

The Man And His Message

Galatians 1:1-5

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The key verse is, most likely, Galatians 5:1 where Paul says, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” I believe that verse summarizes the whole book of Galatians, standing fast in the liberty where Christ has made us free—free from the law, free from the condemnation of the law—and don’t be entangle again in a yoke of bondage. Someone has called the book of Galatians the Christian Declaration of Independence.

The book is written by, and there’s no guessing in verse 1, the Apostle Paul. He starts with, “Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) 2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia.” We’re going to read in just a moment more verses. I’m going to read down to verse 10 because the first ten verses of the first chapter are really the introduction. The strict interpretation is that the first five verses are the introduction or the opening salutation, but technically they cover verses 1-10. There’s also a reference to Paul’s name in Galatians 5:2, so I just wanted to point that out. There are two clear references, Galatians 1:1 and Galatians 5:2, to the authorship of Paul.

I always chuckle a bit when I’m studying a book of the Bible that scholars, so called, will spend pages debating who wrote a book of the Bible. All you have to do is read the first verse. In this case, it’s true that very few people debate or question the authorship of Paul the apostle. This is what’s called a Pauline epistle. Now, it’s not one of his prison epistles, but it is an epistle of Paul. It’s believed that it was probably the first epistle that Paul ever penned, and it was written probably about 49 or 50 A.D. It was believed to be written, and I think this is so, before Acts 15 in what was called the Jerusalem counsel where they met to determine the Gentiles’ relationship to the law; that is, the Jewish law, in they becoming Christians.

Do Gentiles have to become Jews in order to be Christians? Now, I know that might kind of confuse you a little bit, and this may be new territory for some of you, but this is what the book of Galatians is about. Basically, false teachers had come into the churches of Galatia, Jews who were Judaizing the believers, and they were telling the Christians, “You cannot be a Christian, you cannot be saved, unless you also are circumcised, you keep the law of Moses, and you follow dietary laws.” That’s why they’re called Judaizers. They were Jews who were telling Gentiles, “You can’t be a Christian, you can’t be saved, unless you become first a Jew. You have to proselyte into Judaism.”

Someone said that Judaism was the birthplace of Christianity, but it was also almost the cemetery of Christianity. It almost destroyed Christianity, and this issue actually created an issue where Christianity almost became a Jewish sect. It also was in danger of corrupting the true gospel of Jesus Christ, which is no small matter. This is why Paul picked up his pen and wrote the book of Galatians.

Another thing that scholars like to debate, and I just mentioned it because someone, no doubt, will ask me about it after church tonight, is whether Paul was writing to the churches in northern or southern Galatia. They have these two theories called the northern Galatian theory and the southern Galatian theory. Depending upon which group of churches Paul was writing to...and by the way, Galatia is modern-day Turkey. I believe the church is most likely in the south, but it doesn't really matter. It doesn't change the writing that Paul gave. But some people like to make a big deal, "Is this southern or northern Galatia," and "what churches?"

Another little footnote, that is, Paul is writing for the first time. He's also writing his only epistle that was to a group of churches. Some believe that Ephesus was to a group of churches, but it's not addressed that way in the letter. It's the only letter of Paul in that it was written to the churches of Galatia. I believe that these are the churches in southern Galatia, and I'll talk about that more in just a moment, that were actually started by Paul and Barnabas on his first missionary journey. If you have a map at the back of your Bible on the journeys of Paul, look at the first missionary journey and you'll see the area of Galatia. It became a Roman province where Paul started these churches, and the false teachers entered into these churches and were polluting the gospel, perverting the gospel, and were trying to bring Christians under legalism for their salvation and for sanctification as well.

There are three basic purposes for Paul writing Galatians, and this is very important. I want you to catch this. If you're taking notes in the way of outline, it's consistent with the outline that I passed out; that is, Paul was writing to defend his authority, and he does that in Galatians 1 and 2. In order to destroy the gospel that Paul preached, they tried to destroy Paul's personal integrity. They said he was not really an apostle, he doesn't have the authority, he doesn't know what he's talking about, he's perverted the gospel; and in order to undermine the message, they attacked the man.

