

## **A SUMMARY OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

### **Galatians 6:11-18 (Week 17)**

**By Andy Manning**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. What is a Christian? What is the Christian life all about? How would you answer that question? What one verse would you point to sum up Christianity? In this final passage, Paul gives us a good verse to sum up the entire Christian life, or what it means to be a Christian.
2. This is the last sermon in our study of Paul's epistle to the Galatians.
  - i. Galatians was the favorite book of the Protestant Reformers, Martin Luther, and John Calvin.
  - ii. It is often called "Luther's book" because Martin Luther relied so heavily upon it in his teaching and preaching.
  - iii. It has been called the Magna Carter of Christian Liberty; the battle-cry of the Reformation; the great charter of religious freedom; the Christian declaration of independence.
3. Let's do a little review:
  - i. Galatia was a Roman province in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey), where Paul started several churches on his first missionary journey.
  - ii. The churches in Galatian were dealing with two primary problems.
    1. The first is legalism, which is relying on the law for salvation. After Paul started these churches, false teachers called Judaizers moved in and told the Galatians that faith in Christ was not enough for salvation. They also needed to be devout Jews. In response, Paul argued that salvation is by faith alone. Salvation is not deserved, and it cannot be earned. To be saved, we must put our faith in Jesus Christ, who died in our place for our sins. This problem is dealt in Galatians 1-5:12.
    2. The second problem is libertinism, which is using grace as an excuse to sin. Other believers in the church were misapplying Paul's message. They reasoned that since the law doesn't help us get to heaven, then we can ignore the law and give ourselves to sin. In response Paul argued that we must pursue holiness. Those who give themselves to sin will reap what they so – destruction in this life and in the next. This problem is dealt with in 5:13-6:18.
4. In this final section, Galatians 6:11-18, Paul summarizes the book of Galatians. And in his summary of Galatians, he gives us a verse that summarizes the entire Christian life.

#### **II. TEXT: Galatians 6:11-18**

*11 Look at what large letters I use as I write to you in my own handwriting.*

- i. Normally, Paul would have a scribe write his letter, and he would add his signature at the bottom. With Galatians it appears that he wrote this entire final section.
- ii. Why large letters? Different possibilities have been suggested. First, because of their importance; second, because his writing hand was sore; or third, he had vision problems.

*12 Those who want to make a good impression in the flesh are the ones who would compel you to be circumcised—but only to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.*

*13 For even the circumcised don't keep the law themselves, and yet they want you to be circumcised in order to boast about your flesh.*

- iii. In these two verses Paul explains the two motives of the Judaizers – the false teachers.
- iv. First, to avoid persecution. Because they also believed in Jesus, they were being persecuted as well. So, they were trying to work their way back into the good graces of the Jews by devoting themselves to Judaism. In other words, they were hoping for a compromise. They would believe in Jesus, but still live as Jews.
- v. Second, for bragging rights. They wanted to lead many Gentiles to get circumcised and adopt Judaism so that they could go back to the Jews and brag about their many converts.

*14 But as for me, I will never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world has been crucified to me through the cross, and I to the world.*

- vi. This is Paul's summary of the entire epistle, and of the entire Christian life. We'll come back to it.

*15 For both circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing; what matters instead is a new creation.*

- vii. The Judaizers were trying to persuade the Galatians to get circumcised and follow the Jewish law. Paul said that circumcision doesn't matter. What matters is a new creation. What matters is the new birth. What matters is the miracle of regeneration in which God changes your heart and makes you into new person. And this only comes through faith in Christ (Jn 20:31).

*16 May peace come to all those who follow this standard, and mercy even to the Israel of God!*

- viii. The word "even" in Greek can be translated "that is." I think a better translation of this verse is "May peace and mercy come to all who follow this standard, that is the Israel of God."
- ix. So, Paul is praying for peace and mercy to be upon all who rely upon Christ rather than works.

1. **William Hendriksen** defines peace as, "The serenity of heart that is the portion of all those who have been justified by faith (Rm 5:1). In

the midst of the storms of life they are safe because they have found shelter in the cleft of the rock. In the day of wrath, wasteness, and desolation God hides all those who take refuge in him (Zeph 1:2; 2:3; 3:12). Hence, peace is spiritual wholeness and prosperity.”

