification by faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross versus justification by Law. The Cross is testimony of God's agape love for His people, regardless Jews or Gentiles. While the Law imprisoned everyone under the power of sin, the promised Messiah fulfilled the laws, took on the curse of the law and redeemed all people from their sins. Through His death, Jesus purchased everlasting freedom for all.

The life of Jesus is the only Gospel; God loves us and gave His Son to die for us. As Jesus declared, the wages of sin have been paid in full. All who believe in Jesus are sanctified by faith and not by work. In Jesus, we are redeemed a New Creation with a longing to live a Christ-Centric life propelled by the Spirit of Christ.

# Transcript

## Galatians – Part 1 of 1

Today, we start on the book of Galatians and this is a very, very different type of book. So let's backtrack a little bit. We saw the foundation for the church laid in the book of Romans. The foundation of the gospel is justification by faith. It showed how Abraham trusted God's promise that he would have a son, and through his seed all nations would be blessed. And Abraham believed God and he was justified by faith.

Now that is the foundation of our Christian faith. We trust in God's promise, we trust in His promise that His son is the Messiah who died for all our sins, paid the price for all our sins past, present, and future. And Jesus said, "It is finished," and rose from the dead, and we believe that we are justified by faith.

So this is the foundation of our faith. Luther, the father of the Reformation, believed the just shall live by faith. So one of our foundational doctrines is called sola fide - faith alone. Sola means solely, fide – faith; solely by faith. We have laid the foundation for our Christian faith, simply believing what Jesus did for us. Then after Romans, we thought the foundation was laid, we are going to have a beautiful building. And after Romans, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, we saw the messy church.

We are brought back to reality that having laid a foundation doesn't mean that the building is going to be very well built. In this sin-cursed world, we have to

accept the fact that Satan is still around messing things up. So we saw in the Corinthians church, a practical problem. Then we come to Galatians now, and we see a doctrinal problem. So we move from the foundation in Romans – doctrine, then practical problems and then Galatians – doctrine again. I hope you see that life is always this struggle, right doctrines hopefully will build right practices but often we don't know how to apply, Satan messes things up, and then things don't quite turn out.

So here in Galatians, we see Satan attacks the foundation, and we see Paul furious. We have never seen a writing so strong. Why is Paul so strong in this epistle? Because when you mess around in the foundation, you can

destroy the entire building. So let's backtrack and look at the history. Paul had gone to Galatia which is not a town, it is a district, somewhere in Turkey. And he had planted several churches, names you will be familiar with Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and so on. Now, when he planted those churches, it was very clear he preached the gospel. He said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the righteousness of God and he preached how the righteousness of God is given not to those who earn the righteousness (There is none righteous, not one) but through Christ. And he established these churches built on the foundation of the gospel, which is a foundation of justification by faith.

Then after he had planted churches, his style was to move on, being an apostle. And the Jewish believers, I don't even know whether they were really believers or not, entered the churches in Galatia and began to say, I don't think he really preached the full gospel. He preached 'just believe in Jesus,' which we also believe, but that's not enough. We need to move on to the "full gospel". Always be careful of the word "full gospel". There is only one gospel. It's built on Christ.

So what do they mean? Oh, after you have trusted Christ, you need to obey the Jewish laws. The Jewish laws begin with circumcision, then the food laws, and then Sabbath keeping. Must be very careful about certain days, passover, and many, many things. There are 613 laws in the Old Testament. How can you be a full Christian? The "full gospel" is not just about Jesus, but about you obeying more laws.

So here, the Galatians swallowed it. You said, Why? Doesn't make sense. I mean Paul already told them, just justification by faith, trust Christ, that's all you need to do. The rest God will do in you as you cooperate with God. But why did they swallow something so different? Because, and you and I will also fall for it, because there's nothing like the gospel. What do you mean? Because all our lives we've been taught that if you want to get something, you earn it. From the time you were little, our parents taught us, you want to get good grades, work for it; you want to get a good job, study hard in school; you want to advance in your career, work hard in your job.