By the way, the title of my message tonight is: The Man and His Message. They first attacked the man because they wanted to weaken the message, which is no surprise. All great men or women of God that have been used by God have been attacked. I don't think it's possible to be used by God and not come under attack. Moses was attacked by his own sister and brother. John the Baptist was attacked. Paul was attacked, and Jesus was attacked. Whoever stands up and serves the Lord is going to come under some kind of attack or opposition. Paul was writing in Galatians 1 and 2 to defend his authority, so they are personal. It's kind of biographical, you might say, where he talks a lot about himself and his apostleship to prove that he had authority and knew what he was talking about.

The second section is Galatians 3 and 4 where we find Paul defending his doctrine, his message, what he taught. This is now doctrinal. The third division is Paul defends Christian living and liberty, Galatians 5 and 6, which is practical. In the outline that I gave you, we first have his argument, Galatians 1 and 2, which is biographical. Second, it is theological, and I said doctrinal. Thirdly, Galatians 5 and 6, it's practical. There are six chapters. The first two are personal, the second two are doctrinal, and the third set of two, Galatians 5 and 6, are practical, where he deals with Christian living. Someone put it like this: The gospel of grace is

defended, Galatians 1 and 2; the gospel of God's grace is explained, Galatians 3 and 4; and the gospel of grace is applied, Galatians 5 and 6. Paul is writing, first of all, in Galatians 1 and 2 to defend or vindicate his own apostolic authority and ministry. Again, the overarching thing is that he was trying to defend the true gospel.

There are a few key words (I'm getting a bit ahead of myself because of all this information in my brain that wants to come out) I want you to know, and we'll note them as we go through. The first word is "gospel." Then, you'll find the word, "grace," and then you'll find a reference to the "cross." We're going to focus on the "cross" tonight in the message that Paul preached, but you find "grace," "gospel," and "cross." Those are central words all through the book of Galatians because Paul is defending the gospel of God's grace who sent His Son to die on the cross so that we can be forgiven and saved.

Tonight we look at Galatians 1:1-5. In verses 1-2 we have the man, and he's talking about his authority. Go back with me to verses 1-2. He starts with, "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man," so you see right away that Paul makes clear that he's an apostle and he's not appointed by any man or any group of men but is appointed as an apostle by God the Father and Jesus Christ. When he refers to God the Father, he says, "...who raised him," Jesus Christ, "from the dead;) 2 And all the brethren which are with me," and we don't know who they were because we're not absolutely sure where Paul is writing from. Most likely it's from Antioch his home church that sent him out on his missionary trips, but he doesn't tell us who the brethren are "which are with me." Then, he says to them, verse 3, "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: 5 To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Follow with me, verses 6-10, where we get some more background. He says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you," those were the false teachers, the Judaizers, "and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," the Greek word is anathema, and we're going to look at that next week, cursed to the lowest hell, "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. 10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

The opening in verse 1 starts with his name, Paul. We know that he was first known as Saul of Tarsus, and we could spend the whole night just talking about this man Paul. His name originally is believed to be, because he was from the tribe of Benjamin, named after King Saul who was the first king of Israel. The name Saul has the meaning of asked for, so Saul means he was asked for and was the first king that the people asked for. Then, when Paul went out on his missionary journey, he got saved in Acts 9 (I'm not following any real chronology here on his life) on the road to Damascus, became a Christian, and then went out on the missionary trip.

On the first missionary trip, the first place that Paul went was to the island of Cyprus where he encountered a magician who was Elymas, a sorcerer. He just rebuked him in the power of the Spirit and blindness came on him. It was the first recorded incident where Paul used his apostolic authority and, as a result, the protractor of the island, Sergius Paulus, became a Christian. Some have this wild theory (I think it's wild, and I don't know why I'm telling you this) that Paul then adapted the name Sergius Paulus because it was his first convert, the first one he led to Christ on his first missionary journey. That's possible, but it's also possible because he was a Hebrew growing up in Tarsus, which was a Greek city, he had Roman citizenship where a lot of Hebrew young boys would have dual names. They would have a Hebrew name and a Greek name, and it's possible he just abandoned the name Saul and took up the name Paul.

The name Paul actually means little. It means small or little of stature. He adapted that name when he finally went out in ministry and started doing his missionary journeys and discovered that God had called him to be an apostle to the Gentiles. The important point is there that he's an apostle, notice it in verse 1. This is Apostle with a capital A. I say that because there were two kind of groups of apostles. The first group of apostles were a chosen, select group that Jesus chose. To be an apostle, the Bible actually said that you had to see Jesus and company with Him, and you had to see Him resurrected.

