

The Study of Galatians - Lesson 2

Christian Liberty

Galatians 1:6-10

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Bruce: Sovereign Lord, You humble us by adopting us into Your family. We pray, Lord, that during these moments together that You'd teach us to the point of understanding, that we might behold You more clearly for Christ's sake. Amen and Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: Let's turn in our Bibles, please, to the book of Galatians. We just began a new series last week. We'll be looking at verses 6-10 of chapter 1 of the book of Galatians. I'll be reading from the English Standard Version.

"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. Not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed! As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one that you received, let him be accursed! 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." May God be pleased to open our eyes, that we might behold Him more clearly. This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Bruce: Amen and Amen. Last week in our introduction to the book of Galatians, Paul was dealing with a group of people who were brought to saving faith by the grace of God through the proclamation of the Biblical gospel. And all of a sudden they began to be infiltrated by a group of Judaizers who were coming back into their presence to basically take them back into the customs of Moses, the Old Covenant. They were basically saying that you must be a law keeper to enjoy your salvation. So they were trying to mix grace with law—law keeping as a means of salvation.

And so Paul first of all tackles this problem, as we saw last week, by dealing with the centrality of the gospel as the Person and work of Christ. If you want to know what the gospel is about, it's about the Person and the work of Jesus Christ. That's why we say that the gospel is Christocentric. It's centered on Christ Jesus. And we talked last week about the fact that He died to save us and that He lives to sanctify us. He died to save us from our sins. He is now seated at the right hand of God interceding for us in order to sanctify us to make us more holy.

So now Paul goes into a greater definition of dealing with this issue, as you see in your outline. And Paul begins to express his anxiety over what's going on in the local churches at Galatia. So look at verses 5-7.

The first reason that Paul is anxious was that the Galatians were deserting the grace of God. They were deserting the grace of God.

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Now the verb tense here—*were deserting*—means that it was in the process of taking place. It wasn't a full desertion. It means it was in the process of doing that. They were in the process of deserting it. They had not fully deserted it or turned away.

Paul reminds them that they have been saved by grace. And now they were reverting back to law keeping as a means of attaining their salvation. They were going from liberty to legalism.

Now we need to understand that the grace of God is a major theme in this particular book, the book of Galatians. Take a look at these passages—chapter 1 verse 3, chapter 1 verse 15, chapter 2 verse 9, chapter 2 verse 21, chapter 5 verse 4, and chapter 6 verse 18.

Transcriber's Note: Galatians 1:3. *"Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1:6. *"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ.*

1:15. *"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,*

2:9. *And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised."*

2:21. *"I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."*

5:4. *"You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."*

6:18. *"Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."*

Bruce: These all deal with the major theme of the book of Galatians, and that is the grace of God. Grace is simply God's favor to undeserving sinners, unmerited favor to undeserving sinners. That is the theme of this book.

Now we need to understand that the words *grace* and *gifts* oftentimes go together and are synonyms, because we understand that salvation is a gift of God through His grace. So sometimes you'll see the word *gift* and sometimes you'll see the word *grace* used together to describe salvation with a Christocentric center on Jesus Christ.

Now these Galatian believers were not simply changing religions or changing churches, but they were actually abandoning the very grace of God. And to make matters worse, they were also deserting the very grace of God and the God of grace. There were only two things that Paul was concerned about. They were deserting the grace of God and also deserting the God of grace, the One who is the Author of grace.

Notice this. One of the things that makes it difficult in a section like this, when you look at something historically, is how do you make application to us personally? The real issue is this. What am I going to do about what I just learned?

Now we just learned something from Paul's instruction to the church at Galatia, and he said this. "You're deserting the grace of God and the God of grace." Now that's a truth that the Scripture teaches us. The real issue for us is not to say, "What do I think about this passage?" The real issue is to say, "What am I going to do about this passage? How am I going to apply it in my life?"

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Let me give you some understanding. This is a very serious issue in the church today, the mixture of law and grace. It's a very, very deceptive way of bringing people to a false or pseudo-conversion. And so the application for us is, do I understand the real difference between law keeping as a means of salvation and grace as a means of salvation? That's the issue. And we have to spend some time talking about that this morning, to make application in our own lives of what we're learning from following the church at Galatia.

