

Lesson Forty-eight

Galatians

	Personal Words from Paul Defense of the True Gospel	Doctrinal Teaching Freedom from Legalism	Practical Exhortations Freedom to Love and to Serve
	<p>For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. (1:11-12)</p>	<p>Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. (3:24-25)</p>	<p>For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (5:13)</p>
	CHAPTERS 1-2	CHAPTERS 3-4	CHAPTERS 5-6
Style	Vigorous, blunt, direct, and brief		
Theme	Justification comes by faith in Christ Jesus, not by works of the Law.		
Key Verse	2:16		
Christ in Galatians	Jesus is the source and power of the believer's new life and the heir of the promises to Abraham's seed (2:20; 3:1-16).		

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Author: There is no real doubt that the apostle Paul is the author of this epistle. He is mentioned in the salutation in 1:1, and elsewhere in the body of the letter (5:2). The autobiographical parts of the letter are consistent with the events of Paul's life which we read about in the book of Acts. And the early church fathers of the second and third centuries all attributed the book to him.

Audience: Galatia was a large Roman province in the center of modern-day Turkey. It initially referred to an area where the Gauls migrated from western Europe through Italy and Greece. At this time, Galatia referred to the northern areas of Asia Minor. In 25 BC, however, when it was converted to a Roman province, territory was added to the south, included the major cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Since Paul had recorded interactions with these cities, most scholars believe he was writing to churches in the Southern area of the province of Galatia.

Purpose for writing: After Paul left the Galatian churches, false teachers came there proclaiming a different Gospel. They believed that Christianity was a particular sect within the confines of Judaism. Therefore, Gentiles had to become Jews before they could be saved. In other words, they were still teaching that salvation came from being obedient to the law and that one could "earn" his/her salvation. These false teachers were called "Judaizers" based on the verb translated "to live as do the Jews" in Galatians 2:14.

Paul wrote this book to make three primary points to his readers:

- (1) Paul defended his apostolic authority because the Judaizers were trying to discredit him.
- (2) He outlined the case for salvation by faith alone.
- (3) He showed that everyday Christian living is based on freedom from the Law in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In this book, Paul reiterates the theology first outlined in the letter to the Romans – that justification is by faith alone. Galatians builds on this foundation to provide a defense of Christian liberty against any form of legalism.

Because this book speaks to the freedom we have in Christ, it is sometimes called "**The Magna Charta of Christian Liberty.**"

The Law of the Harvest

Galatians 6:7-10

Each day we are reminded of the uncertainties of life. Our life truly is fragile, a mist that is here for a while and then is gone. Therefore, it is important to view each day as an opportunity to prepare for that which is eternal. We should live our lives in such a way so that we are always prepared to meet God, whenever that day may come. This text from Galatians challenges us to think about this issue from the viewpoint of sowing and reaping.

As we have stated, this book is sometimes referred to as the Magna Charta of Christian Liberty because it stresses to us the freedom of grace, apart from the Law. Yet, Paul would never say that we are free to sin and do whatever we want. In fact, the freedom he proclaims is freedom FROM sin as we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The way we live gives evidence of who we truly are and our actions, sooner or later, reveal our true character. This is the law of the harvest that Paul addresses in this passage.

I. THE LAW STATED

A. Paul begins with a warning: “do not be deceived.” Satan is the deceiver and he tries to lead us astray by calling God a liar. This is what he did in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. And one of his best lies – one repeated since that first lie in the garden – is this: you can live any way you want and there are no consequences.

B. We learn here that God cannot be mocked. He knows everything. He is not fooled by how we act on Sunday and how we live the rest of the week. And so, Paul lays out the law of the harvest for us: whatever you sow, that's what you'll reap. Farmers naturally understand this. If you sow corn seed, you will get corn. If you sow a watermelon seed, you will get watermelons. You cannot sow cotton seeds and expect to get peas! What you plant is what you'll get.

C. Imagine a large farm with two fields. One field is called FLESH and the other field is called SPIRIT. There is no third alternative. Everything you do is sown in one of these fields or the other. You can sow to the fleshly side all day, every day – but don't be surprised when you reap the fruit of that. Or you can plant seeds with the Spirit and enjoy the fruit of that. But make no mistake, you will reap whatever you sow.

II. THE LAW PATIENTLY APPLIED

A. The problem with walking by the Spirit is that sometimes we don't see immediate results. Living by the flesh sometimes yields immediate gratification and so we may be tempted to wonder if it is worth it. Many of us want to sow and reap on the same day!

B. A farmer who depends on his crop for his livelihood knows the importance of patience. Farming is not a mere hobby – it is 365 days a year of work, carefully toiling until finally the fields produce their yield.

C. Paul reminds his readers not to become weary in living as they should. Keep sowing the seeds of the Spirit and eventually you WILL reap the harvest. The message to us today is Keep Going! Don't Give Up! You will receive part of the reward here on this earth, but the majority of the reaping will be done in heaven, but it is well worth it!

III. THE LAW APPLIED

A. Sometimes theology sounds good, but we don't know how to apply it. Paul closes this section with a practical application of the law of the harvest: therefore, as you have the opportunity, do good. The word “therefore” ties this statement in to what has just preceded it. Essentially it says, “Since you will reap what you sow, then take advantage right now to sow good.”

B. Every day there are opportunities to say a word of encouragement. Every day we have the ability to demonstrate kindness to someone. Every day we can show the love of God in some way. Don't wait. Do it today, while it is still called today. Begin sowing that which you can reap in joy!