

## **READ The BIBLE Together**



### **Galatians**

**29<sup>th</sup> September – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

**SHALOM CHURCH, SINGAPORE  
(Upholding the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith)**

## Introductory Notes -- GALATIANS

From the time Paul was converted till the time he was killed – a period of about 30 years, Paul travelled widely throughout the Roman Empire as an ambassador of Christ, preaching the gospel and planting gospel churches. The book of **ACTS** records Paul's three missionary journeys.

In his first missionary journey (**ACTS 13:4-14:28**), Paul preached the gospel and planted churches in Pisidian-Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. **Acts 13:38-39** would be a good summary of the message he preached in these areas: *“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses.”*



As the map above shows us, these places would be viewed as the southern part of Galatia. It is most likely that Paul's letter to the **GALATIANS** was addressed to these churches that he planted in his first missionary journey.

The reason why Paul wrote to these churches in southern Galatia was because these believers had started to believe a different gospel (**1:6**). Other men known as “Judaizers” have come into these churches and taught these people that *“unless they are*

*circumcised according to the custom of Moses, they cannot be saved.” (Acts 15:1). In other words, the gospel of the “Judaizers” was “believe in Jesus Christ plus keep the Law of Moses, and you shall be saved”.*

The “*plus*” is serious because it essentially changed the gospel of free grace to a message of human works. To believe the gospel of the “Judaizers” is to reject the true gospel. Therefore, unless these Galatians repent and believe the true gospel, they would be lost!

The seriousness of the matter explains why Paul would use such strong words in his letter. He called it a different gospel and pronounced woe twice to anyone (including angels) who would preach it!

## **Week 1**

**[29<sup>th</sup> September – 5<sup>th</sup> October 2013]**

Day 1 Read **Introductory Notes – GALATIANS** above

After reading **Introductory Notes – GALATIANS**, ponder and answer these questions:

1. What is the gospel?
2. The “Judaizers” preached a message of “Jesus Christ plus \_\_\_\_\_”. Are there modern “Judaizers” today? In other words, do you know of any one / group that teaches that to be saved, you must believe in Jesus Christ *plus* something else?
3. Paul writing **GALATIANS** to the Galatian Christians was not something unique. After planting churches, Paul would often write letters to them subsequently, either to further instruct them, comfort them or correct them. Think of Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians, Philippians and Ephesians as examples.

How would this simple observation change the way you view the Christian Life?

Day 2 Read **GALATIANS 1:1-5**

1. Paul called himself an apostle. What is an apostle?

Note: While every Christian is a saint, not every Christian is an apostle. See how clearly Paul distinguished himself from the other Christians who were with him then. They were all '*brethren*' (**verse 2**) while he alone among them was "*an apostle*" (**verse 1**).

2. Paul said that he was an apostle, not from men or through men.

(a) What does "*not from men*" mean?

(b) What does "*not through men*" mean?

Instead, he is an apostle '*through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead.*'

3. Why do you think Paul is making such a big thing about his apostleship here? What would happen if the church doubted his apostleship?

Day 3 Read **GALATIANS 1:3-5**

Paul wished these Christians grace and peace, from God and Christ. This aptly sums up the gospel that he preached: Salvation is about *peace* – peace with God and men, and this salvation comes to us by *grace* – God's free favour, irrespective of any human merit or works. This salvation comes to us from the Father and the Son together – it was the Father who loved us and sent His Son into this world to accomplish salvation for us (cf. **John 3:16**).

After his greeting in **verse 3**, Paul immediately talked about the great historical event of Christ's death on the cross (**verses 4-5**). At the cross, the grace of God was shown and from the cross His peace to us was derived. This is what we want to focus on today.

1. (a) According to **verse 4a**, what did Jesus Christ do for us?  
  
(b) Could you say that Christ did that for you? Explain.
  
2. (a) According to **verse 4b**, what was the purpose of Christ's death for us?  
  
(b) What does this mean and what is the implication of this?
  
3. According to **verse 4c**, who planned all these things?
  
4. According to **verse 5**, what was the ultimate purpose for all these?

#### Day 4 Summary Notes for **GALATIANS 1:1-5**

In these introductory verses, the apostle Paul traced out the three stages of divine action for man's salvation.

Stage I: The death of Christ (**verses 4-5**).

God the Father planned for this. Hence, it is the will of the Father that Jesus gave Himself for our sins -- to be our sin offering. Since He is our sin offering, this means that on our own, we can never save ourselves.

Note also that He didn't die on the cross just so that our sins can be forgiven. No, it was to deliver us from this present evil age. In other words, His death on the cross aims to make us legally righteous (called "justification" or "salvation past" in Christian Theology) as well as really holy (called "sanctification" or "salvation present" in Christian Theology).

The ultimate aim is the glory of God! When we are glorified (called "glorification" or "salvation future" in Christian Theology), perfect and sinless, standing with Christ in heaven, God gets all the glory. This is what the death of Christ aims at: our justification, our sanctification and our glorification.

## **Is Christ your sin offering? Elaborate why or why not?**

Stage II: The appointment of Paul as apostle (**verses 1-2**).

The salvation accomplished by Christ must be announced. To do this, God through Christ appointed Paul to be His apostle. An apostle is a “sent out” one, and in Paul’s case, he was sent out by Jesus Christ. As His apostle, Paul bore the authority of Christ and would convey only the message of Christ. When an apostle of Christ speaks, it is as if Christ is speaking!

This is why Paul insisted that his apostleship was not “*from men*” – the origin of his apostleship was not human. No man or group of men appointed him to be an apostle. Nor was his apostleship “*through men*” – that is, Christ sent someone to go and appoint Paul as apostle. Rather, Christ directly and personally appointed him to be His apostle, and the origin of this appointment goes all the way back to God. It is divine!

Now, Paul brings this message (the good news of Christ as our sin offering, aiming at our justification, sanctification and glorification) to the Galatians as Christ’s apostle. If they reject this message, then they are rejecting Christ! But if they receive this message, then they are accepting Christ’s message, and ultimately God’s message.

This explains why Paul was so urgent to underline his apostolic credentials. It was not so much for him as it was for them. If they doubt his apostleship, then they would ignore his message. But to ignore his message was to choose the path of death!

**Do you agree that “*Christ’s death on the cross aims to make us legally righteous (called ‘justification’ or ‘salvation past’ in Christian Theology) as well as really holy (called ‘sanctification’ or ‘salvation present’ in Christian Theology)*”? Discuss.**

Stage III: The gift of grace and peace to believers (**verse 3**).

Christ came to accomplish salvation. Paul came to preach the Gospel. But it is only when these Galatians believe the Gospel that they experience the grace and peace of God.

The reverse would be true! If they now reject the Gospel preached by Paul, then they would no longer have the grace and peace that comes from God and Christ!

## Day 5 Doctrine of Christ in **GALATIANS 1:1-5**

In these introductory verses, we can find Paul giving us a very rich teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ.

First of all He is equal with God! We can see this from **verse 1** where Paul puts Jesus Christ on the same level as God the Father – *through Jesus Christ and God the Father who ...*

Next, Jesus was crucified and then rose from the dead. **Verse 4** talks about Him giving Himself for our sins. This is not only talking about His death on the cross, it also underlines His willingness to do so. *He gave Himself...* It also calls our attention to the purpose of His death: He died for our sins, namely to make atonement for our sins. Using Old Testament language, He is our sin offering. **Verse 1** talks about Him being raised from the dead. Jesus didn't only die on that Friday afternoon. He was resurrected on that Sunday morning. By His resurrection, we know that He has conquered death! By His resurrection, we know that God has accepted His offering of Himself for our sins!

If Jesus is equal with God, meaning He is God, then how could God die? Though not stated explicitly, these verses would imply the truth of the incarnation. Jesus is God, and at the "fullness of time" (**Galatians 4:4**) He came into this world as Man. And it is as Man that He could die on the cross. Death is the separation of the body and soul, and only man has a body and a soul. And it is as Man that He was resurrected – the reuniting of His body and soul.

The remainder of **verse 4** tells us Jesus didn't die on the cross just so that our sins are forgiven. His death on the cross was also a rescue operation. The Greek word used by Paul here is the same word used in the book of **Acts** to describe the rescue of Israel from bondage in Egypt, the rescue of Peter from the Roman prison, and the rescue of Paul from the furious Jerusalem mob. The rescue of **verse 4** is from this present evil age! In other words, Christ died to make us a new humanity. We are made new creatures. We are in the process of being delivered from this old world, and will be transported finally to the new heavens and new earth. This work of rescue is traced back to the cross and is now carried out by the Advocate sent by Jesus, namely the Holy Spirit.

Finally, we learn from these few verses that God the Son Jesus Christ worked in perfect harmony with God the Father in our salvation. The work of Christ for our salvation is according to the will of God (**verse 4**), and the ultimate aim of His work is the glory of God (**verse 5**). This reminds us of the words of Jesus in **John 17:4** ~ *I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.*

After reading the **Doctrine of Jesus in GALATIANS 1:1-5**, ask yourself:

- (a) Do you know the Jesus described above?
  
- (b) Is the Jesus you believe in, the same as the Jesus described above?

Day 6 Read **GALATIANS 1:6-9**

After greeting his readers, Paul would normally go on to pray for them or praise and thank God. However, in his epistle to the Galatians, we find no prayer, no praise, no thanksgiving and no commendation, Instead, he launched straight into his theme with a note of extreme urgency. He did two things in these 4 verses: He expressed his astonishment and his indignation.

1. Over what was Paul astonished? (**Verses 6-7**)
  
2. (a) How did Paul express his indignation over the false teachers? (**Verses 8-9**)  
  
(b) Why, do you think, did Paul feel so strongly and use such drastic language? Do you think Paul was right in having such a strong reaction here?
  
3. Imagine that you are one of the Galatian Christians.  
  
(a) What would be your response after reading these 4 verses from Paul?  
  
(b) Why would you respond in the way you did?