There were only a few men who were known as apostles, and Judas, of course, apostatized, and they had to replace Judas with Matthias. That seems to be a manmade appointment. Interesting, Paul says, "...not of men, neither by man," but Paul was one born out of due time or later on. He became an apostle separate from the 12 apostles that we have in the gospel records, but he was called of God on the Damascus road, he saw Jesus, not in His humanity but in His resurrected glory, and he was commissioned and sent out by Jesus Christ. He was sent by Him even though Ananias came and laid hands on him, God even told Ananias, "He's a chosen vessel. I've called him for a particular purpose," and He spoke to Paul and said, "I've called you to be a light," and "to go unto the Gentiles and preach the gospel."

The point that Paul wants to make in verse 1 is that his apostleship was, "...not of men," it wasn't a group that, like Matthias in Acts 1, pulled straws. They kind of said, "Eeny, meeny, miny, moe, which one shall we pick as apostle?" After Matthias is picked, you actually never see or hear about him again, so there's a theory that they were really kind of out of the will of God in picking him, that God had planned for Paul to be that apostle and to fill that slot. I actually have no problem calling Paul the greatest Christian that ever lived. Any time I think about him or his life, it just kind of completely blows my fuse or my mind to think about what a great man he was and what the world owes to this man, Paul the Apostle.

It wasn't a group of men conferring his apostleship, and no doubt the false teachers said that he just got his apostleship from a group of men and wasn't really divinely given, and then he says, "...neither by man," and uses the singular. The first is plural—it wasn't a group of men, it wasn't one individual. It could be that they were saying, "When Ananias laid hands on Saul to give him the Holy Spirit, that he was the one conferring his apostleship upon him," but it came from,

notice verse 1, "...by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who," and he throws this in at the end of verse 1, "raised him from the dead," so it came as its source from God the Father, and it came as its channel through God the Son. A lot of times it's not seen, but it's there very clearly, that Jesus is actually put on the same par as God the Father. The source is God the Father, the channel is God the Son, and what he's saying there in verse 1 is actually Jesus is God. It wasn't from man, it was from God—God the Father and God the Son. Again, I do believe that is proof text, among many others that are perhaps more clear, but this is clearly implied that Jesus is God. It speaks of His divine authority, and we find here that Jesus is the channel of his apostleship and commission.

Paul then ties his name together with "all the brethren which are with me," and as I pointed out, he doesn't tell us what brethren they were. He just says, "And all the brethren which are with me," greet you as well. Then, he's writing to the churches. As I pointed out earlier, this is the only epistle where Paul wrote to a group of churches, the churches of Galatia, which include Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. Now, that's based on what's called the southern Galatian theory. If he wrote to the northern churches, there'd be a different group of them, and he would have written actually after his second missionary journey not after the first, but it doesn't change the content or the message of the letter that is written.

A really important thing I want to point out that I don't want to forget: Of all of Paul's letters, this is the only one where he had no commendation, no thanksgiving, no prayer. He doesn't say anything good about the Galatians. Even though the church at Corinth had all kinds of problems and was all messed up, he had a few good things to say about them. He said, "I thank God for you," and prayed for them. He thanked God for the Ephesians, and he prayed for them. He thanked God for the Philippians. The Philippians were actually, you might say, Paul's favorite church, if you could put it that way. He was near and dear to the Philippians than any other church.

When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he was upset with them, and rightfully so. He had started the churches there. Through him, God had brought them to Christ. They were growing in Christ. No sooner had he left Galatia, and this group of churches that he started, that false teachers were turning them away from the true gospel Paul had left them with, and they were turning away from Paul himself. What a heartbreak this was for Paul, and how important Paul realized it was that if he didn't defend the true gospel right here and right now, that it may never be known and that Christianity would die in the cradle. That's why I say Judaism was the cradle of Christianity, but it also could have been the casket of Christianity. It could have been just a small Jewish sect, and it could have been bound up with laws, rules, regulations, and so forth. Paul is very, very concerned about this problem, and he has nothing good to say to them—no word of commendation, praise, or prayer. He just kind of will jump right into his subject.