So go to Romans chapter 11, verse 6. The way to deal with this issue is this. Can you really mix law and grace as a means of salvation? Can you really do that? That's what they were trying to do.

Look at Romans chapter 11, verse 6. *"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works. Otherwise, grace would no longer be grace."* Grace would no longer be grace. You see, you can't mix the two together. You can't have grace and law keeping together as a means of salvation because one excludes the other. And probably one of the clearest verses that we just read is Romans 11:6.

Salvation is the gift of God's grace, purchased by Jesus Christ at the cross. To turn from grace to law is to desert the God of grace, as well as the grace of God. And that's exactly what the church in Galatia was doing.

How about 2 Timothy 1:9, which says it this way? I'm just trying to help you to understand that other passages in Scripture talk about the separation between grace and law works. You can't have both.

Another passage for your consideration would be 2 Timothy 1:9. *"Who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works, but because of His own purpose and grace, which He gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began."*

Now notice that little phrase *"before ages began."* He says that God gave us the grace before the foundation of the world, before the ages began. If you're going to change the gospel, when are you going to have to go back to? You're going to have to go back to before the world began, because that's when the gospel was introduced by the grace of God. So if you're going to say that salvation is now by works, you've got to go all the way back to the foundation of the world—before the world began, before the ages began, to change the gospel. You can't do that! And so we need to understand this.

Notice this verse again. It's a critical passage—*"which He gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began."* That's when it all began. And to change it into a new gospel, you've got to go back that far and create a whole new system. And you can't do that.

How about Acts chapter 4, verse 12, another verse to help us understand the contrast? *"For there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we can be saved."*

How about 1 Corinthians 3:11? *"For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus."* So men, if you're going to create a new gospel, create a new foundation, you're going to have to go all the way back before the creation of the world and start it all over again. And you can't do that. You cannot have a new gospel because the one that was given to us was given to us before the ages began and before the foundation of the world.

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So we need to understand that this is a very serious issue in our culture today. People say that you can have grace plus works. And what I'm trying to help you understand is the impossibility for that to happen. You can't mix the two. They do not go together. The second thing they were doing—

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

Participant: Would you give some examples of grace plus works?

Bruce: Well, I'll do that in a moment.

Participant: Oh, sorry!

Bruce: I think that's going to be my wrap up. (*Laughter.*) Remind me to do that because that's the critical question. I'll get to that in a moment.

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Please.

Participant: I was just going to say—and you touched on this a little bit last week—that usually, in Paul's writings, he gives a greeting. "I thank you," and "I thank my God for you, mentioning you in my prayers," etc. He doesn't do that here. He does it in 1 Corinthians, where there are all these people committing immorality, and heresy about the resurrection and confusion about spiritual gifts. But he doesn't do that here. And it's very interesting to me that this must have been so heavy upon Paul's mind, even more of a concern than the immorality of the Corinthians and the heresy that was being taught there. It's interesting.

Bruce: It is. Notice the first couple of words in verse 6. "*I am astonished!*" Paul says, "I'm astonished that you're leaving the grace of God and the God of grace." So Don's point is actually correct. This is the only time in Paul's writing where he doesn't start off with a warm, gracious salutation. Now later on in chapter 4, he will refer to them as "dear friends." But right now he's really drawing back. He's really drawing a battle line.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: He's basically saying, "Look! You're messing around with the gospel of Christ. There is only one gospel." And if you're going to change the gospel, to do that you've got to go all the way back before the world began. So he's really coming very, very aggressively, taking on this heresy. The second thing is this. They were not only deserting the grace of God, but they were *perverting the gospel of God*. Now these Judaizers claimed to be preaching the gospel. But there cannot be two gospels, one centered in works and one centered in grace. They are not preaching another gospel, Paul says, but they are preaching a different message. He is basically saying this. There is only one pure gospel. And so they're changing the whole message. There is only one gospel. So what they are preaching is not the gospel. They're preaching a different message, because there is only one gospel. And that is the one dealing with the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the Person and work of Christ, and repentance and faith. And Paul basically says, "There is not another one!" They just created their own new one! You can't change the old one because it was given to us before the world began. And now he's saying that they're not really preaching a gospel. They're preaching something totally different, because

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there is only one gospel. You can't change the gospel. But he says that it's a different message—so different from the true gospel that it is really not a gospel at all.

