

Final Words – Gal 6:11-18

Gal 6:11-18; We've come a long way in our study of Galatians

24 messages in all, covering some of the most foundational aspects of our life in Christ
Truths that remind us over and over again *that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ* (Gal 2:16)

And Paul wraps things up with some *final* words, to make sure we don't *forget* those truths, and encourage us moving forward (**Intro**)

➤ [11] *See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.*

Paul spent a chapter and a half at the *beginning* of the letter, to prove and convince the Galatian churches that he was *legit*
That he was called by God, accepted by the apostles, and correct in his message
Here, at the *end*, he comes full circle to remove any doubt about what he's *written*;
Saying it *too* is legit; It's not fake; He wrote it himself

Then, he returns to the situation at hand, with a few final thoughts

[12] *It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.*

[13] *For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.*

[14] *But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. [15] For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.*

[16] *And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.*

[17] *From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. Yet another indicator that he's legit; And shouldn't be hassled*

B/c he has suffered for all this, and has the battle scars to prove it

Which no one would endure, if they knew their message was false; If they were "illegit"

[18] *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.*

➤ Final words, that start with a final warning:

1. If you want a peaceful life, beware of disingenuous people (v12-13)

Dishonest and insincere people; The very thing he implies about the Judaizers in v12-13

Remember them? That group from Jerusalem who believed and advocated you had to be *circumcised* in order to be *saved*? That it's *faith plus works* that = *justification*? That's the issue; They were distorting the gospel

And in doing so, Paul basically says they're faking their sincerity and upsetting the apple cart; Disingenuous to the core, and spreading anything *but* peace

Troubling and unsettling the church, like he talked about in chapter 5 (v10,12)

Which makes this a final warning to *beware*; A warning *equally* applicable to us

Whether in your home, your school, your workplace, or our church – if you want a *peaceful* life, beware of *disingenuous* people

Described in this passage, as . . .

• Those who care more about appearances than substance (v12a)

12a – *It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised*; IOW one mark of *disingenuous* people . . .

Is that they care far too much about what people think
Far too much about their appearances; Far too much about people's *perceptions*

Think churches who seek to entertain rather than worship; Pastors who are more *hip* than *holy*; TV evangelists who seek to impress instead of preach

Like the guy who spoke at one of our daughter's college baccalaureate services
He named dropped anybody and everybody he possibly could, including the President of the United States, to impress us and *make a good showing*
All while preaching a message that was not only hollow, but *unbiblical*
And my heart churned

If you want a *peaceful* life, beware of those who care more about *appearances* than *substance*

2nd, beware of . . .

• Those who compromise the truth to avoid fallout (v12b)

The Judaizers were forcing *circumcision* on the Galatians, v12b, *only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.*

They avoided the sufficiency of the cross and the cross *alone* to save, in order to avoid backlash among their friends; B/c it was contrary to what they had always believed

That would be like people in *our* day, who don't want to be criticized for the exclusivity of *gospel*; So they water it down and say there are *many* ways to God

Or those who don't want to be mistreated for their *adherence* to God's Word – so they live more like the world than the Lord

Or how about those who don't want to be overlooked for a *position* due to their beliefs?

Sometimes in the workplace, sometimes in government

So they waffle, and say whatever's politically correct

➤ Fortunately, that *wasn't* the case with Russell Vought recently; Who was being considered for a position in the Office of Management and Budget . . .

And happens to be a strong Christian; Believing that the Bible is true, and that Jesus is the only way to God

Which Senator Bernie Sanders took issue with, essentially saying, that a person with such convictions doesn't *belong* in government

Which is not only morally *shameful* on Senator Sander's part, but contrary to Article 6 of the Constitution; That says . . .

"No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office"

Fortunately Mr. Vought didn't compromise; He stood firm; And *endured* the fallout

➤ But many others don't; They try to avoid it altogether

Think mainline denominations; 3 centuries ago they were the *stalwarts* of Christian faith; Biblical through and through

But over the years, they slowly *compromised* their message, in order to please the populace and avoid abandonment; Fallout

And that doesn't even *touch* the *personal* examples you could come up with
Like those who compromise the truth by *spinning* it; In order to avoid backlash from
those who wouldn't approve
Beware of people like that; B/c in the long run, they only lead to strife

3rd, beware of . . .

- **Those who practice what they preach only if they have to (v13a)**

Only if it's expedient; Only if someone's looking; Only if the "optics" of the situation
demand it

That's what Paul alludes to in v13 – *For even those who are circumcised do not
themselves keep the law*

Even the high-minded *Judaizers* didn't practice what they preach; Not if they didn't
have to

Which every single one of us tends toward, no doubt

But for some, it's a lifestyle; From leaders with a double standard, to pastors with a
double life, to parents who live as they do not as they say

Beware of people like that; And avoid them if you want a *peaceful* life

And then last, beware of . . .

- **Those who use others to elevate themselves (v13b)**

In v13b, still speaking about the *Judaizers*, Paul says . . .

They desire to have you circumcised [the churches] that they may boast in your flesh.

Apparently, the *Judaizers* were all about numbers; All about convincing people to be
circumcised just like *they* were, so they could boast of a greater following

IOW they used the *Galatians* to elevate themselves; To make *themselves* look good

➤ When I first entered the commodities trading business, our company used to conduct
mock trading sessions for new clerks like myself

And invariably, a new trader saw that as their opportunity, to lord it over us and make
us *look* bad, in order to elevate themselves; Make *themselves* look good

And as you might imagine, it didn't make for much peace

Especially when we got down to the trading floor the next day, and they somehow got
overlooked by some of the clerks; Oops

Using others to elevate ourselves, happens all the time, doesn't it?

