

ARE WE REALLY FREE?

Galatians 1:1-9

Misconceptions about Bible: (“As the “Good Book says”)

“The Lord helps those who help themselves!”

“God never violates our free will!”

Where’s that in Scripture?

Yet, people make such statements all the time;

Sounds spiritual; so people think it must be from God!

Also many misconceptions re. liberty

–what does God say about freedom?

Gal addresses issue of *liberty–freedom* in Christ!

Flies in the face of everything our culture teaches us about life, liberty & the pursuit of happiness!

People have always held misconceptions about liberty.

“If God would just leave me alone–let me do what I feel like doing– everything would be great!”

Gospel vs religions–*religions* promote false ideas

Tell us, if we want... –to satisfy God; –obtain eternal life

We must DO something!

Salvation by faith alone–plus nothing–is too easy!

“too simple just to ‘*trust Jesus;*’ receive eternal life as gift

“We have to DO something!”

Pagan religions–require sacrifices to satisfy gods.

People go through life enslaved by fear of death.

Heb. 2:14-15 “*Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*”

Pagans never know what to expect from gods—who

carry lightning bolt, to zap people who anger them

Gods don’t have to be just or holy; but control our destiny

“*You better be careful not to make them mad!*”

Gal. 4:8 “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were **slaves** to those who by nature are not gods.”

Oriental religions – (=> New Age Movement!)

Universe is one big god—the force—we’re all part of it!

Our goal in life: form union with nature & seek ultimate good of nature (*how are we at pulling THAT off?*)

Muslims—serve god—requires absolute obedience; metes out vengeance against anyone who crosses him.

Not known for love or grace!

Trad. western religions & cults—derive from Christianity

Contain *some* truth about Christ.

Salvation based on **works**, partially or totally, to **earn** life

Some **incl.** need for Jesus’ death; we add something!

We can’t know ‘til we die whether we’ll make it!

Even in **Evangelical Churches** same struggle sneaks in.

How could God accept decision, late in life, as enough for people who pass life insulting, rebel against God?

Salvation has to cost more than that!

People—even in our church—have their own rule book.

To be saved—at least to *please* God—we obey rules

We have to DO certain things; NOT DO other things.

In Paul’s day—this idea was common in Israel.

JUDAISM had 613 commandments people were to keep:

248 positive commands

365 negative commands (one for each day of the year!).

When Christ came, people kept asking what they must DO to enter the kingdom, or obtain eternal life.

Christ gave answer too hard for *anyone* to attain!

We’ll *never DO* enough to earn our way to God.

Once we know we can’t *earn* it, we seek grace/mercy.

Some go away sad; they can’t pay the price!

We don’t have what it takes. We can’t pull it off!

Rom. 10:3-4 “*Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. ⁴Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.*”

–hoping to establish *our* righteousness, we give up!

People say, “I have to get my life straightened out;

God could never accept ME with garbage in *MY* life!”

If that’s what you’re thinking, I have bad news!

We *never* straighten out our life by our efforts!

Until we realize how **BAD** the bad news is, we’ll never understand what’s **GOOD** about “**GOOD NEWS!**”

To people like this “**GOOD NEWS**” came.

While we never make it *on our own*, **Christ did it for us**

Rom. Our problem! *All have sinned; come up short!*

God provides all we need to fix the problem—in Christ.

We receive that gift by **trusting His Son!**

JUDAIZERS—never accept this message!

They continually oppose Paul & his “**GOSPEL**”!

They’re convinced people have to *DO something!*

3 variants:

1. **Who can be saved?** Only Jews

Acts 10-11—Salvation for all who trust Jesus—Jew/pagan!

2. **How can pagans be saved?** By keeping law

Acts 15—Jew *nor* pagan saved that way! All come by faith.

3. **How can pagan believers live to please God?**

Sanctification—*how should we LIVE?* =>Gal. Col, Phil

Sanctification, like salvation, comes by faith alone

Start by law => finish by law.

Start by faith => finish by faith.

Start playing by rule book => we’re *fried!*

How about **US**? **Are we really free?** –or still enslaved?

Are we trying to earn enough points to make it with God?

Gal. church *started* on road by *faith*.

Now, they're trying to please God by obeying rules!

Paul: "**It's impossible to reconcile salvation by faith with sanctification by law."**

You can't be saved by faith, and walk by law!

You can't have it both ways—it's one or the other!

**Everything's based on faith,
or, it's all based on law!**

Issue is: *What are we trusting in?*

Paul says: **we're free because we're in Christ.**

We aren't under law—ANY LAW!