Day 7 Summary Notes for **GALATIANS 1:6-9**



The apostle Paul expressed his utter astonishment at the conduct of the Galatian Christians. What did they do? They were turning away from the gospel of grace! In the Greek, the verb is active, not passive and the tense is present, not past. It is not “*you have been turned away*” but “*you are currently turning away*”!

The “*turning away*” signifies a transfer of allegiance. It is used of soldiers who revolt or desert. This is why Paul actually put their turning away in a much stronger and personal tone: *You are turning away from Him who called you . . .* They are not just forsaking some beliefs and doctrines. No, they are forsaking the God of grace Himself!

The Galatian Christians behaved in this way because of the activity of the false teachers. These false teachers were known as Judaizers, and they taught that in order to be saved, you needed to keep the Law of Moses besides believing in Jesus. Paul does not mince his words: *They are troubling the church and perverting the gospel.* The two go together. The real troubler of the church is the one who distorts the gospel and proclaims it as if it is the gospel! Hence Paul called that message a different gospel, another gospel!

To these false teachers, Paul pronounced the curse of God upon them – “*let him be accursed*” (**verses 8 & 9**). Why such strong words?

Because when you add “*keep the Law of Moses*” to “*believe in Jesus*” as the way to be saved, you are saying that Christ’s death on the cross is insufficient to save you. This is to detract from the glory of the Saviour! If you love Christ, then you cannot be indifferent to this addition!

Next, to preach this ‘another gospel’ is to put the souls of men at stake. If the Galatian were to believe this ‘another gospel’, they shall ultimately perish! If Paul loved them, then Paul cannot be indifferent to what is happening. It is like a parent crushing a snake who is threatening to bite his child! His drastic action towards the snake is motivated by his deep love for his child!!

Having read the Summary Notes above, ponder:

**Would you have the same kind of response as Paul, if you find the gospel being distorted in Shalom Church? Why?**

**What else would you do, if any?**

**Week 2**

**[6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> October 2013]**

Day 1 Read **GALATIANS 1:10-24**

We will be spending the next four days looking at these 15 verses. Skipping **verses 10-12** for the time being, **verses 13-14** talk about Paul's pre-conversion days, **verses 15-16a** talk about Paul's conversion while **verses 16b-24** talk about the first ten years after Paul's conversion.

Today, we shall focus on Paul's pre-conversion days (**verses 13-14**).

1. What was the first hallmark of Paul's life before his conversion? (**Verse 13**)
2. What was the second hallmark of Paul's life before his conversion? (**Verse 14**)
3. Why, do you think, did Paul highlight these two aspects of his pre-conversion days?

Day 2 Read **GALATIANS 1:10-24**

Having looked at Paul's pre-conversion days (**verses 13-14**) yesterday, we shall now turn our attention to Paul's conversion (**verses 15-16a**) today.

Note the contrast set up: In **verses 13-14**, it was all about Paul – *“I persecuted the church . . . I tried to destroy it . . . I was advanced in Judaism . . . I was exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.* Now in **verses 15-16a**, God takes centre stage!

What did God do, with respect to Paul?

**Verse 15:**

**Verse 16:**

Why, do you think, did Paul talk about his conversion in this way?

Day 3 Read **GALATIANS 1:10-24**

Today, we shall look at the first ten years of Paul's life after his conversion (**verses 16b-23**).

1. Where did Paul go after his conversion? (**Verse 17**)
2. After 3 years, where did Paul go and what did he do there? (**Verses 18-20**)
3. After that, where did Paul go, what did he do, and what was the effect? (**Verses 21-24**)
4. Why did Paul tell the Galatian Christians where he went after his conversion, and what he did in those places?

Day 4 Read **GALATIANS 1:10-24**

Having seen Paul's pre-conversion days, conversion and the first ten years after his conversion, today we shall explore the purpose of why he said all these things.

We start with **verse 10**. He said that as Christ's slave, his only aim was to please Christ. The implication is that he would not change the gospel that he was given by Christ to proclaim. But did Christ really give him the gospel to proclaim?

Yes, he insisted in **verse 11**. He did not receive the gospel from men and neither did men come along and teach him the gospel. Rather, it was Christ who gave him the gospel directly.

To support this claim, Paul reminded the Galatians first of all the kind of person he was before his conversion – persecuting the church and blindly zealous for Judaism. See how anti-Christian he was then! Humanly speaking, it was impossible that Paul would believe the gospel. Hence, if he was converted subsequently, it had to be the work of God! And this gospel that he now preaches, it cannot be something that he invented.

Next, Paul pointed their attention to his conversion. In his fanaticism, Paul was bent upon a course of persecution and destruction, but God (whom he left out of his calculations), arrested Paul and changed his headlong course. All his raging fanaticism was no match for the good pleasure of God. In simple words, God turned him around! God taught him the gospel and made him believe it. Now, the gospel he believed is the gospel he preached. Hence **verse 16** ~ *to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him*

*among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood.* Once again, Paul insisted that he did not learn the gospel from men.

This can be further seen in the first ten years of his post-conversion life. He went to Arabia and Damascus. Then he went to Jerusalem 3 years later, for 15 days and met Peter and James. It was too short a time to learn the gospel from them. Following that, he went to Syria and Cilicia, preaching this gospel. For those 10 years, the saints in Jerusalem did not know him personally.

So the gospel that he preached to the Galatians was not from men. Rather it was from Christ. In simple words, Paul spent these 15 verses elaborating on these things in order to underscore the divine source of the message he brings. So what? To reject the gospel he preaches is to reject the Christ who gave him the gospel!

In pondering over these 15 verses, we see then that Paul wasn't talking about himself and his experiences because he loved to talk about himself. Rather, he was doing it because he loved these Galatian Christians. He wanted them to know the seriousness of their on-going desertion of the gospel of Christ!

**Without doubt, we will talk about ourselves to others. In the light of what we've read above about Paul, how can we talk about ourselves in such a way that we will lead others to Christ and the gospel?**

Day 5      Read **GALATIANS 2:1-10**

In **GALATIANS 1**, Paul has shown that the gospel he preached came from God and not man. To prove that his gospel was independent of the other apostles, he stressed that he paid only one visit to Jerusalem in the first 10 years of his Christian Life, and that visit lasted only 15 days.

Now in the beginning of **GALATIANS 2**, Paul wants to show that the gospel he preached is the same as the gospel preached by the other apostles. So he will mention another visit to Jerusalem, and how the other apostles endorse the gospel he preached.

1. (a) When did Paul visit Jerusalem again? (**Verse 1**)
  - (b) Who went with Paul on this visit? (**Verse 1**)
  - (c) Why did Paul make this visit to Jerusalem? (**Verse 2**)

2. In this visit, Paul encountered the false brethren (also known as the Judaizers) – **verses 3-5.**

(a) What was their demand? (Cf. **Acts 15:1**)

(b) What was Paul's response to their demand?

(c) What was the issue at stake in this encounter?

2. In this visit, Paul also met up with another group of men.

(a) Who were they? (**Verse 2, 6, 9**)

(b) What happened at this meeting? (**Verse 9-10**)

*“Looking back over the first paragraph of Galatians 2, we have learnt that, on his second visit to Jerusalem, Paul met two groups of men, whose attitude to him differed completely. The ‘false brethren’, who disagreed with his gospel and policy, tried to compel Titus to be circumcised. Paul refused to submit to them. The apostles, on the other hand, acknowledged the truths of Paul’s gospel and gave him their hand in confirmation.”*

John Stott

Day 6      Read **GALATIANS 2:11-16**

These 6 verses record a confrontation between Paul and Peter in Antioch. It formed a sharp contrast to what was recorded in the previous 10 verses. There, Paul went to Jerusalem and he was given the right hand of fellowship. Here, Peter came to Antioch and he was opposed in the face by Paul. Why? We shall see.

1. (a) What did Peter do before the Judaizers came to Antioch?

(b) What did Peter do after the Judaizers came to Antioch? Why?

- (c) What was the impact of Peter's action upon the rest of the Jewish believers?
- (d) What, do you think, would be the effect of Peter's action on the Gentile believers?
2. (a) What was Paul's response to what Peter did?
- (b) Why did Paul do this?
- (c) What, do you think, was the outcome this action of Paul?
3. What lesson(s) can we learn from this confrontation in Antioch?

## Day 7 Summary Notes for **GALATIANS 2:1-16**

### Verses 1-10

14 years after his conversion, Paul went up to Jerusalem. He didn't go there because the apostles or the Jerusalem Church summoned him. Rather, the reason for this journey was a revelation (**verse 2**). He went because God told him to!

While in Jerusalem, he was confronted by the Judaizers who insisted that Gentiles must be Jews before they could be full Christians. In other words, they were proclaiming a "Christ plus" gospel. As a result, they were demanding that Titus, a Greek (non-Jew) be circumcised. Paul refused to bow to their pressure. He vigorously resisted them and called them 'false brethren'! The reason for his lack of co-operation was so that the truth of the gospel may continue with the church (**verse 5**).

While in Jerusalem, he also met with the leaders of the church – Peter, John and James (the half-brother of Jesus). These men were supposedly men of reputation and pillars of the church. Yet as far as Paul was concerned, the gospel he preached was the gospel they preached. There was no difference in their message, and all of them acknowledged it. The only 'different' thing that came out of this meeting was the different area of

ministry – Paul would focus on reaching the Gentiles while they would give their energy to work with the Jews.

Hence, the visit to Jerusalem ended well – with handshakes and hugs, agreement and understanding.

### Verses 11-16

The scene now moves to Antioch, the heart of Gentile missions. Peter came to Antioch and for a period of time, he was eating with the Gentile believers. It was a wonderful time of fellowship and a testimony of the oneness of all who bow their knees to Jesus. But things changed when the Judaizers came to Antioch. Peter started to withdraw himself from meal fellowship with the Gentile believers. **Verse 12e** is emphatic on the reason why – *Peter feared the Judaizers!* As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter and acted falsely.

Paul was clear that Peter and the Jewish believers did not renounce the gospel of grace. They still believed it. Paul stated this clearly in **verses 15 & 16**. Yet by their conduct, they had denied the gospel. This is why Paul accused them of playing the hypocrite – not behaving in a way consistent with their beliefs!