From bosses who use employees and take the credit for themselves, to leaders who treat
people like pawns and act like kings

Creating an undercurrent of trouble, an erosion of trust, and a life of strife (**Summary**)

Anything but peace

If you want to avoid that, if you want to live a *peaceable* life, beware of people like that
Beware of self-serving, disingenuous types – who feign sincerity, but create trouble
That's the *warning* here in Paul's final words

Next is an *encouragement*; By way of example; To say . . .

2. If you're going to boast, boast in the cross (v14-15)

Paul says in v14 – *But far be it from me to boast* [like the *Judaizers*; even though he could,
legitimately; b/c he *had* a following, he spoke the truth, he walked his talk] . . .

*But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which
the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

If you're going to boast, boast in the cross

Which doesn't so much mean brag, as it does *revel*, rejoice about, glory in
Or as John Stott said it, a preacher and theologian in the late 20th century – the cross
should fill our horizons, engross our attention, and absorb our time (paraphrased)
In a word, it should be our *obsession*

So Paul's saying, if you're going to obsess about something, like moms obsess about the
accomplishments of her kids, or hockey fans obsess about their favorite team . . .

Or businessmen about the bottom line – Obsess about the cross
Talk about the cross; Revel in the cross; Glory in the cross; Boast in the cross
That's where it's at

B/c first of all . . .

- **It saves our souls (v14a)**

The cross does; *The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*; The means by which he is our Savior
B/c on it, he died for our sins, and spared *us* from doing so ourselves
On it, he paid the price of our *redemption*, and rescued us from sin
On it, he sacrificed himself, and ensured our forgiveness
On it, he satisfied God's *wrath*, and spared us from hell
The cross of Christ saves our souls

➤ *If you believe; That when Jesus died on it, he died for you; For your sins*

And you repent of your sin, to follow him

IOW if his cross is your cross, boast in that; Revel in that; Rejoice in that; Obsess on
that; It saves our souls

2nd . . .

- **It sets us apart (v14b)**

V14b – *Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which
the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

It's by and through the cross, that *the world has been crucified to [us], and [us] to the
world*.

The world, referring to all the godless values and hopeless pleasures of unredeemed
humanity; Those dominated by sin and wrong thinking (Ryken, *Galatians*, 277)

And to be crucified one to another, means *they* no longer want to be influenced by *us*, and
we no longer want to be influenced by *them*

Or to say it another way – the world no longer *loves* us, and we no longer love the
world; We're set apart

Separated by a different purpose, a different hope, and a different path

And praise God for it, b/c it enables us to heed his command in **1 John 2:15**

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of
the Father is not in him.*

If you're going to boast in something, boast in the instrument by which God set you
apart unto salvation, and enables you to love *him* . . .

Instead of the godless values and hopeless pleasures of others*****

3rd, the cross is boast-worthy, b/c . . .

- **It eliminates works (v15a)**

V15 – For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision

When it comes to our *salvation*, the cross renders *moot* anything we do; Or don't do Anything; Any kind of works; Circumcision was just the *hot* button at the time; Representing *all* good works; *All* that the Law dictates

If we are in Christ, good works do nothing to *improve* our standing before God, or *gain* our standing before God; Nothing

The cross *eliminates* them; Good works don't matter
It's faith and faith *alone* that leads to Christ; Faith in the *cross*

And you don't have to read Exodus or Leviticus very long, to be *thankful* for such freedom; It's overwhelming; With law after law to get right and *stay* right
We're free of that; B/c of the cross; Which is all the more reason to boast in it

And then 4th . . .

- **It makes us new (v15b)**

If you're going to boast, boast in the cross – b/c it makes you *new*

Still beating the drum in v15, that it's *all* the cross and *only* the cross, Paul says . . .
For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

When it comes to our salvation and life in Christ, the only thing that matters is the internal, supernatural work of God in our hearts, to make us *new*
To change us from the inside out
To give us new desires, new affections, new power, new birth, new focus, new hope, new love, and new songs
Along with a new covenant, new heart, new teaching, new commandment, new self, and a new *life*

That's the new *creation* we've been given; *That's* the thing that counts; That's who we are; All b/c of Christ's work on the *cross*; It's all about the cross

➤ Which begs the question, why *wouldn't* you boast in it? (**Summary**)
Why *wouldn't* you revel in it? Why *wouldn't* you glory? Why *wouldn't* you obsess?

And then last . . .

3. If you want a blessing, embrace the truth (v16,18)

V16&18 – [16] And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

The *Israel of God* referring to those, based on the context of chapter 3, who have put their faith and trust in Jesus; And only those; No matter what their ethnicity
IOW the *Israel of God* is the church

And the *rule* in v16, refers to the guideline of truth by which we are to conduct our lives
Namely, that we are saved by the grace of the cross, not by works
So Paul is saying, that everyone who *individually* lives by that, and *corporately* lives by that, as part of the church – will receive a blessing; A blessing of peace and mercy

➤ Then, after confirming his legitimacy/authority in v17, he *adds* to that blessing in v18

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

Peace, mercy, and grace; Some of the biggest blessings God gives, when we trust and obey; When we believe and live accordingly; When we *walk* according to the truth

And who doesn't want a blessing? Who doesn't want peace? Who doesn't want grace? But few want the truth necessary to *get* it; Few choose the narrow path necessary to receive it

If you want the blessing, you *have* to embrace the truth; You have to live it (**Summary**)

Final words; Of both warning *and* encouragement, to solidify our foundation and encourage our hearts
That Jesus would be first, last, and always in our lives

Pray – Lord, how we long for your grace; How we need your mercy; And how we love your peace; Find us embracing your truth; Find us walking your way; And find us boasting in your cross

We give now a tithe, just a tenth of all you've given us, asking you to multiply its impact, as only you can do