

Parson to Person
(Galatians 5 – Part 1)
(Verses 1–12)
“Stand Fast—In Defended Grace”

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion does not *come* from Him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!”
(Galatians 5:1–12)

Stand Fast

This chapter begins with the non-negotiable command, “*Stand fast...in the liberty by which Christ has made [you] free*” (vs. 1a). Command? Yes! “Falling” for a lie was not an option.

Unwavering Doctrine—Non-tolerated Heretics

Paul was not willing to meet the Galatians anywhere short of the carefully articulated doctrine communicated within the gospel of

grace. He was not willing to tolerate the heretics who were demanding a works-based/performance-based gospel. He knew that anything less was a “*yoke of bondage*” (vs. 1b)—a bondage Jesus died to remedy.

Paul knew if the Galatians (or anyone else for that matter) believed that their performance (in this case, circumcision) would secure, help secure, maintain, or help maintain the salvation bought and paid for by Jesus, they would, in effect, be denying the work of Christ—thereby with certainty, providing “*insult [to] the Spirit of grace*” (see Hebrews 10:26–31).

Christ Shall Profit You Nothing

“If [the Galatians or anyone else were to] become circumcised [in order to secure, help secure, or help maintain the salvation freely given], Christ [would] profit [them] nothing (vs. 2). He did not, and would not, tolerate a gospel of Christ plus works—or *anything/anyone* plus Christ. The mixture was not, and will not, be accepted. Christ will share His glory with no man—and no thing. Therefore, Paul simply stated, “*You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace*” (vs. 4).

Estranged from Christ

Concerning “estrangement,” two items must be considered:

1) Those who *have* trusted Christ

To be estranged from Christ should *not* be understood as the believer’s loss of a previously obtained salvation. To be estranged from Christ should *not* be understood as a post-salvific discard—as though a believer can be redeemed and then rejected (“*you are bought at a price*”). No, once one has heard the true gospel and trusted Christ for salvation—even if stumbled and discouraged by

human performance/works-based teaching—that person remains born again and cannot lose or forfeit the salvation God alone provides.

The scriptures declare that those who are born again are “kept by the power of God” (see 1 Peter 1:3–5). The born again have “passed from death unto life” (see John 5:24). Jesus said He would give (every believer) “eternal life and they will never perish” (John 10:28).

2) Those who *have not* trusted Christ

Being estranged from Christ *is* the result of believing one is or will be justified by the law—even believing they must be circumcised. Being estranged from Christ *is* believing a false gospel.

Being estranged from Christ is believing one is or will be justified by works—as good as those works might appear. Being estranged from Christ is trust in the law to save. Being estranged from Christ is belief in a false gospel. They are “*estranged from Christ*” who believe they have anything to offer God in exchange for their souls. Let us remember: “Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling” (Lyric taken from “The Old Rugged Cross”).

Anything but Christ and Christ plus anything—is an assault on Christ Himself. Any work but the work of God—is an assault on God. Any “gospel” other than the one Paul proclaimed (Galatians 1:6–9)—is a false gospel.

Fallen from Grace

Salvation has always been by grace through faith. Paul made this abundantly clear (see Galatians 3 *again*). Salvation was never by works—and never will be.

By now the Galatians should have known this—and by now we should too. Therefore, to err regarding this doctrine (salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone) was and is to “fall from grace.”

Grace has always been the means. Faith has always been the method. Those who “fall” from that eternally documented position cannot and will not please God. Those who trust in self, work, or the law are and will be damned. They must trust in Christ—believing the gospel. Therefore, those who have been “*estranged from Christ*”/alienated from Him, have been torn away to the degree that they are not in Christ!

Get this straight! A false gospel is no gospel at all.

Persecution and the Gospel of Grace

Paul wrote, “*if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased*” (vs. 11).

Paul’s defense is ours. We who preach the gospel of grace are ridiculed by the cults. Many are persecuted to the point of death for simply declaring that “Jesus paid it all!”

The “*offense of the cross*” can be understood as a robbery of man—from his or her boasting. Satan hates the cross—and so does the flesh!

The Yoke of Bondage

Satan knows that “*every man who becomes circumcised... is a debtor to keep the whole law*” (vs. 3) and wants to see man bound by that “yoke,”—“*a yoke of bondage*” (vs. 1). Therefore, he (Satan) works to pollute and distort the gospel in order to keep man in self, human performance, and failure. Jesus said, “*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly*”

(John 10:10). Therefore, as true believers, we must “stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free.”

No More Debt

It requires no explanation to say that *“every man who becomes circumcised... is a debtor to keep the whole law”* (vs. 3).

To those who attempt to be justified by law, I would simply ask: “How are you doing?” Feeling strong? Feeling confident? I think not! The law condemns—as *“the ministry of death”* (see 2 Corinthians 3:7).

The believer declares, “The law is death to me” and “I am dead to the law” (see Galatians 2:19–21). I am not a debtor to keep the law—nor am I able. I am set free by the power of Christ!

Purge Out the Leaven—The Judgment of the False Teacher

“This persuasion (the false teaching and the false teachers) does not come from Him who calls you” (vs. 8). The teaching and those teaching it are not from God!

Therefore, reassuringly, Paul wrote,

- 1) *“I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind”* (vs. 10a). This is a statement of motivational encouragement. “Align with God on this—and unify in the truth.”
- 2) *“A little leaven leavens the whole lump”* (vs. 9). “Get rid of it (and them) or it (and they) will spread.”
- 3) *“I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!”* (vs. 12). *“I would like to see these false teachers repent or leave.”*
- 4) *“He who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is”* (vs. 10b). “If they don’t repent—woe unto them.” The

coming judgment on false teachers will be severe! (See 2 Peter 2).

Therefore, my beloved, *“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”* Don’t be deceived!

I love you all,
Pastor Paul