To this troubling situation, Paul stood up and opposed Peter publicly! He didn't pretend things were fine, and hope that the situation would resolve itself over time. He told Peter what was wrong, stated what the gospel is (**verses 15 & 16**) and its implications. Did Peter and the rest of the Jewish believers repent? While the text doesn't tell us, the rest of the New Testament would point us in the direction that they did. More importantly, Paul's action ensured that the gospel of grace would not be lost to the church in that generation. Paul was very clear about the gospel. ***Are you?***

More than that, Paul loves the gospel. This is why he cannot tolerate any one (including another apostle) saying or doing anything that will distort the gospel. ***Do you love the gospel? Would you be prepared to do what Paul did in Antioch?***

It is not that Peter wasn't clear about the Gospel. But Peter had allowed the fear of man to control him. ***Do you also struggle with the fear of man? How has this fear of man affected your conduct, so that it is inconsistent with the gospel you've believed in?***

**Week 3**

**[13<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> October 2013]**

Day 1 Read **GALATIANS 2:15-21**

In these verses, an important word occurs for the first time in **GALATIANS**. It is the word “*justified*” – **verse 16** (thrice) and **verse 17** (once).

1. What does “*justified*” mean?
2. In **verse 16**, Paul says that a person is “*justified by faith in Jesus Christ*”. What does this mean?
3. Have a closer look at **verse 16** which says:

*“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”*

We must not miss an important emphasis here:

- The mere “*knowing*” of this truth – that a man is justified by faith in Jesus Christ – is not enough!
- In addition to “*knowing*”, we must “*have believed in Christ Jesus*” so that we might be justified!

(a) In view of the above explanation, answer: *How can you be justified?*

(b) Are you justified?

Day 2 Read **GALATIANS 2:15-21**

1. In **verses 18 & 19**, Paul was seeking to address an objection to the doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ. What do you think is the objection being addressed here?
2. Take time to memorize **verse 20**.



- (a) What does *‘I have been crucified with Christ’* mean?
- (b) What does *‘Christ lives in me’* mean?
- (c) What is the relationship between Christ and Paul, according to this verse?
- (d) Can you truly say that this relationship with Christ is also true for you?

### Day 3 Summary Notes for **GALATIAN 2:15-21**

God is righteous and we are not. Herein lies the human predicament: *Something is wrong between God and us. Instead of harmony, there is friction. We are under His judgment, alienated from Him and banished from His presence. How can man be righteous before God? How can a condemned sinner be justified?*

The word *“justified”* is a legal term, meaning to declare that someone is innocent, righteous and not guilty. It is the very opposite of *“condemn”*. To condemn is to declare someone guilty.

How can God the Judge declare a sinner righteous?

Human religions say: *By the works of the Law*. This means that we will try to do things to please God, and in response God will declare us righteous. The Judaizers take this position. They use the Law of Moses given to Israel by God, and turn it into a means whereby they try to gain God’s acceptance. In Christian theology, this is called *“salvation by works”*.

In contrast, the Gospel says: *By faith in Jesus Christ*. We cannot do anything that will gain our acceptance with God. We are sinners and everything we do is tainted with sin. Jesus Christ took our place and did what was needed. He lived a perfect life, obeying God personally, perfectly and perpetually. This righteousness of Jesus Christ is transferred to the person who puts his faith in Christ. In this way, God declares the one who believes in Jesus righteous. In Christian theology, this is called *“salvation by faith”* and this is the gospel proclaimed by Paul.

So this is the Gospel: *Sinners are declared righteous and accepted by God only when they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*. As far as Paul is concerned, Peter and Barnabas and all

the Jewish believers, together with him, they all *know* this. However, knowing the gospel is not enough. They must personally *believe* in Christ. Only then will God actually and really declare them righteous!

*Do you know the Gospel?*

*Have you personally believed the Gospel?*

*Do you feel that you need to do something more than just believing in Christ in order to be accepted by God?*

In **verses 17-20**, Paul addressed an objection briefly. Some would say that if indeed a sinner is declared righteous by God when he believed in Jesus, wouldn't this encourage the sinner to go on sinning?

Paul's answer is simple, yet deep: A Christian is united to Jesus in His death and resurrection. Hence, he is dead to sin (crucified with Christ) and is now a new creature (Christ lives in him). So how could someone in whom Christ lives in, still live in sin? It is an utter impossibility!!

Hence, if God has truly declared you righteous, then you will want to have nothing to do with sin in your life. No, you will want to live as a new creature in Christ!

*Is Galatians 2:20 true of you today? Explain.*

Day 4 Read **GALATIANS 3:1-9**

Throughout **GALATIANS 1 & 2**, Paul focused on the divine origin of his apostolic mission and message. He insisted that they have been derived from God and independent of men.

Now, in **GALATIANS 3**, he turns his attention to the Galatian Christians, and their unfaithfulness to the gospel as a result of the corrupting influence of the Judaizers.

1. (a) What did Paul call the Galatians? (**Verses 1 & 3**)

(b) According to Paul, what has happened to the Galatians? (**Verse 1**)

2. In seeking to rescue the Galatians from their treasonous and foolish behaviour, Paul directed their attention to the time of their conversion by asking them two questions.

(a) The first question is found in **verse 2**. What is the question and what is the answer he expects from them?

(b) The second question is found in **verse 5**. What is the question and what is the answer he expects from them?

Note: The two questions are actually the same. The question in **verse 2** is viewed from human perspective while the question in **verse 5** is asked from the divine standpoint.

Day 5 Read **GALATIANS 3:1-9**

Yesterday, we have seen that to rescue the Galatians from their treasonous and foolish behaviour, Paul asked them to reflect on their conversion. Today, we shall see that the apostle Paul, still having the same aim, directed the attention of the Galatian Christians to Abraham.

1. **Verse 6** makes reference to **Genesis 15:6**.

In **Genesis 15**, Abraham was an old man and childless, but God has promised him a son, and posterity. When Abraham asked how the promise would come to pass, God showed him the stars of heaven and basically repeated the promise, saying that Abraham's descendants shall be as numerous as the stars of heaven.

(a) What was the response of Abraham to God's promise?

(b) What happened when Abraham responded in that way to God's promise?

2. In **verse 8**, Paul quotes another incident concerning Abraham, this time from **Genesis 12:3**.

(a) What was the blessing of Abraham?

(b) How would the nations inherit this blessing of Abraham?

## Day 6 Summary Notes for **GALATIANS 3:1-9**

To Paul, the desertion of the Gospel by the Galatians was a foolish act, the result of someone casting a spell over them. It is interesting for Paul to use the singular '*who*' in **verse 1**, suggesting that beyond the Judaizers, Paul saw the work of the devil in this matter. He is both a liar and a murderer (**John 8:44**), and hence it is not surprising that he would seek to distort the gospel and seduce the Galatians to desert it.

The first thing Paul did here was to ask the Galatian Christians to recall their conversion. It is interesting that Paul cast their conversion in terms of them having the Holy Spirit. Did they receive the Holy Spirit by works or by faith? That's the question in **verse 2**. Did God give them the Holy Spirit because of their works or their faith in Christ? That's the question in **verse 5**. The answer he expected from the Galatian Christians was the same: *By faith!* It is by believing in Jesus Christ that their sins were forgiven, that they were declared righteous, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Note that every one who is justified has received the Holy Spirit; there is no second experience whereby believers receive the Spirit).

Since they started their Christian Life by faith, why would they now think that they must continue and end their Christian Life by works? That's his reasoning with these foolish, bewitched Galatians.

Next, he called their attention to Abraham. That's a masterstroke, since the Judaizers would cite Moses as their hero. Here, Paul would go further back, beyond Moses to Abraham, the father of the nation. Paul starts with **Genesis 15** – God's promise of descendants to Abraham. The simple fact is that Abraham believed God. He took God at His word and God therefore declared him righteous! Abraham didn't do anything to obtain justification. No, he simply believed God! Abraham believed before he was circumcised!

This blessing of being declared righteous by God in **Genesis 15:6** is now linked to **Genesis 12:3** by Paul. In **Genesis 12:3**, God has promised to bless the nations in Abraham. Paul now explains that this blessing is justification, and the nations inherit this promise by faith, just like Abraham.

Hence, if you have believed in Christ, then you are connected to Abraham (Abraham's sons, blessed with believing Abraham). Why then do you need to be circumcised before

you can be deemed to be the descendants of Abraham? So Paul is back to reasoning with the foolish, bewitched Galatian, but this time using the example of Abraham.

Both their conversion experience and the example of Abraham points to the truth that it is not by works but by faith that we are declared righteous.

What have you learnt from the Summary Notes above? Write them down and share them with your RTBT group members.