In verses 3-5, we move from the man, Paul, and his apostolic authority and ministry...by the way, I don't believe (I hate to be negative, but I think it's important) that there are any living Apostles (capital A) in the world today. If anyone claims to be an Apostle, they're claiming to be an apostle (small a). The word apostle, I forgot to mention, literally means one who is sent out

with a commission. The closest we have today in our English language is the word ambassador. When an ambassador from America goes to another country, he actually has all the authority of the country he represents. He's sent as an authority. These apostles are all gone. The foundation of the church was laid by the apostles. We have apostolic doctrine, but nobody has the authority today to speak with apostolic authority and supersede or replace or change any biblical revelation that we already have.

Again, I hate to be negative, but I'm going to touch on this a lot in the next several weeks, the Mormon church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, claims to have a direct succession of apostles, and they call the head of their church on earth the Apostle. They use that title. Even in what you might call evangelical Christianity a lot of pastors don't use the title pastor, they use the word apostle. Now, the Scriptures use the word apostle in the general sense for people who are sent out on an errand or commissioned, but for a pastor the words that are used are pastor, bishop, and elder. Those are the three synonymous terms used for pastors in the Scriptures. I don't think that anyone can walk into the church and say, "I'm an apostle. I'm a direct succession from the Apostle Paul or Peter, and I have apostolic authority to tell everyone what to do," and that kind of a thing. That just doesn't exist anymore today, but we do have the apostles' doctrine for us in the Scriptures.

We move from the man, verses 1-2, to the message, verses 3-5. "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ," this is typical of Paul's greeting or normal salutation. He uses the word "grace," which is the more Gentile greeting, which would be charis, which means God's grace or unmerited favor, and then he uses the word "peace," which is the Hebrew greeting shalom. It's actually an important greeting because we're saved by grace, and through the cross of Christ we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have peace with God, and then we walk with Him and have the peace of God. He's actually beginning, even in this salutation, to indicate that grace is what it's all about, not works or legalism but God's marvelous grace.

This grace and peace come from two sources: God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. It comes from the heart of the Father, and it comes from Jesus Christ. We're saved by grace which results in peace with God and with the peace of God in our hearts. It's always in this order: first grace and then we find the peace of God. You cannot know the peace of God until you experience the grace of God and you're standing in the grace of God.

Paul then, verses 4-5, moves to the message itself, and this is the meat of these first five verses. He says, referring to Jesus Christ, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world," and it's all done, "according to the will of God and our Father: 5 To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Years ago, as I was studying for a communion service, I came upon an amazing discovery that in the book of Galatians, over and over and over and over and over again, I never realized this, is a reference to the cross of Christ. Whenever you're dealing with false doctrine or false teachings or false systems, you need to always come back to the centrality of the cross of Jesus Christ. If there is any one place that a cult group or an aberrant doctrine or teaching or false doctrine is going to come, it's going to

come in the area of the Person and the work of Jesus Christ. You must know who Jesus is, why He came, and what He did upon the cross; and the cross is the centerpiece to God's table setting of His redemptive purpose, plan, and program.

Everything in the Old Testament points to the cross, everything beyond in the New Testament points back to the cross, so you need to understand the cross. I think that a lot of times, as Christians, and even shame on us pastors, we don't preach doctrinally enough. A lot of times, as Christians, we don't think deep enough. We just think, Oh Jesus died, and He loves us, and He paid for our sins, but we don't really understand all that's implied and the importance of the cross of Jesus Christ.

Let me rip through seven references, actually there are more than seven but let me give them to you, of the power of the cross as seen in the book of Galatians. If you're taking notes, you can write them down and look them up. If you can't do that, then you can go back and listen to the archived message and write them down. There are seven of them. First, the cross in Galatians has power to deliver us from sin, Galatians 1:4 (we just read it), Galatians 2:21, and Galatians 3:22. Secondly, the power of the cross in Galatians is seen to deliver us from the curse of the law. That's in Galatians 3:13, "...Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," to set us free from the law. Thirdly, is to deliver us from the self life, Galatians 2:20 and Galatians 5:24. Fourthly, the power of the cross in Galatians is seen to deliver us from the world, Galatians 6:14. Fifthly, the power of the cross is to give the new birth or to bring about the new birth to save us and to give us eternal life, Galatians 4:4-7. Sixthly, the power of the cross is in receiving the Holy Spirit, Galatians 3:14. Seventhly, is in bringing forth the Spirit's fruit, Galatians 5:22-25. When we crucify the flesh and the affections and lusts thereof, then we can walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Everything about the Christian life, doctrine, and theology centers around the theater of the cross.