To please God, **we come to God by trusting Christ**;

we continue living by faith, not by keeping rules

Col 2:6-7 "*Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live **in him**,⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the **faith**...*"

It's always been that way!

Our *walk* with God is based on **work Christ did!**

This flies in face of struggle we have with guilt.

Why do we feel so guilty?

Why do we struggle with our past, with lack of peace?

=> We keep trying to earn enough points to make it!

...we're not convinced we're good enough!

(To satisfy God, or other people!)

We have to prove to *somebody* we're good enough!

We try to establish our worth by keeping rules!

WE set up that standard! Then we fall flat on our faces.

Satan comes along & rubs our nose in it!

=> We wonder why we feel guilty and defeated!

We set up standard God never meant for us to keep.

Good news: *we don't have to live up to anyone's standard*

"Jesus paid it ALL! All to HIM I owe!"

We *start* by *faith*—stop trying; rest in Him.

Now **WALK** that way. STOP trying to do it yourself!
 We have what we have because **we're "IN CHRIST"**
 We can't earn it by "obeying rules!"

We "*play to grandstands*"

–trying to convince *people* we're good enough!

4 Practical Perils of Playing to Grandstands:

1. *Everyone's busy playing to grandstands*

People are busy trying to establish *their own* reputation!

2. We lose sight of our real opponent.

3. We lose sight of our Owner/manager

4. We lose sight of our team mates.

Defense of his apostleship & message 1-2

Warns about danger of playing to the grandstands

– trying to live for God to draw applause from men.

He isn't seeking applause. He wants to please God.

You don't do that by keeping list of rules.

Greeting 1:1-5

Greeting gives us preview of content of NT letters

3 parts: author, recipient, greeting

Gal. => greeting reveals polemic nature of book.

Departs from normal pattern of praise & thanksgiving,
 to emphasize source of Paul's apostleship.

Paul's on level of those recognized as authoritative.

Responds to attempt to discredit authority **1-2**

"Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ & God the Father, who raised him from the dead—²& all the brothers with me, To the churches in Galatia."

***His apostleship doesn't come from people,
 but from God***

His message isn't another human philosophy.

He isn't trying to please people!

His commission comes from GOD!

GOD is the source of our message. 1:1

“Apostle” is a person sent on a mission with authority.

Key question: “*Whose authority do you come with?*”

Paul responds: GOD is the source of his authority!

His message comes from GOD; not from men!

GOD delivers people from sin & from evil age that surrounds us. 3-4

“*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father*”

Jesus gave *Himself* for our sin.

He isn’t “the One Who accepts *our* good works!”

He’s “the One Who ***gave Himself!***”

Jesus delivers from environment that contaminates!

GOD gets the glory! 5

“*To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*”

If we don’t try to earn glory, we won’t be frustrated

if we don’t get it!

None of this comes from “great performance.”

We’re not ones who do it!

Surprise at their departure 6-9 “*I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—⁷which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are*

throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be eternally condemned!⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

Paul's surprised they've moved away from the gospel

***Anyone who'd dare change gospel message ought to be condemned.*—"Zero tolerance!"**

Sanctification integral part of gospel –*No tolerance!*

He's patient when people oppose him => Ph. 1
–***no*** patience when people try to mix works into gospel!

Whether for salvation, or for our walk with God.

He knows ***we'll never be good enough!***

"Gospel" of earn our way by our perform-ance isn't good news!

All that produces is greater sense of failure because we never do good enough!

–not to satisfy ourselves!

–not to satisfy our neighbor (friend, spouse, parents!

–not to satisfy God–*we know it! Who're we kidding?!!*

Good news: though *we'll never* satisfy God's demands, God's done it in Christ.

He Who never sinned, died, so when we trust Him,
we ***have*** life & fellowship with God, now & ***forever!***

Our salvation never has & never *will* depend on our ability to please God.

We're complete because we're *in Him* (Col. 2:9-10)

When we try to please God by *our* efforts, we fly in the face of the gospel –we change the message!

People who proclaim this pervert the gospel; They deserve to be condemned.

What Are the Implications of This Message?

Godly living doesn't depend on *our* effort

–never has, never will!

It's all about what Christ has done for us!

That's grace. That's the true basis for our liberty.

We're FREE!–to enjoy what God's done for us in Christ

Why would we go back to chains of legalism? Don't join those who pervert good news!

Jesus paid it ALL; ALL to HIM we owe!

Sin left a bright red stain!

Sin left us to struggle with chains of
bondage!

But HE washed it “white as snow!”

It’s time to ENJOY what Jesus has
done for us!

**Are *YOU* free? Good news! In Christ we can
be!**

If we’ll stop struggling to earn it on our
own—trust HIM!