## Day 7 Summary of **GALATIANS 3:1-9** by John Stott

### *(A) What the gospel is*

*The gospel is Christ crucified, His finished work on the cross. And to preach the gospel is publicly to portray Christ as crucified. The gospel is not good news primarily of a baby in a manger, a young man at a carpenter's bench, a preacher in the fields of Galilee, or even an empty tomb. The gospel concerns Christ upon His cross. Only when Christ is 'openly displayed upon his cross' is the gospel preached. This verb 'proe-graphē' (the Greek word for 'portrayed' in 3:1) means to 'show forth or portray publicly, proclaim or placard in public' (Arndt-Gingrich). It was used of edicts, laws and public notices, which were put up in some public place to be read, and also of pictures and portraits.*

*This means that in preaching the gospel we are to refer to an event (Christ's death on the cross), to expound the doctrine (the perfect participle 'crucified' indicating the abiding effects of Christ's finished work), and to do so publicly, boldly, vividly, so that people see it as if they witnessed it with their own eyes. This is what some writers have called the 'existential' element in preaching. We do more than describe the cross as a first-century event. We actually portray Christ crucified before the eyes of our contemporaries, so that they are confronted by Christ crucified today and realize that they may receive from the cross the salvation of God today.*

### *(B) What the gospel offers*

*On the ground of Christ's cross, the gospel offers a great blessing. Verse 8: 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.' What is this? It is a double blessing. The first part is justification (verse 8) and the second the gift of the Spirit (verses 2-5). It is with these two gifts that God blesses all who are in Christ. He both justifies us, accepting us as righteous in His sight, and puts His Spirit within us. What is more, He never bestows one gift without the other. Everybody who receives the Spirit is justified, and everybody who is justified receives the Spirit. It is important to notice this double initial blessing, since various people nowadays are teaching instead a doctrine of salvation in two stages, that we are justified at the beginning and*

*receive the Spirit only at a later stage.*

*(C) What the gospel requires*

*The gospel offers blessings; what must we do to receive them? The proper answer is 'nothing'! We do not have to do anything. We have only to believe. Our response is not 'the works of the Law' but 'hearing with faith', that is, not obeying the Law but believing the gospel. For obeying is to attempt to do the work of salvation ourselves, whereas believing is to let Christ be our Saviour and to rest in His finished work. So Paul emphasizes both that we receive the Spirit by faith (verses 2 and 5) and that we are justified by faith (verse 8). Indeed, the noun 'faith' and the verb 'to believe' occur seven times in this brief paragraph (verses 1-9).*

*Such is the true gospel, the gospel of the Old and New Testament, the gospel which God Himself began to preach to Abraham (verse 8) and which the apostle Paul continued to preach in his day. It is the setting forth before men's eyes of Jesus Christ as crucified. It offers on this basis both justification and the gift of the Spirit. And its only demand is faith."*

After reading the Summary Notes by John Stott above,

(a) What questions do you have?

(b) What lessons have you learnt?

**Week 4**

**[20<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013]**

Day 1 Read **GALATIANS 3:10-14**

1. After reading these 5 verses . . .

(a) Write down your first impression of this section of Scripture:

(b) Write down what you think is the main point here?

[Please make a serious attempt to answer Question 1(a) and (b) before moving to Question 2]

2. Take some time to read the notes by John Stott below:

*“These verses may seem difficult in both concept and vocabulary, yet they are fundamental to an understanding of biblical Christianity. For they concern the central issue of religion, which is how to come into a right relationship with God. This is described in two ways.*

*First, it is called being ‘justified before God’ (verse 11). To be ‘justified before God’ is the exact opposite of being condemned by Him. It is to be declared righteous, to be accepted, to stand in His favour and under His smile. Clearly, this is a matter of the first importance. Human beings have an instinctive desire to be in favour with their fellow, friend with friend, children with parents, an employee with his boss. Similarly, although we are by nature in revolt against God, we still long to be put right with Him.*

*The second description of a person who finds God is this: ‘he . . . shall live’ (verses 11, 12) or ‘he shall gain life’ (NEB). The life referred to here is, of course, not physical and biological, but spiritual and eternal, not the life of this age, but the life of the age to come. The simplest definition of eternal life in the Bible comes from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself: ‘this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent’ (Jn. 17:3).*

*So ‘justification’ means to be in favour with God; ‘eternal life’ means to be in fellowship with God. And the two are closely, indeed indissolubly, related. We cannot be in fellowship with God until we are in favour with Him; and once we are in favour with Him, fellowship with Him is granted to us too’.*

After reading the notes above, has it helped you understand better the main point of these 5 verses? What amendments are needed to your answer in 1(b) above?

Day 2 Read **GALATIANS 3:10-14** again

How can a sinner be justified and have eternal life? These 5 verses give two alternative answers. We can also call them two different roads and destinies.

1. The first road is called “*justified by the Law*”.

(a) According to **verse 12**, if you take this road, then what must you do?

(b) What is the destiny of those who take this road? Why?

2. The *second road* is called “*justified by faith*”.

(a) What has Jesus Christ to do with this second road?

(b) The destiny of those who take this road is “*blessing*”. What is this blessing?

### Day 3 Summary Notes for **GALATIANS 3:10-14**

These five verses outline clearly for us the two ways of salvation. What God requires of us is righteousness – that we live our lives in perfect and perpetual obedience to this Law. If we can do this perfectly, and for the whole of our life, then we are righteous and we can stand before Him. This is the first way of salvation (the first road)

However, none of us can do it. Paul did not waste any time to cite any examples to make this claim. He simply said in **verse 11** that it was evident (so clear) that, in God’s sight, no one can do it. This road of “*justified by the Law*” (seeking to obey God’s Law perfectly and perpetually in order to be accepted by God) is doomed to failure. The end is to be under the curse.

The second road is called “*justified by faith*”. Faith in Jesus Christ! He came, and He lived a life of perfect and perpetual obedience to the Law of God. What we cannot do, He did it! To those who believe in Jesus, this righteousness of Jesus is transferred to our account, so that when God looks at us, He can declare that we are righteous. This, as we have seen in **Galatians 3:1-9**, is the blessing of Abraham. This blessing comes upon man, not by works, but by faith.

***On which road are you? Are you seeking to be accepted by God through your works, or by trusting in what Jesus has done?***

### Day 4 Read **GALATIANS 3:15-22**

1. **GALATIANS 3:15-22** is Scripture (God’s Word). Hence, let’s take some time to read and ponder over them, although admittedly they are not easy to understand.

After reading these 8 verses . . .

(a) Write down your first impression of this section of Scripture:



(b) Write down what you think is the main point here?

2. The apostle Paul was still making the point that salvation is a free gift from God, received through faith in Christ crucified, irrespective of any human merit. Recall that his opponents were Judaizers --- men who claimed to know the Old Testament well. Hence, Paul referred to two Old Testament characters in these 8 verses.

(a) Who is the first Old Testament character mentioned and what was given to him? (**Verse 16**)

(b) The second Old Testament character (implicitly) mentioned was Moses (**Verse 17**). What was given to/through Moses?

(c) Was Paul highlighting similarity between these two Old Testament characters and what they received, or was he setting up a contrast between them?

What do you think Paul was trying to achieve in doing this?

## Day 5 Some Notes for **GALATIANS 3:15-22**

To Abraham, God gave promises: *seed and land and blessing*. Reading those promises (**Genesis 12 & 15 & 17**), we note that it takes the form of “*I will . . . I will . . . I will*”. It focuses our attention on God’s plan, God’s grace and God’s initiative.

To Moses, God gave the Law. We can get a summary of the Law in the Ten Commandments (**Exodus 20**). It emphasizes man’s duty, man’s works and man’s responsibility: “*Do this . . . do this . . . don’t do that . . .*”

Clearly, two contrasting principles are at work: One is of grace, calling us to believe God’s promise while the other is of works, calling us to obey God’s commandments. If they are set up as ways to obtain God’s blessings (justification and eternal life), then they are opposites! The first way is salvation by grace while the second is salvation by works.

What Paul wanted to establish is that Abraham and grace, not Moses and works, represent the Christian Faith. Yet a question remains: Both the promises and the Law were given by God. Why did God give two contrasting ways of salvation? If He didn't, meaning He has always meant that salvation should be by grace, then why did He give the Law? What is the purpose of the Law He gives through Moses?

Paul posed the question in **verse 19** and then gave us the answer – *the Law was added because of transgression, till the Seed should come*. **What does this mean?**

## Day 6 Some Additional Notes on **GALATIANS 3:15-22**

God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees and promised to bestow on him and his seed a land, and that in his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. The seed of Abraham was not Isaac but Jesus (**verse 16**). In short, through Abraham, God promised to give us Christ, and through Christ we shall receive the blessings of justification and eternal life. To receive justification and eternal life is to receive the inheritance (**verse 18**), and this inheritance is another name for the land that God has promised to Abraham.

Years later, God raised up Moses to deliver the Israelites from Egypt. Leaving Egypt, he led them to Mount Sinai and while at Sinai, God gave them His Laws through Moses. The nature of the Law is very different from that of the promises. The Law points to works (obedience, doing) while the promises point to grace (believing, trusting). Some have mistakenly thought that the inheritance could be obtained through the Law i.e. by man obeying the Law and doing what is commanded. To take this path is to go the way of salvation by works. Paul insists that God never intended salvation to be obtained via this way.

If God did not intend to give salvation to man via the Law, then why did God give the Law? Indeed, what is the relation between the promises given to Abraham and the Law given to Moses, and through Moses to the descendants of Abraham? The answer is that the Law was given, not to give us salvation, but to show us our need for salvation. God gave us the Law to prove to us that we are sinners.

To quote Martin Luther: *“The principal point . . . of the Law . . . is to make men not better but worse; that is to say, it sheweth unto them their sin, that by the knowledge thereof they may be humbled, terrified, bruised and broken, and by this means may be driven to seek grace, and so to come to that blessed Seed (Christ).”*

In simple words, the true function of the Law is to confirm the promise and make it indispensable.

1. What are some key points mentioned in the Additional Notes above?
2. Ponder: *What is the place of the Law in evangelism?*

Day 7 Read John Stott's Introduction to **GALATIANS 3:23-29**

*"In Galatian 3:15-22 the apostle Paul reviewed 2,000 years of Old Testament history, from Abraham through Moses to Christ. He also showed how these great biblical names are related to one another in the unfolding purpose of God, how God gave to Abraham a promise, and to Moses a Law, and how through Christ He fulfilled the promise which the Law had revealed as indispensable. For the Law condemned the sinner to death, while the promise offered him justification and eternal life.*

*Now Paul elaborates his theme and shows that this progression from the promise through the Law to the fulfillment of the promise is more than the history of the Old Testament and of the Jewish nation. It is the biography of every man, at least of every Christian man. Everybody is either held captive by the Law because he is still awaiting the fulfillment of the promise or delivered from the Law because he has inherited the promise. More simply, everybody is living either in the Old Testament or in the New, and derives his religion either from Moses or from Jesus. In the language of this paragraph, he is either 'under Law' or 'in Christ'.*

*God's purpose for our spiritual pilgrimage is that we should pass through the Law into an experience of the promise. The tragedy is that so many people separate them by wanting one without the other. Some try to go to Jesus without first meeting Moses. They want to skip the Old Testament, to inherit the promise of justification in Christ without the prior pain of condemnation by the Law. Others go to Moses and the Law to be condemned, but they stay in this unhappy bondage. They are still living in the Old Testament. Their religion is a grievous yoke, hard to be borne. They have never gone to Christ, to be set free."*

1. Write down one lesson you've learnt from the Introduction above.
2. Have you experienced "*the prior pain of condemnation by the Law*"? Elaborate.