This is not the gospel at all. He says that what they are saying is not the gospel. They're saying that it is, because it's attractive. They're saying that it is because that's the way they can get inside the church. They will say, "We're going to give you a new gospel."

But Paul says, "Wait a minute! That's not the gospel at all," because the moment you try to change it, and the moment you begin to add law and works as a means of salvation, that is not the gospel at all. It's a whole new message. And so Paul says that this is not the gospel at all.

Like many of the cults today, these Judaizers would come along and say, "We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But we've got something wonderful to add to it that makes it greatly attractive to you as believers." So what can you do to add to the grace of God? Yes, Tom?

Tom: I'm thinking also that when you mentioned the word *astonished*, it kind of takes the emphasis off of Paul and puts it on the gospel. That's the important thing. If it were me writing to them, I'd say, "You stupid Galatians! What are you idiots doing?"

Participant: He does say that.

Tom: You have the truth, and I'm astonished that you're leaving the truth.

Bruce: Later on, he says, "*O foolish Galatians!*" So he does the very thing you're saying. (*Laughter.*) He says, "You're foolish!"

Tom: But not when he's starting out.

Bruce: But starting right off, the first thing he deals with is not the condition of the people, but the condition of the message.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: That's the gospel. That's the central part that he's talking about. It's the condition of the message, not the condition of the people, because that's the issue. The condition of the people is brought about by the condition of the message. If you have a false message, you're going to have false believers. So Paul deals with this very directly.

Now notice in verse 7. The word *pervert* in Galatians 1:7 is used only three times in the New Testament. It's found in Acts chapter 2 verse 20, Galatians 1:7, also in James 4:9. It literally means "to turn about, to change into an opposite character."

Transcriber's Note: Acts 2:20. "*The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.*"

Galatians 1:7. "*But there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.*"

James 4:9. "*Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.*"

Bruce: He's talking about the condition of the message, you see. You're changing. You're going from one condition to a new condition. And so he says, "You're perverting the gospel." He's saying, "You're changing it into an opposite condition." And the word can really be translated "to reverse."

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In other words, Paul was saying that these Judaizers had reversed the gospel. They had turned it around and taken it back into the law as a means of salvation. For them, the law and the gospel went together. They were reverting back to the old system and customs of Moses and the law.

Take a look at Acts chapter 15, verse 1. Here's a little illustration of what was going on in the whole church in Asia Minor. *"But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, 'Except you be circumcised according to the customs of Moses, you cannot be saved.'"*

You see, they were beginning to go back and say, "Well, we believe in the gospel of Christ. We just have something wonderful to add to it. You need to do this." Those were all the customs of the Mosaic covenant. And so what Paul was taking on was that you can't have a new gospel, because it isn't the gospel at all. They were perverting the gospel of God, as well as deserting the grace of God.

Notice verse 7. He says the word *trouble*. *"Not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ."*

Now this is a very interesting word. The word *trouble* carries with it the idea of perplexity, confusion and unrest. That's what was being caused inside the church of Galatia—perplexity, confusion and unrest. So no wonder he was so anxious about the condition of his converts! They were going through great agitation because of these doctrines that were being preached by the Judaizers.

Grace always leads to peace. And this group of people was not experiencing peace because they were agitated. They were confused and they were experiencing perplexity because of the confusion of the gospel by what this group was teaching. They were basically saying, "We need to revert to law keeping as a means of salvation." And they were confused, they were anxious and they were perplexed. Paul said that's why they were troubled.

Now keep in mind that we need to understand this applicationally. We're talking about grace and salvation. Keep in mind, friends, that God's grace involves something more than just man's salvation. We need to understand that. There is more to grace than just a man's salvation. You're saved by grace through faith, not of works, so that no man can boast. Grace implies more than just our eternal life and salvation. We're not only saved by grace, but we are to live by grace. You're saved by grace and you live by grace. 1 Corinthians 15:10.