2. **William Hendriksen** defines mercy as, “His love directed toward sinners viewed in their wretchedness and need.”
- x. Who is the Israel of God? It is not ethnic Jews, or national Israel. Paul makes this very clear in Galatians.
1. Abraham’s sons are those who have faith in Jesus.
    - a. **Galatians 3:7** “You know, then, that those who have faith, these are Abraham’s sons.”
  2. Abraham’s heirs are those who belong to Christ.
    - a. **Galatians 3:29** “ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, heirs according to the promise.”
  3. There is now no distinction between Jew and Gentile. The new Israel of God are those who are in Christ.
    - a. **Galatians 3:28** “There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
    - b. Some people think that the United States should support Israel because they are God’s chosen people, and God has a special plan for them in the end times. I don’t believe the Bible teaches that at all. I believe we should support Israel because they are our only democratic ally in the Middle East, and Hamas deserves to be wiped out for what they’ve done. But I don’t believe God has a special plan for the Jews in the end times, any more than any other race or ethnic group. Now that Christ has come, there is no longer Jew and Gentile. There are Christians and non-Christians. Christians, both Jew and Gentile, are the true Israel of God.

*17 From now on, let no one cause me trouble, because I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.*

- xi. Paul is urging the Galatians to submit to his appeals to repentance, because He had suffered much for the cause of Christ, and he didn’t want to be burdened by them any more.
- xii. He may have been referring to his first missionary journey when he brought them the gospel. In Lystra (Galatia) he was almost stoned to death.

*18 Brothers and sisters, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

- xiii. Finally, Paul prays for God to give them grace in their spirit – their inner personality, which is the part of our being that connects with and speaks with God.
- xiv. Grace is God’s love to the undeserving (William Hendriksen).
- xv. In verse 14, Paul summarizes the entire Christian life. He gives us a good picture of what the Christian life is all about. What does it mean to be a Christian? Galatians 6:14 gives us three facts about the Christian life.
- xvi. **Galatians 6:14** “But as for me, I will never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world has been crucified to me through the cross, and I to the world.”

### III. THREE FACTS ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

#### 1. The Christian’s boast.

- i. **Galatians 6:14** “But as for me, I will never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- ii. The point of this verse is not that Christians should not brag. However, that is true.
  1. **1 Corinthians 13:4** “Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant”
  2. **2 Corinthians 10:17** “So let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”
  3. **Psalms 20:7** “Some take pride in chariots, and others in horses, but we take pride in the name of the LORD our God.”
  4. To brag is to praise yourself. As Christians, we don’t do that. We praise the Lord; we even praise other people; but we don’t praise ourselves. We don’t call attention to ourselves and say, “Hey everyone, look at how great I am. Look how wonderful I am. Let me tell you all about my accomplishments.”
  5. **Proverbs 27:2** “Let another praise you, and not your own mouth—a stranger, and not your own lips.”
  6. But that’s not what Paul is getting at here.
- iii. Remember, the primary problem that Paul addresses in this letter is legalism, or relying upon the law for salvation. If we were saved by our own good works, then we would have reason to boast. We would be able to say, “I earned my salvation. I made the cut. I was so good that God let me in.” But nobody is good enough to earn heaven. We are all sinners, deserving God’s wrath. The only way that we can escape God’s wrath and be saved is because God sent His son to die on the cross, taking our penalty, and then He rose again. And if we will trust in Christ’s sacrifice for us, then God will forgive us and save us.
- iv. When Paul says that he won’t boast about anything but the cross, He is giving all credit to Jesus Christ for his salvation. He is saying, “Christ accomplished my salvation from start to finish. He is the only reason why I

am going to heaven. He is the only reason God forgives me. It's all about Jesus, and not about me. I didn't do anything to save myself; to earn my salvation; to impress God. Christ did it all for me. All I had to do was to believe."

- v. Paul put it like this in Ephesians 2:8-9.
  - 1. **Ephesians 2:8-9** "8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—9 not from works, so that no one can boast."
  - 2. Salvation is by grace through faith. It is by grace – we don't deserve it; we didn't earn it. It is through faith – we receive it by believing, trusting, relying up Jesus' sacrifice for our sins.
- vi. In Philipians, Paul put it like this:
  - 1. **Philippians 3:3** "For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, boast in Christ Jesus, and do not put confidence in the flesh"
  - 2. "We are the circumcision." We are the true people of God.
  - 3. "the ones who... boast in Christ Jesus, and do no put confidence in the flesh."
  - 4. To boast in Christ is the opposite of putting confidence in the flesh; in your works; in your effort. Instead, we put all of our hope, confidence, and trust in Jesus.
- vii. I've said this many times, and I'll say it again. The difference between Christianity and every other religion is Do vs. Done. All other religions are about what we must do to earn heaven. Christianity is about what Christ has done for us to get us to heaven.
- viii. So, what is a Christian's boast? It is Christ alone. Our salvation is accomplished from start to finish by Christ. We can't earn it or deserve it. All we can do is receive it by faith in Him.