3. Are you “*still living in the Old Testament*” or have you gone to Christ “*to be set free*”? Explain.

## Week 5

[27<sup>th</sup> October – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2013]

### Day 1 Read GALATIANS 3:23-29

“*Under Law*” or “*In Christ*”, says John Stott in the Introduction in Week 4 Day 7. Both stages are depicted here in these 7 verses. **Verses 23-24** describe for us what “*under Law*” looked like.

1. What was the first metaphor used by Paul to depict being “*under Law*”? (**Verse 23**)
2. What was the second metaphor used by Paul to depict being “*under Law*”? (**Verse 24**)
3. By using these two metaphors, what was Paul seeking to convey?
4. According to **verse 24**, this state is not permanent. When will it end?

### Day 2 Read GALATIANS 3:23-29

Yesterday, we’ve looked at what “*under Law*” looked like (**verses 23-24**). Today, we shall proceed to see what “*in Christ*” looks like (**verses 25-29**).

1. How many times is “Christ” mentioned in these 4 verses?
2. What can be said concerning those who are “*in Christ*”?

**Verse 26:**

**Verse 28:**

**Verse 29:**

3. Review the three results of being “*in Christ*”. Can you write down one implication for each of the results?

Explanatory Notes for Verse 27

“*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*” Paul is not saying that the act of baptism makes one united to Christ. If we read **verses 23-29** again, we discover that he mentioned *faith* five times and *baptism* only once. It is *faith* that secures our union with Christ. Baptism, as an outward and visible act, signifies and symbolizes our union with Christ. Thus, **verse 26** and **verse 27** are saying that in Christ, by faith inwardly and by baptism outwardly, we are all sons of God!

Day 3 Read **GALATIANS 4:1-11**

1. In **verses 1 & 2**, Paul used an analogy of heir-slave.
  - (a) Using your own words, expand and elaborate on this analogy.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) What is Paul seeking to convey via this analogy (**verses 3-5**)?
  
2. In the fullness of time, God did two things.
  - (a) Firstly, He sent His Son. What is God’s purpose in sending His Son?

**Verse 5a:**

**Verse 5b:**

(b) Next, He sent His Spirit. What is the result of God sending His Spirit? (**Verse 6-7**)

3. Here in **verses 8-11** we have Paul's appeal to the Galatian Christians based on his reasoning with them in **verses 1-7**.

What is he saying? (Use your own words)

#### Day 4 Summary Notes for **GALATIANS 4:1-11**

In **GALATIANS 3**, Paul surveyed about 2000 years of Old Testament history, from Abraham to Moses to Christ. God gave the promise to Abraham, and then the Law to Moses, making the promises more necessary and urgent. Finally, the promises are fulfilled in Christ.

In **GALATIANS 4:1-11**, Paul repeats the same history, but this time by contrasting man under the Law (**verse 1-3**) with man in Christ (**verses 4-7**). Then based on this contrast, he made an impassioned plea to the Galatian Christians.

#### Man under Law (Verses 1-3)

To understand the analogy, we need to know something of the Greek culture then. Let us ask Philip Graham Ryken to help us here:

*"In those days, it was customary for a wealthy man to hand his heir over to the care of guardians. Throughout his childhood, the eldest son knew he would inherit his father's estate, but he did not own it yet . . . the heir apparent is "lord of all," meaning that his father's land belongs to him by title, but not yet by actual possession.*

*In the meanwhile, the heir had as much liberty as a common slave. He had no legal or property rights. His guardian kept him under discipline. He was told when to wake up, when to go to school, what to wear, how to behave, and when to go to bed. He also had a trustee to manage his property, especially if his father was deceased. Until he came of age he was called "the young master" – "master" because one day he would inherit the estate, but "young" to keep him firmly in his place.*

*Under this system, the young master sometimes felt more like a slave than a son. But it was all for his own good. What seemed at times like bondage was necessary to bring him to full maturity. Nor did his minority last forever. Eventually he received his inheritance, in keeping with the date legally established by his father."*

Paul's main point was to say that under the Law, man was like that heir during his childhood. We were in bondage (**verse 3**). Why would Paul say that man under the Law was in bondage? Was the Law not given by God? And why would he equate being under the Law to being in bondage to the elements of the world?

While the overall message is clear (man under the Law was not free, under bondage, like the heir during his minor years), yet the details are not easy to understand. Generally speaking, there are two ways to understand this "*in bondage to the elements of the world*".

(A) The word "*elements*" could mean elementary things, like the ABC we learn in primary school. If this is the meaning, then Paul was likening the Old Testament period to the primary education of God's people. This would fit the heir-slave analogy but this elementary stage of education was not exactly 'bondage'.

(B) The word "*elements*" could refer to the elementary spirits of the universe. This would mean the earthly elements like earth, fire, air and water, or the heavenly bodies like sun, moon and stars. These control the seasonal festivals being observed by people on earth. This appears to tie with **verses 9-10** where Paul talks about them being in bondage to weak and beggarly elements, observing days and months and years and seasons.

But what has this got to do with the Law? Probably in this way: As the Jews observe the Law, Satan came along and twisted it to some superstitions and man-made merits systems. For example, keep this festival and observe that day, then God would give you blessing and salvation. The Law could have command the observation of the festival, but not for that purpose. Satan has twisted what is good into what is evil.

### Man in Christ (Verses 4-7)

When the time came, God sent Jesus into this world. Who is Jesus? He is God's Son, He is Mary's Son, and He is a Jew. So as a God-Man, born and having lived as a Jew, He kept God's Law and then died for His people. The purpose is two-fold: To redeem sinners and to adopt them as sons of God. And then God sent His Spirit into the hearts of His people so that they know that they are His sons. Note that the Spirit comes into the hearts of only those who are already God's sons! **Verse 7** is Paul's summary statement of his reasoning thus far: *You are now sons!* The status has been changed. Changed as a result of what God has done.

### Appeal (Verses 8-11)

After reminding the Galatian Christians of what they once were (**verses 1-3**) and who they are now (**verses 4-7**), he appeals to them to consider their great folly in going back to live like those in **verses 1-3**! Why would you do that? Did they prefer slavery to sonship? It appears so! That's the folly of the Galatian under the influence of the Judaizers.

As we ponder over what Paul has said in these 11 verses, two lessons stand out:

[1] **Never forget your identity**

Previously, you were slaves, but as Christians, you are now sons! That's our new identity. It is by remembering our identity that we shall avoid falling into the same error as the Galatian Christians.

[2] **Always live out your identity**

The Christian Life is the life of sons and daughters, not the life of slaves. So when we are tempted or seduced to go back to any kind of bondage, go back to the first principles. Ask: *Who am I?* Then ask: *So how shall I live?*

Learning these two lessons well will spare us lots of heartache and trouble. What have you learnt from the Summary Notes above?

Day 5 Read **GALATIANS 4:12-20**

After reasoning with them from **3:1-4:11**, Paul now appeals to the Galatian Christians with deep feelings and immense tenderness. He calls them "*brethren*" (**verse 12**) and "*my little children*" (**verse 19**).

His basic appeal to them is found in **verse 12a**. Then, from **verses 12c-16** he talks about their attitude to him, and from **verses 17-20** his attitude towards them.

1. Paul appealed to the Galatian Christians to "*become like him*". Paying attention to the context, what do you think is the meaning of his appeal?

Note: "*for I became like you*" (**verse 12b**) – this probably refers to Paul's first visit to the Galatian. As a Jew, he went to Galatia and preached the gospel to the Gentiles there. As he sought to reach them with the gospel, he laid aside his Jewishness, and became like the Gentiles. This is in line with his mission philosophy as outlined in **1 Corinthians 9:20-22**.

So Paul became like them, with the aim that they would finally become like him! As a Jew, he became like a Gentile so that they as pagan unbelievers hostile to God may become Christian believers reconciled to God!



2. *"You have not injured me at all"* (**verse 12c**) is a statement concerning how the Galatian Christians have treated Paul when he first visited them. **Verses 13-15** give us some details about that visit.
  - (a) What was Paul's physical condition when he first visited them?
  - (b) Instead of the expected human response to Paul's physical condition, how did the Galatians treat Paul?
  - (c) Yet the situation has now changed. Now they are treating Paul as if he is their enemy? Why?
3. What can we learn from Paul in his statement *"for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you"* (**verse 19**)?

#### Day 6 Summary Notes for **GALATIANS 4:12-20**

When Paul first set foot on Galatia to preach the Gospel to the Galatians, he put aside every part of his Jewishness that would prove to be a stumble block to them in coming to faith in Jesus Christ. As he has said in **1 Corinthians 9:20-22**, to the Gentiles, he became a Gentile. His aim was so that they become like him – a believer in Jesus Christ, free in Christ, not under bondage to the Law or man's traditions. The book of **Acts** tells us that Paul's aim was achieved. Many of the Galatian became Christians. They became like Paul.

But when the false teachers (Judaizers) arrived with their false gospel, the Galatian Christians have turned their back on the gospel of grace. So Paul is here appealing to them to (once more) be like him. He wanted them to become like him as a man in Christ, with true Christian freedom.

Having made this appeal to the Galatian Christians, he reminded them of their previous attitude to him. When he first visited them, physically he was in a very bad shape. We don't know exactly what was Paul's physical and medical problem then, but *"my trial in the flesh"* and *"you would have plucked your own eyes and given them to me"* give us some indication of his malaise. One would expect the Galatians to abhor him and turn away from Paul. But they didn't! Instead, they received him as if he was an angel, or even as Jesus Christ!