Transcriber's Note: 1 Corinthians 15:10. *"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than them all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*

Bruce: Not only are we saved by grace, but we are to stand in grace, which is the foundation of our Christian life on a day to day basis. That's Romans chapter 5, verses 1 and 2.

Transcriber's Note: Romans 5:1-2. *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."*

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Bruce: Not only are we saved by grace, but grace gives us the strength to be victors, not victims. 2 Timothy 2, verses 1-4.

Transcriber's Note: 2 Timothy 2:1-4. *"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier."*

Bruce: And grace enables us to suffer without complaining, and even to use our suffering for God's glory. 2 Corinthians 12, verses 1-10.

Now my point is this, men. A lot of times people will say that you're saved by grace but you're maintained by works. You see, there's more to grace than just a man's salvation. We're to live in it. We're to live in grace, to stand in it.

I was reading something by one of my Puritan friends, John Flavel, who said this. "Pain in the world is unavoidable. Misery is an option." Pain in the world is inevitable, but misery is an option. It's optional. It's what you do with it!

Now that's the point I'm trying to make here, to help us to understand this. There's more to grace than our salvation. It is that in which we stand. Look at Romans 5. We stand in God's grace. We live by God's grace. Not only are we saved by grace, but we're maintained by grace. Yes, Don?

Don: Several years ago I knew some people who were a part of one of these groups. I don't know if I should call it a denomination. But it was one of these groups where everything you did was suspect. You couldn't wear makeup. You couldn't have a TV in your home, let alone watch it. You were wrong just to have it in your home, let alone turn it on. The woman said, "I know that if I have a TV that I'm going to go to hell." And she was so miserable. I mean she was just very miserable. You could tell that she didn't have peace in her life. So you're right on. It's misery that can come about by not living in grace.

Bruce: You see, grace brings about peace. And Paul's concern, being troubled about the Galatian believers and the condition of their hearts and the church itself, is that they were being troubled. That's an indication that you've walked away from grace. When you have trouble in your heart, it means that you're living in your own resources and not the resources of Christ Himself. Yes, Bishop Rodgers?

Bishop Rodgers: I was just thinking that when I went through seminary, we had some fairly liberal teaching. And it really does have that effect on your sense of what's right, confidence, all that. And it's going on now in evangelical circles today. They're bringing in all kinds of stuff that's troubling to everybody.

Bruce: It is very troubling. That's why Paul is so important. You've got to understand what the gospel is about. And men, we have to do the same thing today in our culture. That's why I'm trying to help us understand the difference between what Paul was going through and what we're going through. It's no different at all. It's the same thing. Other people are bringing things into the gospel of Christ. And they are really not preaching the

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gospel, although they say they will, because there is only one gospel. There is no gospel at all without the gospel of grace.

Participant: Hey, Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

Participant: You're probably going to get to this point as well, so I apologize.

(Laughter.)

Bruce: Go ahead.

Participant: It seems like there are two spectrums. One is grace plus works, and one is so far on grace and grace alone that you can do anything, be anything. God loves you just the way you are. You're good. Are you going to hit at all on that other radically—

Bruce: In about three months. *(Laughter.)* We'll get to chapter 5. That's when it's covered. *(Laughter.)* Not for a few months.

But you did bring up a good point that we need to talk about briefly. The far extreme of that is that grace means that you can just do anything you want. Grace does not mean licentiousness. It means liberty, not licentiousness. In other words, it means that you don't have the freedom to do everything you want. It's liberty. And there are limits to God's liberty. Liberty has its limitations. Remember Paul's writings in 1 Corinthians 6:10 and 10:12? *"All things are lawful for me. But not all things are profitable."* There's liberty in that, but there are also limitations to our liberty. We'll talk about that when we get to Galatians chapter 5. There are limitations to our liberty, for God's glory, and we need to understand that. It doesn't mean that you're free to do anything you want. It means that you're free to operate within the boundaries of God's grace, which is for His glory and our benefit.