Everything in life is not free, that's what we were taught. But actually it is not true. Sunshine is free, the air we breathe is free, rain is free. And those are the most important things. As long as there is rain and sunshine, there will be food. As long as if you have air, and food, you will live. But somehow we were taught nothing is free in life. Rubbish! A lot of the most important

things are free. Given by God. You can't work for air, you can't work for sunshine, you can't work for rain from heaven.

Then, of course, all religions are work religions. In every religion, you work to please god, and hopefully you get a passing grade. But you never know whether you will or you won't. And that's why there's no religion can guarantee you a place in heaven. You never know what is the passing grade, you don't even know your grades. It's like you go through all your life, never knowing your grades and never knowing what the his standard is. That's why religion puts more fear.

So the first reason is we were told nothing is free. The Gospel is free? Does God just give? For God so loved the world he gave, and you just take and believe Jesus as your Savior. How can it be? Every other religion looks at the Gospel and said cannot be. And then our pride is the second reason. You mean I cannot work for it. We all like to believe everything we achieve is because of our brilliance, efforts, success. That's the way we operate.

So here the people just swallowed this and said, We never thought of it. Paul just preached to us half the truth. And the Jewish guys who came in not only said Paul didn't teach the "full gospel," they attacked his person. Is he really an apostle, he was not very impressive, he was a tentmaker, manual labourer. He is not like us, scholars, we don't dirty our hands. If today, the greatest preacher in your church is a manual labourer, you would also be offended, because in our minds, brains are better than hands. But in the Bible, it seems to be the opposite. Paul was a tentmaker, Peter was a fisherman, Jesus was a carpenter. Imagine a carpenter was the senior pastor in your church.....So we see here why people could not accept it and they began to swallow this. Paul writes this letter to defend his position and attack this false teaching.

Galatians Chapter 1:6 ESV

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel -----

Grace of Christ....grace is an undeserved free gift. Turning to a different gospel - what do you mean by a different gospel? There's only one gospel - built on the cross, the finished work of the perfect Savior, the perfect work done on the cross, a perfect gift for you and me. That's all! If your faith is in anything else other than this little symbol, the cross, and if anything is added to the cross, it is not the gospel.

Yes, you can have a lot of other things in your church constitution, but the gospel is simply about Christ, what he did on the cross for you and me. That's it! There is no 'fuller gospel'. Do you believe that on the cross, Jesus Christ, Son of God died for all your sins, past, present future? And he said, "It is finished" - Settled! And he rose from the dead to prove it. Do you believe that? That's the gospel. Anything else is a different gospel and it's not the gospel.

Verse 9:

As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

This is very strong. Basically, let him go to hell. Anybody preaches any gospel, pray that they go to hell. I don't see that the coming out of the mouth of 99.9999% of pastors when you see others preach another gospel. We want to be nice guys.

Chapter 1:10-11

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.

It's too simple for you and me, but not simple for Jesus. Always remember that. People always say, you mean so easy? I said easy for who? Easy for me or easy for Jesus? Not easy for Jesus to leave heaven, come down to earth live a perfect life, went on the cross for all my sins and perfectly paid for it in a manner you and I can never understand. In suffering, in death, in resurrection we can never understand. Easy? When people say so easy, they're insane. It's like asking a child how he was born. He'll say I don't know, I just came out. So easy? Ask your mother whether it was easy? Easy for whom? Thank God I was born without any agony. But I want to thank my mum-she went through a lot, nine months carrying me and then suffering. So don't be such a fool and say it's easy.

So Paul is saying here, this gospel is not from man. Can man imagine such a gospel, to dare tell God to send His Son to come down and die for us? Impossible! It's not from man. He said, If I want to please men, I wouldn't preach this gospel because men would laugh at me.

Chapter 2 tells us about Titus.

Galatians 2:3

But even Titus, who was with me was not forced to be circumcised though he was a Greek.