One can imagine the joy Paul had among them then, and the bond that then existed between them. Yet all these have now changed drastically! Now, they view Paul as their enemy! Why? Because Paul has told them the truth, has said things to them that they don't wish to hear. What did Paul say?

He said to them that following the Judaizers was wrong and potentially fatal, that they were foolish to do this, and they must admit their errors and repent. It wasn't easy for Paul to say these things because these words would have hurt the Galatian Christians and turn them against him, which was what happened exactly. But Paul would still say the truth to them, because Paul loved them!

This brings us to **verses 17-20** that outlined Paul's attitude towards them. He contrasted his attitude towards them against that of the Judaizers. They zealously courted the Galatians so that they may own the Galatians. The Judaizers wanted to own the Galatians so that the Galatians may be zealous for them. In short, their attitude was "self-seeking"! In contrast, Paul was "self-giving", like his Lord. He was behaving like a mother in labour, willing to suffer any pains, endure all discomforts, so that "*Christ may be formed in them*" – that is, so that they may truly be established as genuine disciples of Jesus Christ!

What have you learnt from the Summary Notes above?

Day 7 Re-read **GALATIANS 4:12-20** and the Summary Notes (Day 6).

Ponder . . .

1. What should be our attitude towards our pastors?
2. What should be the aim and attitude of our pastors in their ministry among us?

*"Notice, finally, the reference to Christ in verses 14 & 19. Verse 14: You . . . received me . . . as Christ Jesus. Verse 19: I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you! What should matter to the people is not the pastor's appearance, but whether Christ is speaking through him. And what should matter to the pastor is not the people's favour, but whether Christ is formed in them. The church needs people who, in listening to their pastor, listen for the message of Christ, and pastors who, in labouring among the people, look for the image of Christ. Only when pastors and people thus keep their eyes on Christ will their mutual relations keep healthy, profitable, and pleasing to Almighty God."*

John Stott

Day 1 Read **GALATIANS 4:21-31**

1. In these 11 verses, Paul mentioned 5 characters and 2 locations found in the Old Testament. Can you locate them?

Old Testament Characters

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

Old Testament Locations

(a)

(b)

In addition, please give a brief introduction to each of the characters and locations listed above.

2. Take time to read the Introductory Notes below. They will help you in your study of these 11 verses in the next few days.

*Here in these 11 verses, Paul is saying to the Galatian Christians who desire to be under the Law, "Do you hear the Law?" In other words, have you actually read the Old Testament Scriptures and really understood its meaning?*

*Following this opening statement, Paul presents his argument in three stages. Stage One is historical where he reminds them that Abraham had two sons, Ishmael the son*

of a slave girl and Isaac the son of a free woman (**verses 22-23**). Stage Two is allegorical whereby he argues that the two sons with their mothers represent two religions: a religion of bondage and a religion of freedom (**verses 24-27**). Stage Three is personal whereby Paul applies his allegory to all of us. If we are Christians, then we are not like Ishmael (slaves) but like Isaac (free). He will also tell us what to expect if we take after Isaac (**verses 28-31**).

Day 2 Read **GALATIAN 4:21-31**

1. Although both Ishmael and Isaac were sons of Abraham, they had two important differences.
  - (a) What is the first important difference between these two sons? (**Verse 22**)
  
  - (b) What is the second important difference between these two sons? (**Verse 23**)
  
2. In **verse 24a**, Paul says, “*Which things are symbolic.*” This does not mean that Paul rejects the historicity of Ishmael and Isaac. Rather, he is saying that this piece of history can be used as a symbol to understand spiritual truths. Other versions call it “*allegory*”.
  - (a) What do Hagar & Ishmael symbolize?
  
  - (b) What do Sarah & Isaac symbolize?
  
  - (c) **Verse 27** is a quotation from **Isaiah 54:1**. What do you think is the purpose of this quotation here?

Day 3 Summary Notes for **GALATIANS 4:21-27**

The true seed from Abraham is not physical but spiritual. Both John the Baptist and our Lord Jesus talked about this truth during their ministry. Here Paul draws our attention to this truth once more by pointing to the example of Ishmael and Isaac. Although both have Abraham as their father, yet there were two important differences:

[i] Ishmael was born of a slave, and his birth was according to the flesh

[ii] Isaac was born of a free woman, and his birth was through promises.

Hence, Ishmael was a slave, and he represents all of us spiritually -- slaves by nature. In contrast, Isaac was a free man, and spiritually we stand with Isaac only when we are set free by God's grace. At this point, a question must be asked and answered: ***Is Ishmael my representative, or Isaac?***

Delving into the symbolism deeper, Paul talked about the mothers as well. Hagar was a slave and she gave birth to a slave (Ishmael). They represent the covenant from Mount Sinai, and in the New Testament time, correspond to the earthly Jerusalem, i.e. the Jews then who were trying to gain salvation by obeying the Law.

On the other hand, Sarah was a free woman and she gave birth to a free man (Isaac). They represent the New Covenant, and correspond to the heavenly Jerusalem, i.e. the New Testament believers in Christ – people who are saved, not by works but by the grace of God.

Paul goes on to quote **Isaiah 54:1** about the barren woman having more children than the one who had a husband. The background to this verse would be the Abraham-Sarah-Hagar account in **Genesis**. Recall that Sarah was barren. This was why Hagar came into the picture, and she was pregnant soon afterwards. Perhaps there was gloating on the part of Hagar, mocking at the barrenness of her mistress Sarah while she was bearing Ishmael. Yet her happiness didn't last long! Before long, she would be cast out of the house together with Ishmael, while Sarah would bear a son, the son of promise – Isaac.

The immediate context of **Isaiah 54:1** was about the return of the Jews from exile, and how God here promised that though they looked like the barren woman, yet He shall so blessed them that they shall have many children. One cannot help but relate this to God's blessings to Abraham in **Genesis** that his descendants be as numerous as the sand of the sea and the stars of the sky.

When and how would this promise to Abraham, and the promise of **Isaiah 54:1**, come to pass? It would ultimately be fulfilled in the Christian Church! Those who believed in Christ for justification are the true sons of Abraham, free persons like Isaac, and they are the “many more children” of the barren woman!

Overall, Paul is saying to the Galatian Christians: *It is not enough to claim Abraham as your father. You must also know who is your mother. If she is Hagar, then you are like Ishmael, but if she is Sarah, then you are like Isaac.*

Write down one lesson you have learnt from the Summary Notes above, and then share it with someone outside your RTBT group.

Day 4 Read **GALATIANS 4:21-31**

Today, we are focusing on the **verses 28-31**. If we are Christians, then we are like Isaac. Our lineage from Abraham is spiritual. What follows is this: *If we are like Isaac, then we must expect to be treated as Isaac was treated.*

1. How did Ishmael treat Isaac, and how may we therefore expect to be treated?
  
2. (a) According to **verse 30**, what happened to Ishmael and Isaac finally?  
  
(b) What is the relevance of this for the Galatian Christians, and for us?
  
3. Write down one lesson you have learnt from **verses 28-31**, and then share it with someone outside your RTBT group.

Day 5 Read **GALATIANS 5:1-12**

1. **Verse 1** contains an assertion and a command.
  - (a) The assertion is this: *Christ has made us free*. What is this freedom that Paul is talking about?
  
  - (b) Based on the assertion, Paul gave a command. What is the command?

2. The Judaizers in the Galatian churches were urging the Galatian Christians to be circumcised. Here Paul warned them of the consequences of receiving circumcision. What are they?

**Verse 2:**

**Verse 3:**

**Verse 4:**

Note: Isn't circumcision just a minor operation on the body? Why then was Paul making such a big fuss over it? It was because of the doctrinal implications! The Judaizers were insisting that unless one is circumcised and keep the Law of Moses, one cannot be saved. Hence, circumcision has come to stand for "salvation by human works". To receive circumcision is tantamount to accepting "salvation by works". It is, in effect, to accept the "*Christ plus*" gospel!

Day 6 Read **GALATIAN 5:1-12**

1. In contrast to the person(s) seeking salvation by their efforts, Paul painted the picture of a believer in Christ in **verses 5-6**.

(a) What is the posture of the Christian? (**Verse 5**)

(b) What is the characteristic of the Christian? (**Verse 6**)

(c) Do you have the same posture and characteristic? Explain.

Note: This posture is in sharp contrast to "*striving*" and this characteristic clearly denotes the relationship between faith and works in the Christian Life.

2. In **verses 7-12**, Paul shifted his attention to the false teachers (Judaizers).

(a) Where is the origin of their teaching? (**Verse 8**)

(b) What are the effects of their teaching?

**Verse 7:**

**Verse 9:**

**Verse 10:**

**Verse 12:**

3. Paul highlights a main difference between him and the Judaizers, a difference that will differentiate between a true and a false preacher.

(a) What is it?

(b) Can you see any link between this and **GALATIANS 4:28-31**? Elaborate.

## Day 7 Summary Notes for **GALATIANS 5:1-12**

Once again, Paul starts with identity – *we are free men in Christ, for Christ has made us free*. Our identity must then affect our life – *stand fast in this liberty, and do not be entangled with a yoke of bondage*.

The freedom in view here is not freedom from sin but from the Law. Christ has indeed set us free from the bondage of sin. However, that is not what Paul had in view here. Rather, he is focusing on the truth that Christ has made our conscience free from the guilt of sin. The Christian conscience is a conscience free from the tyranny of the Law, the dreadful struggle to keep the Law in order to be accepted by God.

The teachings of the Judaziers were damning. If the Galatian Christians accepted them, then they were in effect turning their back on the gospel of 'Christ alone saves', and receiving the gospel of 'Christ plus my works save'. This explains those very strong terms used by Paul in **verses 2-4** regarding the consequences of following the Judaizers.

Since Christians are people with a conscience free from the guilt of sin, we do not live our Christian Life striving constantly to gain God's acceptance. Rather, we wait for the



day of our salvation (when we shall be publicly declared, to the whole world, that we are righteous; a righteousness that comes from Jesus Christ). While waiting, we live by faith in Christ daily. This faith is not an idle faith, but it is a faith working through love. Note the theme of “*faith, hope and love*” in the Christian Life!

