

THE GROUND OF SALVATION



PAUL'S LETTER TO
THE GALATIANS

A. SURPRISED BY GRACE

CHAPTER 1

v. 1 – 5 What does this say about the apostle Paul's authority and the content of the Gospel?

v. 6 – 10 Note Paul's passion for truth and integrity in the face of false teaching.

v. 11 – 24 Paul's testimony - How has his story so far prepared him for his work as evangelist to the Gentiles? Are there any connecting points with your own story – before you knew Christ, when you came to faith and since?

CHAPTER 2

v. 1 – 10 Freedom in Christ or bondage to the old Jewish law are the alternative paths that Paul sets out.

How clear is this distinction for you?

What is at stake in the argument?

v. 11 – 14 Understand where the protagonists, Peter and Paul, are coming from. See the discussion in Acts 10, 11 & 15.

v. 15 – 21 Put right by faith alone, not by obeying rules and trying harder. If the church believes this, does it live as though it is true? The old life has died – Christ now lives in us by faith. If we could be saved by our own efforts the cross was unnecessary.

B. SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

CHAPTER 3

v. 1 – 5 Don't be fooled.

v.6 – 9 Remember Abraham, the Father of Judaism, who

was justified by faith – He received promises from God by grace not because he was in some sense worthy.

Trace his story in Genesis 12 – 25. The promises to Abraham were intended to be for all people.

v. 10 – 14 The alternatives: faith and works, promise and law, blessing and curse.

v. 15 – 22 The law does not annul God’s promises but illuminates them and draws us towards God. As we recognise our failure to keep God’s commands we see our need for a Saviour.

v. 23 – 25 The law is not inherently bad but, when it becomes our defining principle, it has the effect of keeping us in captivity. Christ will set us free.

v. 26 – 29 Old distinctions are now void through faith in Christ. A new and intimate relationship with God is possible.

What does it mean to be ‘one in Christ’?

CHAPTER 4

v. 1 – 11 Slaves have become sons. We know God as Father.

What has changed in our relationship with God? What are the privileges and responsibilities of this new status? Be what you are!

v. 12 – 20 A life reverting again to legalism and religious ritual will rob you of your joy. Paul implores the Galatians out of love not to go there.

v. 21 – 31 He illustrates his point with Abraham’s two sons Isaac and Ishmael – Genesis 21.

We inherit the promises of the Old Testament.

We experience the grace of God.

Choose freedom.

C. GRACE FOR THE RACE

CHAPTER 5

v. 1 – 12 False teachers are leading these Christians into captivity and away from dependence on God’s grace in Christ.

Get back on track in the race of faith.

v. 13 – 15 In response to his critics, Paul states that Christian freedom is not to be abused by thinking you can keep on sinning and then be forgiven. He goes on to make clear that Christians should not exploit others or disregard the law.

v. 16 – 26 Live a transformed life in the power of the Holy Spirit that is opposite to the old ways of human nature. Contrasting features, high standards.

Make an active choice to live by grace.

CHAPTER 6

v. 1 – 10 Practical outcomes to living under the motivating principle of grace.

How can we express these in our context?

v. 11 – 18 Returning to the previous argument and warnings.

A final greeting.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

J. Stott – Only one way – the message of Galatians. IVP

C.K. Barrett – Freedom and obligation – A study of the
Epistles to the Galatians. SPCK

A. Cole – Galatians - IVP