Now the Jewish believers had come and said, you got to be circumcised. Paul brought Titus to Jerusalem and in the council in Jerusalem, where all the Jewish leaders were Jewish Christians (they were Jews before, Christians now like Peter), they never asked Titus to be circumcised.

Do Christians need to follow Jewish laws?

Then after that, Peter did a return visit. Paul had gone to Jerusalem to see Peter and the apostles. Now Peter came to Antioch to see Paul and the Christians.

Chapter 2:11-14

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel. I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

So, we see here, Paul stands up against Peter.

Verses 15 to 16:

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

So Paul stood up against Peter. Peter is a strong guy but even Peter gave in to what we call peer pressure. And a lot of us will give in to all kinds of peer pressure.

Chapter 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.

This is not about salvation. It's about sanctification. The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who lives in me. We are justified by faith. How do you now live as a Christian? By your own works? Now I look at, not Christ on the cross but Christ in my heart. How do I live my Christian life now? How do I get sanctified now? By my own energy? No! By Christ who lives in me. We are justified by faith and we are sanctified by faith - the just shall live by faith. Faith is a Christ-centric, God-centric faith. Stop looking at yourself for salvation or sanctification.

### Chapter 3:1-3

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Chapter 2 says Christ lives in us. How are we perfected? How are we sanctified? By faith in Christ. You said, you foolish Galatians you began by trusting Christ and now that you trusted Christ, you trust yourself, after this your eyes go off Christ to you. Never! Christian, let me tell you what you are. You are a follower of Jesus, you followed Him to the cross, got saved there. And then you follow Him every day because He lives in your heart. Your eyes are fixed on Him, not on yourself.

Now, let me tell you what is the most common error among Bible-believing Christians. We start with Christ-He died for me; then afterward, we go back to the flesh. We try to obey laws. You see many Christians saying, It's very hard to be a Christian. Of course! Trying to do anything with your own flesh is very hard.

So we think we know what is salvation? We get a head start with Jesus. He washed away all my past sins. And then I do good works, and hopefully, after I do good works, I get to heaven. But if I mess up, I am a dead duck.

Many Christians believe that they are saved "by faith" but No, they are saved "by faith" plus their continued good works, and hopefully the day they

take their last breath, they did enough to please God. Now such Christians will never be able to help other people, will never care for other people because they are never sure of their own salvation. If you don't know you are in good health, how can you go and help other people? You just worry about yourself. That's the kind of Christians, they go to Bible study, they did everything but never others because they're always concerned, Will I make that grade? And if they're self-righteous, they look down on other people. They're very harsh, they are joyless. Why? Because they're always worried. Will I make the grade at the end of it? You mean Christians are like that? Yes, vast majority of "Bible-believing Christians." Believe me!

What about the nominal Christians? Nominal Christians have a different problem. They don't start with Christ, they start with themselves. This is how they get saved. I tried to obey the 10 commandments, I don't really go to church, I know I cannot obey some. So you know what I do, I ask Jesus to forgive me. So they start with themselves and then the ones they can't do, then Jesus helps me. As opposed to the "Bible-believing Christians" they start with the cross, then they deviate off to self again. Galatians Christian started with faith. And then they said, I think after this, better do this, better do this. Because if we don't, may not make the grade.

So you see these are the 2 types of Christian false gospel that pervades Christianity today, and is accepted and tolerated by Christians as different variations of the gospel. That's what Galatians teaches. For agnostics who don't know God, this is what they will say, I just do my best, I hope it's okay. Jesus is not in the picture, they just do their best.

1. the so-called "Bible-believing" Christian starts with Christ, but then depend on himself to finish the race.
2. the nominal Christian thinks he has to obey the 10 commandments, but if he fails, he goes to God and asks for mercy.

That's Christianity of all stripes today. No! It's faith alone. The just shall live by faith in Christ. And then how is he sanctified? And how is he going to glorify God? Trusting the Christ who lives in Him to produce good fruit. If he lacks patience, (pray, Lord, your patience, if he lacks wisdom, Lord, your wisdom, if he lacks courage, Lord, your courage) always looking to the Lord. Not, depending on your own strength because it's very tiring and impossible.