If you're taking notes, I want to give you five facts about the cross of Christ that are just tucked in these two verses, verses 4-5. The first fact is the cross of Christ was voluntary. I want you to notice it in verse 4, "Who gave himself," now this may seem elementary or basic, but it's super important. When Jesus died on the cross, He died voluntarily. Jesus said, "No man takes My life from Me, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up." When He was arrested in the garden, He said, "I Am," and they all fell back to the ground. He went willingly, voluntarily. He could've called ten thousand angels and come down from the cross, but He gave Himself. How marvelous is that! He willingly, voluntarily gave Himself upon the cross. I want you to think about that personally. He had you in mind before you were ever created, before you ever existed. Back in eternity past, He had you in mind and purposed that He would one day give Himself to die on the cross for our sins.

Write down Philippians 2. It's what theologians call the kenosis passage. It tells us that Jesus humbled Himself, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not," something to hold onto but humbled Himself, "...and took upon him the form of a servant." He voluntarily laid aside not His deity but the manifestation of His glory, His majesty, and His splendor; and He put on humanity and came down to earth and voluntarily went to the cross. If Jesus gave Himself for our sin,

then we need to do nothing but trust Him and His finished work.

You see, all religions say, “Do,” Christianity says, “Done.” That work that is done is done at the cross. If you take the cross out of Christianity, you don’t have Christianity. If you have a religion without the cross, you don’t have a true religion, you don’t have Christianity. Basically, all other systems, religions, teach that in some way, some shape, some form, you do something to save yourself. It’s that simple, but it’s simply profound. You have to pray a bunch. You have to get baptized. You have to obey rules, laws, regulations, and stipulations. You have to wear your underwear, get a haircut, don’t eat certain foods, don’t do certain things, and all of these regulations and rules that you have to do to be saved.

We’re going to see in Galatians 2 that they try to sometimes preach grace but combine it with law. You can’t do that because if you preach law or works, then grace is no more grace. Grace is unearned, undeserved, unmerited favor. Someone defined grace as God’s riches at Christ’s expense. I love that. You don’t do anything, you just believe. Other religions say, “Do,” and this is what they were trying to put on these Galatian believers, “You gotta get circumcised. You gotta follow dietary laws. You gotta worship on Saturday,” the Seventh-day Adventist’s are really big about laws, rules, dietary laws, and the day you worship on. It’s legalism. Instead of saying, “It’s already done. All you have to do is enter in by faith and believe in Jesus Christ.” Jesus gave Himself for us on the cross.

The second fact I note in this section, verse 4, is that it was substitutionary. Jesus gave Himself voluntarily. He gave Himself vicariously or as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. Now, you’ve heard me say it a million times, and this is going to be a million one, but the essence of the cross, which is the centerpiece of God’s redemptive plan, is substitutionary death—He died for us. Now, when it uses that little word “for” in the passage, “Who gave himself for our sins,” the purpose, the intention, is that it means in place of or instead of. He paid for our sins. Again, I used Genesis 22:13 where Abraham offered up Isaac. Isaac was taken off the altar, and the ram was substituted in his place. Jesus actually went to the cross in your place. Now, He didn’t become a sinner, but He became a sin bearer. He bore our sins as the sinless Son of God. He died for us. He took our place. That word “for” our sins is hamartia. It means that we miss the mark. God has a standard, God has a command, we disobey it, violate it, step out of bounds, but fall short. We miss the mark.

I want you to notice the third thing about the cross, it was to rescue us. It was voluntary, substitutionary, and it was His redeeming or rescuing mission. Notice verse 4, “...that he might deliver us from this present evil world,” the word “world” there is the Greek word *aion*. It means age. Even before Christ, the Jews put everything into two ages: the age they were living in and then the Messianic Age when the Messiah would come and set up His Kingdom. Jesus actually rescues us in verse 4.

It’s interesting that Paul says in verse 4, “Who gave himself for our sins,” this would be justification or salvation, and “that he might deliver us,” in the King James Bible the better concept is rescue us or to set us free or to release us. This is sanctification. He not only came

to deliver us from the penalty and the power of the law, but He came to rescue us from a life of sin on a daily basis. It's called sanctification. He didn't just save you so you can go to heaven one day, He saved you so you can live holy right now upon the earth, and that's what is implied there with the idea of "deliver us." No doubt he's thinking, too, of the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt in the exodus, they were redeemed or ransomed or delivered.

