

Book of the Bible: Galatians – “Set Free”

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Background:

Galatia was a roman province in what today is eastern Turkey and consisted of a number of towns. Paul and Barnabas journeyed through that area on Paul's first missionary journey. Paul always proclaimed the good news that all are saved by grace through faith, not by anything we do. As he and his partners left each city, some Jewish Christians would enter and try and undo what Paul and Barnabas had done by telling the new believers that a person had to continue certain Jewish practices in order to be saved. They brought great confusion to these churches. Paul's letter related that the Galatian Christians had just been set free by the gospel but had now started to think good works and certain rituals were necessary. This made them captives to work.

+ Galatians is often called “Luther’s Book” because Luther used it often, along with Romans, to speak about salvation by grace through faith.

+ Galatians is often referred as the Magna Carta of Christian liberty.

THE STATUS OF HUMANITY BEFORE SALVATION – SLAVES

“The Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin”

Galatians 3:22

PAUL’S MESSAGE: SET FREE!

“A [person] is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ – by observing the law no one will be justified.”

Galatians 2:16

We are children of God – “no longer a slave but a child.” 2:20

REIMPRISONED:

“False brothers have infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel that the truth of the gospel might remain in you.” Galatians 2:4-5

“You foolish Galatians, Who has bewitched you?” Galatians 3:1

THE GREAT SIGN THAT ONE IS A SLAVE TO THE LAW

“What has happened to all your joy?” Galatians 4:15

PAUL’S PLEA FOR GALATIANS TO GRAB UNTO GRACE AGAIN

“It is for freedom that Christ has SET US FREE. Stand firm, then, and do not be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” 5:1

“You were called to be free.” Galatians 5:13

EVEN PETER LOST GRACE FOR A TIME

[Paul speaking of Peter] – “I opposed him to his face...he was in the wrong... You force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs” 2:11

Grace is the great centerpiece of a Christian’s life. However – it is the most difficult thing to comprehend. Maybe all Christians, at times, wrestle with grace.

WHY WE HAVE A HARD TIME UNDERSTANDING GRACE

1. We often fail in our Christian faith
2. We succeed too much in our Christian faith
3. We have never experienced in a concrete way
4. Churches often preach law, not grace