Having laid out the contrast between people seeking to be saved by their works and Christians who trust Christ alone for salvation (**verses 1-6**), Paul moved to contrast false preachers and true gospel preachers.

Concerning false preachers, he said that their message did not come from God. The effects of their message were damaging: *it hinders true believers from real progress in the Christian Life, troubles and unsettles believers, and spreads to negatively affect others*. On the other hand, the effects of the gospel on the lives of believers would be exactly the reverse!

There is one other contrast, and that is “*persecution*”. Preachers of the gospel will be persecuted, just like believers of the gospel will be persecuted (**4:28-31**). To preach circumcision is to tell people that by their own good works and effort, they can achieve salvation. To preach the gospel of Christ crucified is to tell people that they cannot do anything to save themselves. Only Christ can save them through the cross.

The message of circumcision is quite inoffensive, popular because it’s flattering to the ego. The message of Christ crucified is offensive to human pride, unpopular because it’s unflattering to one’s ego and the notion of self-righteousness. No wonder people hate preachers of the gospel and persecute them!

1. What is the gospel? Using no more than 8 lines, write down the main points of the gospel:
2. It is a very human response to want to avoid persecution. Have you ever modified or hid the gospel, so that you will not be persecuted? Elaborate.

## **Week 7**

**[10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2013]**

Day 1 Read **GALATIANS 5:13-15**

In these 3 verses, Paul elaborates on the Christian freedom that he mentioned in **verse 1**.

1. Who has this Christian freedom?
2. What is the essence of this Christian freedom?

**Verse 13b:**

**Verse 13c:**

**Verse 14:**

3. Think of 3 specific ways whereby you can live out this Christian freedom in your daily life.
  - (i)
  - (ii)
  - (iii)

Day 2 Read **GALATIANS 5:16-25**

The Christian Life is a life of liberty in Christ. Some relapse from liberty into bondage (**5:1**) while others turn liberty into license (**5:13**). So in **verses 13-15**, Paul emphasized that true Christian freedom will express itself in denying ungodly lusts, serving our neighbours and obeying the Law of God. How can we live in this way? The answer is the Holy Spirit and living our life in the Spirit.

1. Re-read **verses 16-18**, and then summarize the main theme of these 3 verses using one sentence:
2. Is the experience described in **verses 16-18** familiar or strange? Elaborate and share.
3. (a) Paul calls the believers to walk in the Spirit. What does this mean?

(b) Paul talks about being led by the Spirit. What does this mean?

Day 3 Read **GALATIANS 5:16-25**

Having introduced us to the Christian conflict in **verses 16-18**, Paul now zeroes in on the works of the flesh (**verses 19-21**) before talking about the fruit of the Spirit (**verses 22-23**).

Today, we shall focus on the works of the flesh (**verses 19-21**). The works of the flesh is called "*the lust of the flesh*" in **verse 16**. It basically means all the sinful desires of our fallen nature.

1. **Verse 19** puts the spotlight on the realm of *sex*. Paul mentioned four different works of the flesh, all linked to *sex*.

What are they? (Name them and give a brief description for each of them)

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

**Were you guilty of any of these works of the flesh?**

**Are you guilty of any of these works of the flesh?**

**If the answer to either/both questions above is "Yes", what should you do?**

2. The first part of **verse 20** puts the spotlight on the realm of *religion*. Paul mentioned two different works of the flesh, all linked to *religion*.

What are they? (Name them and give a brief description for each of them)

(a)

(b)

**How can a professed Christian (church-goer) be guilty of such sins?**

Day 4 Read **GALATIANS 5:16-25**

Today, we shall continue to focus on the works of the flesh (**verses 19-21**).

1. The rest of **verse 20** and the first part of **verse 21** put the spotlight on the realm of *human relationships*. Paul mentioned eight different works of the flesh, all linked to *human relationships*.

What are they? (Name them and give a brief description for each of them)

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

(f) Heresies (NKJV); translated as 'factions' (NASB), 'divisions' (ESV)

(g)

(h)

**Looking over the list above, can you say honestly that your life for the past 7 days have been entirely free from them?**

**If the answer is “No”, then what should you do?**

2. The rest of **verse 21** puts the spotlight on the realm of *drinks*. Paul mentioned two different works of the flesh, all linked to *drinks*.

What are they? (Name them and give a brief description for each of them)

(a)

(b)

**How can a professed Christian (church-goer) be guilty of such sins?**

3. What is the meaning of **verse 21**?

Day 5 Read **GALATIANS 5:16-25**

Having spent the last two days looking at the works of the flesh, we turn today to study the fruit of the Spirit. Note that it is ‘fruit’, not ‘fruits’, made up of 9 Christian graces.

1. The first three Christian graces appear to have something to do with our attitude towards God. What are they? (Name them and give a brief description for each of them)

(a)

(b)

(c)

2. The next three Christian graces appear to have something to do with our attitude towards others. What are they? (Name them and give a brief description for each of them)
  - (a)
  - (b)
  - (c)
  
3. The last three Christian graces appear to describe the character of a Christian as a person. What are they? (Name them and give a brief description for each of them)
  - (a)
  - (b)
  - (c)
  
4. All 9 Christian graces mentioned must be found in the life of a Christian. In other words, this is not a list for us to choose which ones we prefer to have.

Looking over the list of 9 Christian graces once more, ***which one is most lacking in your Christian Life right now?***

***What, do you think, can be done to address this lack?***

Day 6 Read **GALATIANS 5:16-25**

How can we ensure that the works of the flesh are on the decrease while the fruit of the Spirit is on the increase in our Christian Life? The answer is found in **verses 24-25**.

1. **Verse 24** is not talking about what was done to/for us at our conversion, but what we must do in our Christian Life.

(a) What must we do?

(b) What does this mean?

2. **Verse 25** mentioned another thing that we must do, stating a fact and then calling us to a duty.

(a) What is the fact being stated here?

(b) What is the duty we must perform?

Practically, how does this look like?

## Day 7 Summary Notes **GALATIANS 5:13-25**

As a Christian who believes in Christ alone for salvation, his conscience is free from the tyranny of the Law. He is no longer involved in the dreadful struggle to keep the Law in order to be accepted by God. In other words, a Christian is a free man.

This Christian freedom is not a license to sin and indulge in the flesh. Rather, in Christian freedom, he shuns ungodly lusts, serves other people, and cheerfully obeys God's Law as an expression of his gratitude to God for the salvation he receives (**verses 13-15**).

To live in this way is not easy. In fact, it is a daily and life-long battle! **Verses 16-18** alert us to the Christian conflict that Paul mentioned elsewhere in **Romans 7**. In the Christian, the flesh (old sinful nature that remains in the believer) wars against the Spirit who now lives in the Christian. In this battle, the Spirit is our General. He leads us in this warfare. We are to follow Him into the battlefield, one step at a time (walk).

To understand what is involved in this war, Paul takes time to list down (not exhaustively) the works of the flesh. In **verse 24**, he will tell us to crucify them! But before coming to that, he lists down 16 specific works of the flesh, spread out over the realm of sex, religion, human relationships and drinks. In uncompromising tone, he tells us that to practice these things (live in them, indulge in them) is to show oneself to be unsaved! Whatever you may say of yourselves, however loud you may profess your faith, you will not inherit the kingdom of God if the works of the flesh is your lifestyle!

Hence, if you are a real believer, you will heed what Paul says in **verse 24**. You will

crucify the flesh with its passions. The “*crucify*” in **verse 24** is not talking about **2:20** – the dying with Christ we experience through our union with Christ. Rather, Paul is talking about something we must do deliberately. Perhaps he is borrowing from the words of our Lord Jesus in calling us to take up our cross and follow Him (**Mark 8:34**). Paul is here saying that in taking up our cross, we must ensure that the execution took place. We must nail the flesh with its sinful passions to the cross. This rejection of the old sinful nature must be *pitiless* and *decisive*, and it will be painful. But either we kill sin whenever we find it in our life, or sin will kill us!

On the other hand, there is the fruit of the Spirit to cultivate. We are not called to plant the seed of this fruit; it is already planted at our conversion. Rather we are to cultivate this fruit, described as 9 Christian graces (towards God, others and self) in **verses 22-23**. In the words of Paul, if we live in the Spirit – that is, if the Spirit lives in us because He has come to us at our conversion, then we must walk in the Spirit. This ties us back to **verses 16-18** where we are called to walk in the Spirit as He leads us into battle. The Spirit will lead us, and we are the ones to do the walking! We follow the Spirit, and in following Him, the 9 Christian graces are being cultivated.

What have you learnt from the **Summary Notes** above?

## Week 8

[17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2013]

Day 1 Read **GALATIANS 5:26 – 6:5**

Recall that one expression of Christian freedom is to serve others (**5:13**). Recall that Paul highlighted 8 specific works of the flesh in the realm of human relationships (**5:19-21**). Recall that in talking about the fruit of the Spirit, three Christian graces have to do with our attitude towards others. All these point to one thing: *One practical result of walking in the Spirit can be seen in our personal relationships with others, especially with fellow believers.* This is the focus of our text for today.

1. **5:26** tells us how Christians should not treat each other. What are they?

(a)

(b)

(c)



2. Have you ever been guilty of such behaviour towards a fellow believer in Shalom Church?

Are you still guilty today?

3. Does it surprise you that Christians could treat each other in this terrible way?

What lessons can we learn from this?

Day 2 Read **GALATIANS 5:26 – 6:5**

**6:1-5** tell us how Christians should treat each other. The general principle is stated in **verse 2** while a specific example is given in **verse 1**.

1. Read **verse 2**.

(a) What are we called to do?

(b) What do you think this mean?

Note: Paul says that when we do this, we are fulfilling the Law of Christ. If we cross-reference this to **GALATIANS 5:14**, we know that Paul is talking about loving others.

2. (a) What do you think is the message of **verse 3**?

(b) What do you think is the message of **verses 4-5**?

Hint: **Verses 3-5** must be understood in their context. In other words, the message of these 3 verses must have something to do with the general principle stated in **verse 2**.