If you're a Christian, your sins have been forgiven because Jesus died voluntarily and substitutionally on the cross, but He had a purpose behind it. He wanted to rescue you out of a life of sin and darkness, and He wanted to bring you out of the darkness into His light. He wanted to deliver you. I mean, it's kind of a cool thought that if you're a Christian, you've been delivered from this present evil world—you're not at home in the world, you're not to be like the world, you're not to be living like the world, talking like the world. You're to be a stranger and a pilgrim in this present evil world. He also delivered us from the legalism, the works of the law.

Here's the fourth. The cross of Christ was planned by God. Look at verse 4. It says, "... according to the will of God and our Father." All of this redemptive rescuing, atoning work on the cross was something that started in the benevolent, loving, gracious heart of God the Father. I'm convinced that there's purposes and plans and things that God has not revealed to us that when we get to heaven, He's going to reveal them little by little by little throughout all eternity, so we're just going to keep getting our minds blown as we go through the eternal state of all the grace, the mercy, the love, and the purpose and plan, the wisdom and the majesty of God in His whole redemptive plan. It's just going to be so marvelous, but the idea there is that it started in the loving heart of God.

What is this beginning to teach us? By the way, the first five verses of Galatians 1 are the whole book of Galatians packed into five verses. The three categories of personal, then doctrinal, and then practical are all found in these first five verses. Paul wastes no time in coming against the enemies of the gospel to center on the cross and the grace of God and how it was purposed by God in eternity past, that it was all of God. Salvation, as it says in the book of Jonah of all places, is of the Lord. When Jonah was in the belly of the whale, what could he do to save himself? Not much. He said, "Salvation is of the Lord," and that's true today, salvation is of the Lord. We need to understand that it's the work of God.

In Acts 2:23, referring to Jesus' death on the cross says, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Jesus was predetermined by God the Father to die on the cross, and it was all motivated by the loving purposes and plan of God. John 3:16 can be put alongside that, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him," and there's our word, we're justified by faith, not whoever does, not whoever lives, not whoever shapes up, not whoever gets their act together, not whoever works hard, not whoever is baptized, not whoever goes to church on Wednesday night, "should not perish, but have everlasting life." My hope is built on nothing less, Than Jesus' blood and righteousness, I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name, On Christ the solid rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand. If you think, Ah, if I don't eat meat, I'll be more spiritual, and I'll

get to go to heaven. No, that's not true. You might be more healthy, I don't think so, but maybe if you don't eat meat at McDonald's you might be more healthy. If I worship on certain days, maybe I'll be more holy. If I wear certain clothes or get a certain Christian haircut, maybe I'll be more holy. If I don't do this and don't do that, and I stop these things, then God will love me more, and I'll be accepted by Him. It's not "do," it's "done."

Liberty isn't for license to go out and sin. Christ has set us free from the laws' penalty and the laws' power, but He hasn't set us free so that we can go out and sin or live in ungodliness or unholiness. He set us free to be able to be filled with the Spirit. We're going to get the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, that practical section, so it's not by the law or by works, it's by the Spirit of God producing the fruit of God to the glory of God in our lives. How marvelous is that that God planned it and purposed it.

Here's the fifth and the last, verse 5. He says, verse 4, "Who gave himself for our sins," that's man's big problem, he's a sinner; and He did it for the purpose "that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father," here it is, verse 5, "To whom be glory," that's another very important reoccurring key word in Galatians, "for ever and ever. Amen." If you do anything to save yourself, if you do anything to contribute to your salvation or your sanctification, then God doesn't get all the glory. You get some of the glory, and God will not share His glory with anyone else. The cross humbles us. Our sin and our shame is there on the cross. It humbles and breaks us, but the cross also exalts God in His love and in His grace. This is why Paul said in Galatians 6:14, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

The cross is not just for our salvation, the cross is for our sanctification and also for our service. When we serve the Lord, we want to stay humble and dependent on Him, and we want to be hidden behind the cross. Paul does something that he doesn't do in any of his other doctrinal epistles. At the end of verse 5, where he closes this opening salutation, he closes with a doxology. Do you know what the cross does? It leads us to praise. It leads us to worship. It leads us to glorifying and praising God, not praising men or the works of men. Amen? Let's pray.