

Journey Through the New Testament

Galatians 3 – Ephesians 1

Series: An Apostle's Epistles

The Message to the Galatians

8-25-19

Introduction

Galatians 3-6 is a continuation of Paul's letter of concern to the Galatian believers who had "fallen away from grace." (Gal. 5:4) This part of Paul's letter emphasizes the freedom that is found in Christ and the result of life in the Spirit. Rather than keeping the law, both Jews and Gentiles are called to faith in Christ and to living a life of love. This is what fulfills the law.

The Galatian believers were being led astray by those who promoted the Jewish law rather than Paul's teaching of grace and freedom in Christ. In some ways, we like the black and white of following the rules rather than living by faith. It is faith in Christ, however, that brings life in the Spirit.

Opening Prayer

O God, you sent Christ that we might be free and full of love for others. Forgive us for clinging to the "weak and worthless" rather than to freedom and grace. Enable us to live by your Spirit and to love and serve our neighbor. In Christ we pray. Amen.

Bible Study Galatians 4:4-7 (CEB)

What?

1. What are the "full rights" that come with being a son or heir in the usual sense?
2. What is given to the believer as an heir (child) of God? (v. 6)
3. What is the good news of these verses?

Read Galatians 4:8-9

1. What do you think made the Galatians "turn back to the weak and worthless world system?" (the law)
2. In what way was the law "weak" compared to the Spirit given by faith in Christ?

Read Galatians 5:1-6

1. As Christians, we are to be free from the "bondage of slavery." In what ways do we feel tied to keeping the rules rather than living in the freedom and grace of God?

So What?

1. So, if it's not about the rules, what matters as far as Christ is concerned?
(v. 6)

Read Galatians 5:14-18

1. So, what is the summary of the entire law and the way we should live?
2. What is Paul's advice for how to live in this way?

Read Galatians 5:22-26

1. What qualities come into our lives when we live according to the Spirit rather than the rules?
2. What is the source of these qualities?

Now What?

Lesson Notes:

The letter to the Galatians warns us about being led astray, reminds us that we are children of God, and directs us to be led by the Spirit. This results in living a life of freedom, faith and love.

1. Now that this has been made clearer, what are the challenges of living by faith?
2. What are the challenges of living a life of love for our neighbor?
3. What is difficult about living according to the Spirit?
4. What can we do that will help us deal with these difficulties?

Lesson Notes:

Galatians 5:22-23 is a picture of what it looks like to have the Holy spirit reign in a human life. Just as you know an apple tree by the fruit on its limbs, this passage says that you know Christians by the "fruit" in their lives. These fruits are the essence of embodied Christianity. The fruits of the Spirit are best demonstrated in the quality of our relationships with others. We may not always "feel" Christ-like, but our actions in serving others express love and the Spirit of Christ. (Commentary, *Wesley Study Bible*)

Closing

*Let's not get tired of doing good,
because in time we'll have a harvest if we don't give up.*

Galatians 6:9