

Way of the Cross

Galatians 6.11-18 ~ May 23, 2010

➤ v11 ~ Personal Closing

- ///: “Scribe!” ~ Explain position of scribe in boot camp . . .
 - Drill Instructors didn’t type up their own schedules
- People didn’t used to pump their own gas
- At this time people didn’t write their own letters
 - But they often added a personal note at the end
 - Paul mentions this in 1 Corinthians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians
 - The personal ending served many purposes
 1. Declared it to be an original – not a forgery
 2. Personalized the epistle
 3. Highlighted most important points ~ **Galatians**

➤ v12 - 13 ~ Judaizers have three stated desires

1. “make a good showing”
2. “not suffer persecution”
3. “boast in subverting Galatians”

➤ Judaizer Goals

- self-aggrandizement ~ look good (desire, showing, desire, boast)
- self-protection ~ feel good (**only** that they may not suffer ~ fear it)

➤ How could the circumcision of Galatians accomplish this?

- Let’s look at it from several perspectives
 1. Jewish and Roman officials
 2. Jewish believers / Gentile believers

➤ Jewish and Roman Officials

- Judaism was officially tolerated in Roman provinces
- Everyone knew Jews were circumcised and observed many customs
 1. Jews were jealous of the growth of Christianity
 2. Jews were dismayed by the popularity of Christ
 3. Jews were outraged at the exalted position of Christ
- Christianity still regarded as a sect of Judaism

- **Jewish believers / Gentile believers**
 - Jews embraced Christianity and came under attack
 - Jews were lynching fellow Jews thought soft on Christianity
 - Jewish believers tempted to play down their faith in Christ
 - Being Jewish was outward ~ being Christian was inward
 - Gentiles were perhaps new to both Judaism and Christianity

- **Benefits of Aligning with Jews (Syncretism)**
 - Christians would not be persecuted
 - Jews would maintain superiority
 - WIN / WIN for Jews and Christians . . .
 - III: Computer Lab at National University (*Tracy and D&D*)

- **Battle Between Good and Evil is not WIN / WIN**
 - Jesus said, *“the poor you have with you always . . .” (John 12.8)*
 - We will never *“solve”* the problem of the poor
 - The problem springs from our sinful nature
 - **1 Cor 1.18** ~ *“the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”*
 - Paul stated there are people perishing and being saved
 - Present tense, ongoing, *“are perishing”*, *“are being saved”*
 - These statements are not theoretical ~ they are real
 - III: I-88 West to I-80 West (had to follow I-80 East signs)
 - We were not going east to Chicago ~ but it looked like it . . .
 - Looks can be deceiving ~ We can *“look”* just like the world . . .
 - III 2: Computer Lab (*Tracy and car with stickers and Bible stuff*)
 - I wanted to blend in ~ I wanted a WIN / WIN
 - But God had something else in mind
 - **Read Is 55.6-11** ~ *“My ways are not your ways”*
 - This phrase is in the context of God’s work on earth

Xition: We’ve seen the “way of the world” ~ let’s look at “way of the cross”

➤ **v14a ~ Our Boast is Only in the Cross**

- The Judaizers wanted to boast in accomplishment
 - to exert influence over the young Christians
 - to be accepted by the Jewish religious leaders
 - only wanted to avoid persecution ~ no discomfort or hassles
- Paul, on the other hand, **boasts only** in the cross
 - It doesn't matter if that leads to:
 - acceptance or rejection,
 - praise or ridicule,
 - blessings or beatings
- He no longer boasts of anything unrelated to Christ
 - We may, and often do, boast of many things
 - our accomplishments, our children's accomplishments
 - our knowledge, our skills
 - our children's intelligence, their good conduct
- All pride should begin and end with thanks to God who made us