So basically, the gospel is God-centric, Christ-centric. If is not God- centric, Christ-centric is not the gospel.

### Chapter 3:6-8

just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”

What is Paul hinting at here? You see God told Abraham, in you all nations will be blessed, multi-ethnic, international, not Jewish. These people have come in and said you want to be a believer, you have to be Jewish. You have to follow the Jewish customs. No, all nations will be blessed. They won't have to be Jewish. It's simple faith in Christ.

### Chapter 3:10-13

For all who rely on works of the law under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.”

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us – for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”

So Paul says the law is a curse. Because you know why?

You want to obey the law, you have to obey 100% of the time. How do you obey traffic laws? Can you stop at 90% of the red lights, and go through the other 10% of the time? No, every time you go through 1 red light, you are a lawbreaker. So people don't understand that if they want to live by the law, they have to obey all, or they will be outlaws. And no outlaw will ever go to heaven, that's the curse of the law.

But Christ lived a perfect life. He took our place. He lived the perfect life I could not live; he went to the cross and paid for my sins I could not pay. That is the gospel.

### Chapter 3:23-24

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

What was the law for? It makes life liveable until the time we have a new heart, and Christ comes and gives us a new spirit one day. We need some kind of law, to make life liveable under reasonable law and order situations. Basically, the law is given because everybody likes to do their own thing. So God gives the law until Christ came into my heart, and then you see a new spirit. That is the new law, later we will learn. It's no more the law of the Torah, it's the law of Christ. What's the law of Christ? Love God and love your neighbour as yourself.

### Chapter 3:27

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

I like that - putting on Christ. When God looks at me, He doesn't see me, He sees Christ. Put on Christ, replaced by Christ. On the cross He took my sins. He rose from the dead, He gave me His life. Christ lives in me. And I know all this is very hard to conceptualize, but it will be fleshed out. Some things I say, will trouble you at this time. But there are many more epistles to help sort out these things. This is a foundational epistle that will shake our thinking, it's meant to. But thank God that there are others to help us establish those statements that are made that seemed to be out of place.

### Galatians Chapter 4:6

And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

No other religion has anything close to this. We actually pray 'Our Father, God, Heavenly Father' and you feel very comfortable with it.

Jesus called God, "Abba!" Abba is Papa, whatever language you use. But you and I also call God, "Abba! Our Father!" because we are in Christ. Now, this is amazing to me.

To other religions, this is blasphemy. How dare you call God, Father? In Christ, we are sons. So this is something I hope you treasure. Every time you say, Heavenly Father, it's precious. You say it confidently. Why? The Spirit gives you the confidence through Christ that you are the child of God.

### Chapter 5:2-4

Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.

If you think you're going to be saved because of Christ plus something you do, that makes you qualified to get to heaven, you are cut off from going to heaven. Repeat, you are cut off from going to heaven. If you think there's another condition for you to be saved, like some good work you need to do, like circumcision, then you don't have Christ at all. You say, how come? Because the Christ that went on the cross said, "It is finished." I paid for all that you need. It is settled. Trust me, I did it all. But you say, I trust you, but do you mind if I do some more just to be sure.

All that means is you don't trust him, that's all. But you say, I trust in Jesus. Which Jesus do you trust in? The Jesus who paid for half of your sins, your past sins only, not your future sins? That Jesus doesn't exist, it's not in the Bible. It tells us in the Bible, Whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. Christ said, "It is finished." Tetelestai - FULLY PAID! That's the original word. But if you think you have to pay some more, then you're believing a different Christ. You're cut off from that Christ, the real one. You just want to do more because you don't trust Christ. You don't believe. Abraham believed God, that's why he was justified. Do you believe what Christ did on the cross? Or you think, I'm not so sure, better be sure, better do some good work, just to add, in case he didn't really do it all for me. In which case you believe in a different Christ.