Now go to Galatians chapter 5 verse 4. I just want to deal with something that is in the context of what we are discussing right now about grace. Paul uses the phrase *"fallen from grace."* Now that's a phrase that we use periodically in our culture—fallen from grace. When a Christian turns away from living by God's grace, he must depend upon his own resources. This leads to failure, and it leads to disappointment and frustration. That's what he means when he says "fallen from grace." It means moving out of the sphere of grace into the sphere of law, ceasing to depend upon God's resources and depending upon your own resources. That's what it means. You're moving out of the sphere of grace.

Now I just gave you a couple of indications about the sphere of grace, that we stand in grace, we live in grace, grace gives us strength to be victors, not victims. Grace enables us to suffer without complaining. You see, that's what it means to be operating in the sphere of grace. There is much more to grace than just our salvation. It means that we maintain ourselves in our Christian life in God's grace.

And so when you move out of that sphere of grace, you now take on the resources of yourself, and you're basically saying, "I'm moving away from the resources of God, and now I have the resources of myself to live like that." That's what it means to fall from grace.

Now this doesn't mean that you've lost your salvation, in one sense. But it does mean this. You've moved out of the sphere of grace, and you're no longer living in grace. And one of the indications of that will be your frustration, disappointment and pain.

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So the understanding that we need to have is that there is more to grace than salvation. We need to be maintained by grace just as much as we are saved by grace. Do you understand that? That's an application for us to take on today, that we must live in grace and remain in the sphere of God's grace.

The next thing that Paul does is this that will be helpful to us. He exposes his adversaries. He begins to expose his adversaries. You'll notice that in verses 8-10. These Judaizers are identified by the false gospel that they preached.

Now notice this, guys. The test of a man's ministry is not popularity. Look at Matthew 24. Nor is it miraculous gifts and wonders. Matthew 24:23-24.

Transcriber's Note: Matthew 24:23-24. *"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!', or 'There He is!', do not believe it. For false Christ's and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect."*

Bruce: But a man's ministry is evaluated by his faithfulness to the word of God. The references I would call you to would be Isaiah chapter 8 verse 20, 1 Timothy 4:1, and 1 John 4:1-6, which says to test the spirits.

Transcriber's Note: Isaiah 8:20. *"To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn."*

1 Timothy 4:1. *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons."*

1 John 4:1-6. *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."*

Bruce: And even 2 John 5:11 warns us not to encourage those who bring false doctrine.

Transcriber's Note: 2 John 10-11. *"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds."*

Bruce: We should not be encouraging people to do that for the sake of popularity.

Now Christ had committed the gospel to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. And Paul in turn committed that to other people. He taught Timothy and his other young proteges. They were to become faithful stewards.

And here is the message of the gospel that was entrusted to Paul. Go to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. This is a summary.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8. Paul writes to the church of Corinth and says this. *"Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you."* Now he's preaching a gospel that

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Christ gave to him. *"Which you received and in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you, as of first importance, what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scripture, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as one untimely born, He appeared also to me."*

Now Paul is saying, "Look! Christ gave me this message—that He died for our sins, that He lives for our sanctification. That's the message He gave me, and that's the message I'm giving to you, Timothy and to my other proteges. And that's the message that you are to preach because there is no other gospel."

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: And so he begins to identify the condition of these Judaizers by the content of their message. And he reminds them that this is the message that Christ gave him. And just in summary, read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, which I just read.

But they'd come along. These Judaizers came along, and they substituted this false gospel for the true one. And for this sin Paul pronounced them accursed. He pronounced them accursed. Notice this. The word that he uses is the word *anathema*, which means "dedicated to destruction."

Teaching and preaching the Scriptures is serious business, men, because Paul basically says this. If you're teaching something other than the Scripture, you're doomed to destruction. If you preach a gospel other than the one that I just gave you, you're doomed to destruction.

One of the concerns that I have, every time that I preach or teach,—and I'm sure everyone else has who does the same thing—is that one of these days I'm going to have to stand before the Lord. And He is going to say, "Bruce, why did you say that?"

Now that doesn't give me fear. It gives me motivation to make sure that I'm teaching the Scripture and being as accurate as I can. I know I have holes in my theology and mistakes in my theology. It's just that I don't know where they are yet. And when I find them I change them, because the issue is this. "Why did you say what you said? Was it the truth? Was it Scripturally based?" When you don't do that, you're doomed to destruction. It's a very serious accusation that Paul gives these Judaizers.