## Day 3 Summary Notes for GALATIANS 5:26 – 6:5

We know the health of our Christian Life by looking at how we treat the people in our lives. So Paul outlined for us how we should and should not treat our fellow believers, as people who live and walk in the Spirit.

First of all, we must kill self-conceit in us -- the thinking that we are better than others! This is a common sin in all believers. We do think we are better, wiser, more balanced than all other believers, though we may not say it. Paul says we must kill such an attitude in us. When we have such a sinful attitude towards fellow believers, what follows would be provoking one another and envying one another.

Hence, if we see a church where believers are in conflict and tension exists – provoking each other or being envious of each other, we have to go beyond the actions to the heart. In the heart, there's self-conceit – deluded views of oneself! We need to recognize the heart attitude and sinful deeds for what they are – *works of the flesh*. **What must we do to these works of the flesh?**

In contrast to **5:26**, this is how we should treat one another in the church: *Bear each other burdens (6:2)*. The Greek word here is *baros*, meaning a weight or heavy load. Each one of us carries burdens in our life. Sometimes, our burdens are too heavy and can weigh us down. It is true that elsewhere in the Bible, we are called to cast our burdens upon the Lord. Here, Paul is telling us that one of the ways God grants us help with our heavy burdens is via fellow believers. They come to help us bear our burdens! To be a burden-bearer is to fulfill Christ's command to love one another.

Perhaps some believers are unwilling to do this ministry. Isn't this the work of a servant? Why should I do this, since I am "*somebody*"! Paul says in **verse 3** that if you think you are something (somebody) when you are nothing (nobody), then you deceived yourself! And the truth is, we are nothing (nobody)! We are nothing other than hell-deserving sinners saved by grace!

So let's not scrutinize our neighbour and compare ourselves to them. We shall all have to answer to God for what we do, and give an account of it to Him one day individually. This is the meaning of **verses 4-5**. The 'burden' of **verse 5** is a different Greek word (*phortion*), a common word for a man's pack. In other words, don't compare yourself with others, doing what **5:26** forbids. Instead, just step forward in humility and love your fellow believers by bearing their burdens!

**Can you think of 1 person in Shalom Church whereby you can go in love and humility to bear his/her burdens?**



**After reading the summary above, and studying GALATIAN 5:26-6:5, what is one area in your life that must change? How would the change look like?**

Day 5 Read **GALATIANS 6:6**

1. Two groups of people are mentioned here.
  - (a) Who are they?
  - (b) What kind of relationship do they sustain with each other?
2.
  - (a) Is this principle being lived out in Shalom Church?
  - (b) How could this principle be abused?
3. Why do you think Paul mention this principle here in **verse 6**? In other words, what relevance does this principle has with what was said beforehand, or what shall be said afterwards?

Day 6 Read **GALATIANS 6:7-10**

1. What is the metaphor employed by Paul in these 4 verses?
2. What is the principle that Paul wanted to emphasize in these 4 verses?
3. Why do you think Paul begins his paragraph with "*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked*"?

Day 7 Read **GALATIANS 6:7-10**

1. (a) What does it mean to sow to the flesh?  
  
(b) What kind of a harvest can we expect from such sowing?
2. (a) What does it mean to sow to the Spirit?  
  
(b) What kind of a harvest can we expect from such sowing?
3. What do you think is the message of Paul here?

**Week 9**

**[24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013]**

Day 1 Read **GALATIANS 6:9-10**

1. What kind of sowing is in view here?
2. Where is this sowing to be carried out?
3. What is the encouragement Paul gave concerning this kind of sowing?
4. What have you learnt from these two verses?

## Day 2 Summary Notes for **GALATIANS 6:7-10**

In the chapter on *Divine Providence* (Chapter 5), the London Confession of Faith says this in paragraph 3: *God, in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure.* This is the doctrine of the means – normally God uses means to accomplish His will on earth.

In the natural realm, using the farmer as an example, if he wants a bumper harvest of barley at the end of the agricultural year, then he must sow plentifully good seeds of barley at the beginning of the year. Good seed would normally yield good crop. Sow barley seeds and you will get barley, not wheat. Sow sparingly and you should not expect a plentiful harvest. The principle is simple: *What you sow is what you reap.*

In **Galatians 6:7-10**, the apostle Paul, using the metaphor of sowing and reaping, made reference to the doctrine of means and the principle of “*what you sow is what you reap*”. He applies it to three areas:

### [A] Christian Ministry

The minister sows by teaching good things. God’s people, receiving good things (spiritual) from him, must share good things (physical) with him. It is an interesting application of the sowing-reaping principle outlined. We do not know why Paul would mention this here.

Maybe it was to hint to the Galatian Christians that since the Judaizers do not convey good things (spiritually) to them, they should withdraw good things (physically) from the Judaizers.

Maybe it was to hint to the Galatian Christians to more eagerly support their ministers. Well-supported ministers would mean freedom from entanglement with the affairs of the world, so that they can better preach and teach God’s Word to them. With better teaching of God’s Word, they would be better inoculated against false teachings like those propagated by the Judaziers.

Whatever may be the peculiar reason(s) for Paul’s words in **verse 6**, the principle remains valid for all local churches today. Read **1 Timothy 5:17** for another statement of this matter.

### [B] Christian Holiness

The principle of ‘*what you sow is what you reap*’ applies to our growth in holiness as well. This is a principle that believers tend to ignore, then as well as now. This is why Paul introduced the matter with such strong words: *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked.*

To sow to the flesh is to pander to the lusts of the flesh, to do its desires instead of crucifying it. If we indulge in our sins instead of following the Spirit to fight it, it is no wonder that growth in holiness is just a pipe dream for us. As John Stott puts it,

*“Some Christians sow to the flesh every day and wonder why they do not reap holiness. Holiness is a harvest; whether we reap it or not depends almost entirely on what and where we sow.”* We should be reminded that without holiness, no man can see the Lord.

To sow to the Spirit is to follow the lead of the Spirit and fight remaining sins in our life daily. The details of this warfare has been explained in **GALATIAN 5:16-25**. Specifically, it means to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit outlined in **5:22-23**. The harvest is not just having a reputation of being a good Christian, but *everlasting life!*

**Ponder: Is this teaching us that we have everlasting life by human works (living a holy life)?**

[C] Christian Well-Doing

The third application is *“doing good”*. The elaboration of *“doing good”* can be found in **GALATIANS 6:1-5**. Doing good is like sowing seeds. Where do we sow this seed? Among all men, especially our fellow believers! The harvest is assured, although Paul does not elaborate on it. Instead, he focused on the length of time between this sowing and the harvesting. The gap of time can be long and we can become weary. His encouragement is straightforward: *In due time, we shall reap*. How can he be so sure?

Because God would normally work through the means He has ordained, and He will not violate this principle most of the time: *What we sow shall be what we reap*.

Write down two lessons you’ve learnt from the Summary Notes above and share them with someone outside your RTBT group.

Day 3 Read **GALATIANS 6:11-18**

These 8 verses contain Paul’s final words to the Galatian Christians. As far as we know, in accordance to the practice then, Paul would be dictating his letter to an amanuensis (someone who copied out what was said). Here in **verse 11**, Paul took over the pen and wrote something. Perhaps it is to append his signature as a guarantee against forgery.

Perhaps, we could understand that these 8 verses were actually penned by Paul himself.

In **verses 12-15**, Paul again contrasts himself with the Judaizers.

1. What was the overriding concern of the Judaizers?
2. As a result of this overriding concern, what did they want the Galatian Christians to do?
3. As they make this demand of the Galatian Christians, there was hypocrisy in their lives. What was it?
4. What were their motivations?

**Verse 12:**

**Verse 13:**

5. Review your answers to Questions 1-4 above. From them, you can form the profile of a false teacher. Using a paragraph of no more than 5 sentences, describe how a false teacher would look like:

Day 4 Read **GALATIAN 6:11-18**

Read **verses 14-15**. They are a summary statement of Paul's ministry, and stand in sharp contrast to the work of the Judaizers.

1. What was Paul's emphasis?



2. What was Paul's boast?
  
3. Review your answers to Questions 1-2 above. From them, you can form the profile of a true preacher of the gospel. Using a paragraph of no more than 5 sentences, describe how a true gospel preacher would look like:

Day 5 Read **GALATIANS 6:11-18**

1. **Verse 16** mentions '*this rule*'. What is it?
  
2. Who is the Israel of God?
  
3. How can the Israel of God enjoy peace and mercy?

Day 6 Summary Notes for **GALATIANS 6:11-18**

False teachers love themselves and make use of those whom they are supposed to serve to achieve their own selfish agenda. This is seen so clearly in the case of the Judaizers. Their emphasis was *outward* – a good showing in the flesh. Hence they called upon the Galatian Christians to be circumcised. Frankly, they were not concerned about the spiritual wellbeing of these people. Rather, they were making use of the Galatian Christians, so that they could boast and so that they would avoid persecution. Paul went a step further to expose their hypocrisy: *Although they call the Galatian Christians to be circumcised and keep the Law, they themselves can't keep the Law!*

In contrast to false teachers, true servants of God will always value the inward above the outward, and point people to Christ instead of to themselves. So the gospel minister will emphasize the crucial importance of being a new creature in Christ. To be a new creature in Christ is an inward, spiritual condition. The gospel minister will not trim his message to be popular with the masses. No, he will preach Christ crucified, and he himself will live the cruciform life – a life shaped by the cross, putting his own sins to death, following Christ in obedience to God. In short, he will seek to do what he calls



3. List down one area of your life that has changed, as a result of this study of **GALATIANS**:

### **Acknowledgement**

Whatever the weaknesses of this Read-The-Bible-Together guide, they would have been far greater without the kind help of brothers Paul PHUA and Isaiah CHUA, sisters Karen MOK and Jemimah WEI in giving their time and energy to review the entire guide, asking questions all the way and giving many valuable suggestions.

Thank you, fellow labourers!

*Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another!* (Proverbs 27:17, ESV)