Chapter 5 verse 9:

A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

A little bit of yeast put in the flour makes the whole bread . What is it telling us? This doctrine of works, just starts with circumcision. Soon they will tell you circumcision is not enough, you better follow the Jewish food laws. Then Jewish food law is still not enough, you better take the Passover too. And Passover is not enough, you better have all the other laws too. Start with a little, and then it goes on and on. Same with people, who trust Jesus with this idea. Better make sure I go to heaven by attending Bible study. I think if I don't attend Bible study, I don't get to heaven. And then, what about the new class on Saturday in church? I need to attend that just to be sure.....A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

Chapter 5:13-14

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

We have freedom because of Christ. We don't have to worry about the 613 laws. Did I do it? If I don't, I'll go to hell. If you live that way, you're never free to serve others, to love your neighbour as yourself. Because you are worried about yourself.

Why does God give us this freedom that I am going to heaven? Christ did everything for me. Now I can focus on others, not whether I will get to heaven. This is the freedom to serve others.

Verse 13:

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

What was the law of Christ? Love God, love your neighbour in every way possible.

Chapter 5:19-21 we see the works of the flesh:

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

If that's your life, you're not a believer. If your life has a lot of these, you're not a believer. But the fruit of the Spirit (singular) is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, against such there is no law.

If you're born again you will have these nine characteristics. It's not nine fruits, one fruit with nine characteristics. It's a very unique fruit. It's called the fruit of the Spirit.

Now, every human has some of those, saved or not saved. Some people are very patient, some unsaved people are extremely kind. Some unsaved people lots of joy. But the fruit of the Spirit has all nine. I am not going into too much into it because the topic is about the foundation of your faith. When you have a relationship with God, you have these three-love, joy, peace. When you have these, you can have patience, kindness and goodness to others. Because of this peace, you can be patient with others,

kind, not to worry about yourself. And then the last three - faithfulness, gentleness, self-control - it's not so much about others, but about your own life.

So the first three is your relationship with God - love, joy and peace produced. When you have love, joy and peace in your heart, what happens is you have patience, gentleness, kindness and goodness to others. And your character would be faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Chapter 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Verse 10:

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

When you have love, joy, and peace, what do you do? You will bear others burdens, you won't be worrying about your own eternal security. You can bear others burdens, you can do good to other people, when you have this foundation built by Christ.

Verses 14 and 15 - ending of Galatians:

But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

I like this ending. Paul says what I boast about is the cross of Christ. That's the most amazing thing in the world. It's the greatest miracle in the world. That on one person the sins of the world was settled, that on one person he lived a perfect life for all who trust in Him. And that He died for our sins and rose from the dead and He sent us His spirit. All I want to glory about, Paul said is the cross. That is amazing -easy to talk and teach, but hard to grasp the magnitude of the amazing miracle of the cross.

Many Christians talk about miracles in some stadium as if it was so amazing, but the miracle of the Cross is the most amazing! To them the cross is just the starting point, then you have to finish it. It's not a finished work, so how to be excited about the unfinished work of the Cross. It's finished!

Everything you need is at the cross. If you're not a believer, look at the cross, that's all you need to be a child of God. And then, after you've trusted Christ on the cross, all you need to have victory in this world over sin, freedom to live a life of joy, peace, and love is found in Christ in you. You say how to love others? Christ is in you, trust Him to impart His love.

As we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, walk in step, put away our sins, and ask Christ to live his life through us. You just need to cooperate, putting aside all the old habits and not let yours come through my life. I glory in the cross because in the cross, my sins were settled. Christ lives in me so that I can bear my brothers' burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ, which is to love my neighbour as myself.

So what have you learned from the book of Galatians?

Galatians is about the amazing God who loved us, gave himself for us, and about us who can walk in the same footsteps, because as He gave himself for us, we can give ourselves to others.

May God bless you! May Christ be seen in your life.