Look at Acts chapter 23 verse 14 for an illustration of that.

Transcriber's Note: Acts 23:14. *"They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, 'We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul.'"*

No matter who the preacher may be, Paul says,—it could be an angel from heaven, or even Paul himself—if he preaches another gospel, he is accursed, doomed to destruction. Yes?

Participant: Bruce, I think of a lot of the confusion going on today when people, and many Christians, believe that Muslims and Christians are worshiping the same God.

Bruce: Yes.

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Participant: And according to this, Mohammed would actually be accursed.

Bruce: Correct.

Second Participant: Of course.

First Participant: Because he's preaching a different gospel.

Bruce: You see, men, there is only one gospel! It doesn't change culturally. It was given before the foundation of the world. And anybody who is teaching a gospel other than that is accursed. They are doomed to destruction. That's a serious accusation, men. You've got to take very seriously who you believe and who you listen to. And so this is a very serious issue.

Muslims and Christians do not worship the same God. They do not do that. That's not popular to say in our world today, but the battleground is what does the Scripture say? Is the Scripture sufficient? Yes, Don?

Don: Yes. I think a lot of times it's even more frightening than that, because it's so easy to drift into faith and works. Look what happened at the time of Jesus, where the Jews and the Pharisees were basically counting on their righteousness to get them into heaven.

Bruce: Absolutely.

Don: Or look what happened in the Middle Ages that made the Reformation necessary—the faith and works there. In classic Roman Catholicism, the Council of Trent declared that anybody who believes in justification by faith alone was anathema. So it has cropped up a lot of times in church history.

Bruce: It's still with us today. We have to be very, very careful, men. That's why we're trying to spend our time making application about God's grace in our lives to help us understand it.

Participant: What is that verse for "doomed to destruction?"

Participant: Galatians 1:8 and 9.

Bruce: 1:8 and 9. Now here's one thing that his enemies were doing. Paul is addressing his enemies. And they accused Paul of being a compromiser, and adjusting the gospel to fit the Gentiles. It was really the Judaizers who adjusted the message.

How often do we do this? We hold back in proclaiming Biblical truth because we don't want to disrupt the group. Or we want to make sure that we are received well, so much so that people will want to respond to us. See, sometimes in our culture we do the very same thing, and that is that we compromise the message for the sake of popularity or acceptance.

I don't know if any of you have seen this. I was flipping through the TV the other night. And one of these—the Discovery channel, or National Geographic, or somebody—was doing a series on who is God?

Participant: Oh, boy!

Bruce: Have you seen that? Have you seen the advertisement? They showed pictures in this brief, little two-minute vignette of different people worshiping all over the world. And they went to one pastor here in America, in a church of about 35 thousand in Houston. And basically, this is what he said in ten seconds. He said, "My job is not to preach doctrine, but to help people leave feeling good about God."

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Participant: Oh, man!

Bruce: That's what he said. Then it went on to show the Muslims and people of other religions around the world. But that's what an American pastor said. He basically said, "My job is not to teach doctrine. It's to make people feel good about God."

Do you see how subtle that is? That's exactly what the Judaizers were doing. They were trying to be popular and compromising the whole message.

Look at Galatians 4:17. Here is what was going on with these Judaizers coming to the church at Galatia. Galatians 4:17. Paul is referring to these adversaries who would change the message of the gospel. *"They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them,"* which really means giving them all the attention. They were doing this to draw attention.

"They make much of you, but for no good purpose." In other words, they didn't have the right motive. The other thing that Paul takes them on with is the fact that not only did they have the wrong message, but they had the wrong motive. Their motive is that you would pay a lot of attention to them. Their motive is essentially popularity.

Paul was not a politician. Paul was an ambassador. His task was not to play politics, but to proclaim a message.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: And these Judaizers, on the other hand, were cowardly compromising, mixing law and grace, hoping to please both the Jews and the Gentiles, but never asking whether or not they were pleasing to God.