➤ **v14b ~ Mutual Crucifixion**

- *"the world has been crucified to me"*
 - Nothing in the world can lure Paul away from God
 - fame ~ wealth ~ power
 - Paul likely had all 3 of these to significant degree
 - ◆ Roman citizen from wealthy well-connected family in Tarsus
 - ◆ Probably not even 30 yet when he persecuted Christians
- *"I have been crucified to the world"*
 - The world cannot get anything from Paul
 - He refuses to be *"used"* by the world for its purposes
 - Lenin referred to western communist sympathizers as *'useful idiots'*
 - He had contempt for them but made use of them
 - Christians are *"used"* in this way today
 - Christians are often courted by politicians
 - ◆ Ill: Book, *"Tempting Faith"* by David Kuo
 - * by statist Christian on Bush's *"Faith-based initiative"*
 - * National leaders hugged publically but called *"nuts"* and *"goofy"*
- Spurgeon ~ "serve men" ~ "bless men" ~ "save men" ~ **"don't fear men"**

Xition: What is most important *in Christ*?

- **v15 ~ Appearances are Nothing / Miracle of Rebirth is Everything**
 - *“What distinguishes Christians from non-Christians?”*
 - *Is it our beliefs?* ~ The demons believe and tremble
 - Knowing and even believing the truth is not it
 - *Is it our actions / our good works?* ~ Humanists do likewise
 - *What is it?* ~ *What sets believers apart from unbelievers?*
 - It is their relationship with God
 - *III: Pastor Erber story of sign* ~ brought tears to his eyes
 - He was talking with God ~ God kindly gave him the answer
 - He was in his car tearing up, talking with God
 - *III: On I-80 in cars (same way – diff dests)* ~ living miraculously
 - *“Are you talking with God?”*
 - If you’re not, then your not distinguishable from unbelievers
 - Not in the way that counts . . .
 - It is the miraculous that separates believers from unbelievers
 - The miracle of rebirth
 - And it is communion with God that marks the miraculous life
 - Without communion with God our light – our salt – diminishes
- **v12, v16 ~ “As many as . . .**
 - v12 ~ *“As many as desire to make a good showing . . .”*
 - v16 ~ *“As many as walk according to this rule . . .”*
 - Two paths contrasted
 - The Way of the World ~ *“desire, experience, materialism”*
 - The Way of the Cross ~ *“sacrifice, faith, miraculous”*
- **v16b ~ “walk” – “peace and mercy .. upon .. the Israel of God”**
 - Those who walk in obedience ~ practicing mutual crucifixion
 - These are the *“Israel of God”*
 - Only these does Paul bless
- **v17 ~ Scarred for Christ**
 - *“stigmata”* ~ Paul not speaking of miraculous appearance of scars
 - Paul’s scars were not obtained miraculously
 - The wounds were made by those that rejected the miraculous
 - *“marks of the Lord Jesus”*
 - Jesus didn’t apply them ~ but they mark Paul as His . . .

➤ **v18a ~ “Brethren”**

- Paul began this letter with a strong rebuke
- But he ends it with an appeal to brothers
- We can learn from Paul’s example
 - We can discuss divisive matters – yet part as friends
 - We can discipline our children yet hug them and tuck them in
 - We can confront someone c/a slight yet not sever the relationship
 - We can model ourselves after Christ and forgive – as he forgave

➤ **v18b ~ “Grace ... be with your spirit”**

- Paul again reminds them of the miraculous
- He could have said, “*God be with you . . .*”
- But he said “*be with your spirit . . .*”
 - God wants us to live spiritually, to walk spiritually
 - Walking with Him ~ Talking to Him

➤ **Talking with God**

- III: Train ride into Chicago on Metra
 - Great conversation ~ “*just war*”, “*freezing human heads*”
- Favorite verse **Gen 5.24** “*Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.*”
 - God will one day take all of us . . .
 - *But will He take us to continue a conversation we’re having with Him here on earth?*
 - *Or will we have to start one anew with Him when we leave this earth?*

➤ **Live Miraculously!**

➤ **Talk to God every day!**

➤ **That’s the first discipline on the Way of the Cross!**

➤ **Let us pray . . .**