## 2. The Christian's behavior.

- i. **Galatians 6:14** "But as for me, I will never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world has been crucified to me through the cross, and I to the world."
- ii. Notice this phrase, "The world has been crucified to me through the cross."
- iii. What is the world? The Bible uses the term in three ways:
  - 1. The physical world, as opposed to the moon or the sun. See Jn 17:24.
  - 2. All the people in the world. John 3:16 says that God loves the world.
  - 3. The sinful value system unbelievers.
- iv. The world is dominated or driven by three values.
  - 1. **1 John 2:15-16 (ESV)** "15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires

of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.”

- a. The desires of the flesh: The passion for pleasure; the desire to feel good.
  - b. The desires of the eyes: The passion to possess; the desire to acquire.
  - c. The pride of life: The passion for position. The desire to be.
2. Everyone around you who isn't following Christ, this is what they are living for. This is what is important to them. This is what drives them. This is what they are seeking. This is what motivates them.
- v. But Paul says that the world – the value system of unbelievers – has been crucified to him through the cross. In other words, when he became a Christian, something happened to him. God changed him. And now, the world is dead to him. The things that he used to think were important; the things that the world thinks are important, are no longer important. Now that he is a Christian, Paul's life is no longer driven by the desire for pleasure, and the desire to acquire, and the desire to be. That's not what he lives for anymore.
  - vi. What does he live for?
    1. **Philippians 1:21** “For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”
    2. Now, Paul's life is all about Christ. Loving Christ, serving Christ, sharing Christ, pleasing Christ, learning about Christ, obeying Christ, trusting Christ, talking with Christ, imitating Christ, etc.
  - vii. What is the Christian's behavior? Christ. The Christian lives to know, love, and please Christ.

### 3. The Christian's burden.

- i. **Galatians 6:14** “But as for me, I will never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world has been crucified to me through the cross, and I to the world.”
- ii. Notice the last sentence, “The world has been crucified to me through the cross, and I to the world.”
- iii. Paul no longer values the things of this world. But on the flip side, the world no longer values Paul.
- iv. When you dedicate your life to Jesus Christ, you will stand out. You will be different. You are marching to the beat of a different drummer. You are swimming upstream, against the current of culture.
- v. And sometimes the people of this world will hate you. They will want to cancel you. They will want to silence you. They will want to punish you. They will want to intimidate you so that you will abandon your Christian convictions and fall back in line with the world.
- vi. **Charles Fuller** “Fellowship with God means war with the world.”

- vii. **Matthew 24:9** “Then they will hand you over to be persecuted, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of my name.”
- viii. **John 15:20** “Remember the word I spoke to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”
- ix. **2 Timothy 3:12** “In fact, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”
- x. Why does the world hate Christians? Because they can’t control you. You refuse to kneel when everyone else kneels. You refuse to say what everyone else says. You refuse to celebrate what they celebrate. You refuse to buy what they want you to buy. To watch what they want you to watch. To listen to what they want you to listen to. To laugh at their jokes. To adopt their styles and trends. Your allegiance is with Jesus, and so they hate you.
- xi. What is the Christian’s burden? The hatred of the world.
- xii. How should we respond to persecution?
  - 1. Stand firm.
    - a. **1 Corinthians 16:13** “Be alert, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong.”
    - b. Don’t waver. Don’t flop. Don’t cave. Don’t compromise. Don’t bend. Don’t break.
    - c. The book of Acts tells about the apostles who were arrested by the Jewish authorities, and they were told to stop preaching about Jesus. But they kept on preaching. So, they were arrested again, and the Jewish leaders said, “Didn’t we order to stop teaching about Jesus?” The apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than people (Acts 5:29).”
    - d. Keep believing God. Keep obeying God. Keep serving God.
  - 2. Love your persecutors.
    - a. **Matthew 5:44** “But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”
    - b. This is what makes Christians so different. When people are mean to us, and mock us, and mistreat us, we pay them back with kindness.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

- 1. What does it mean to be a Christian? Three facts.
  - i. The Christian’s boast: Christ alone. All the credit and glory for our salvation goes to Him.
  - ii. The Christian’s behavior. To live is Christ. To love Him, please Him, know Him, and serve Him.
  - iii. The Christian’s burden. Persecution. The world may hate us, but we will stand firm, and we will pay them back with kindness.