The question in order for us to apply this truth is this, guys. What is our motive for doing things? Paul exposed the motives of the Galatians, and the motives for the Galatians were these. The Judaizers were coming to the Galatians to make much of the people so that the people would make much of them in popularity.

But what is our motive for doing anything? I take you to 1 Corinthians 10:31. *"So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."* Is that our motive? That ought to be the motive of everything that we do. And men, you can't do that and move outside of God's grace. You have to stand and live in God's grace.

How about 2 Corinthians 5:9? *"So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him."* You see, that's the motive that we need to have—to do all for the glory of God and to please Him.

Now lastly, I want to conclude with this, and draw some summary to all this, an application for us. Would you go to Ephesians 2:1? Brian, we're going to come to your answer now. Scripture says this. *"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins."*

So the good thing about Scripture is that it's logical. Truth is always very logical.

Now consider this. If you take the word *dead* to mean *sick*, then works salvation is the legitimate consequence of that mindset. If you say that you are sick in your trespasses and sins, then the logical conclusion you would come to, and correctly so, but it's not Biblical,—but if you logically hold the position that you are sick in your trespasses and sins and you can do something about it, that leads you to works salvation, because you can do something at the end.

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Here's how that applies. I've heard people say this. You're in a hospital room, taking your last breath, and you're ready to die. The doctor comes in and says, "If you just reach up and take this pill, it will cure everything." And so with your last dying breath, you reach out and you grab that pill and you take it. That's works salvation.

What does the Scripture say? You see, if the Scripture says that *dead* means *sick*, then that's legitimate. That's the logical conclusion. I've got one thing I can do. I'm 99 per cent dead, but one per cent of me can still do something. And I can reach out and grab that pill, and take that pill and be saved.

But the Scripture says this. You're dead in your trespasses and sins. What can a dead person do?

Participant: Nothing.

Bruce: Nothing! You are dead. What does a dead person need? Life! You need life! Which comes first, life or faith?

Participant: Life.

Bruce: Life comes first. Faith is the first expression of life. If dead means dead, that means you can do absolutely nothing other than beg for God's mercy, to ask Him to save you by the grace of God. That's all you can do.

You see, that's the issue that Paul is dealing with these Galatians. For us it means this. Does dead mean sick, or does dead mean dead? If dead means dead, the only logical conclusion that you can come to is that you're saved by—

Participant: Grace.

Grace—God's unmerited favor to undeserving sinners. That's grace. Does the word *dead* mean dead, or does it mean sick? Most of our evangelists today will say this. They give you an illustration that you're drowning in water. Somebody throws a life jacket to you, and in the last effort that you reach to grab it, that's works salvation, because if dead means dead, then you can't do anything except beg for mercy.

Participant: Hey, Bruce?

Bruce: Sir?

Participant: Even begging for mercy is an act of grace on the part of the sinner.

Bruce: Absolutely. You could not do that if you didn't have the grace beforehand. You're absolutely correct. It's an expression of grace. Yes, Ted?

Ted: I was listening to one of the Christian radio stations in Pittsburgh this week, and someone was preaching about Peter's imprisonment. And he was preaching on how the people prayed fervently. And he said that if that congregation had not prayed earnestly and without ceasing, Peter would have been the second martyr. So what he was saying is that Peter's release was due to the praying of the congregation.

Bruce: Salvation by praying.

Ted: Salvation by praying.

Bruce: Salvation by praying. Correct. That's works. Listen to this, men, in summary. No one was ever saved by giving his heart to Jesus. They were saved because Jesus gave His heart to them. Do you understand the difference? That is grace. No one was ever saved by giving his heart to Jesus. They were saved because Jesus gave His heart to them. That's His unmerited favor for undeserving sinners. And friends, that is the gospel of

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grace. Anything other than that is not the gospel at all, because there is only one gospel. May it be so that we preach the true gospel of Christ. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen and Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: Let's pray. Father, we thank You for the clarity of Paul's teaching to the church at Galatia. May we understand that not only are we saved by grace, but that we maintain our lives by grace. And may it be so that You would be pleased, in all things, that we would bring honor and glory to You. And all the Brave Men said, "Amen." (*Applause.*)