

2016: Week 24

Sunday, June 12th 2016

"Do You Stand Firm In Grace?"

Galatians 5:1

¹It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery" (NASB).

On Sunday, we continued our study as a church family through Paul's letter to the Galatians. In Galatians 5 Paul continued his contrast between slavery and freedom, and he passionately urged the Galatian believers to "stand firm" in the freedom that they possessed in Christ. Paul recognized that the Galatians were susceptible to falling away from a grace-based theology and drifting towards a works-based-theology. Whether it was in regards to how they viewed their salvation or the process of spiritual maturation, the Galatians demonstrated inconsistencies and confusion. It's sad to admit, but sometimes we too exhibit similar inconsistencies. We might fully embrace that we are saved "by God's grace through faith upon the work of Christ," but do we also allow such truths to impact our own spiritual growth as well? By God's grace, let us stand firm in His grace and consider how He wants us to live.

1. READ Galatians 5:1-12

- When Paul said it was for "freedom that Christ set us free" (v.1), what specifically was he talking about?
- If a believer is freed from the obligation to keep the Mosaic Law *in order* to be saved, how is a believer to view the Mosaic Law *after* being saved? Furthermore, how is a believer to view direct New Testament instructions?
- When taking a deeper look at Galatians 5:4, John spent some time on Sunday examining the phrase "you have fallen from grace." When you hear that phrase, what comes to mind? Does this phrase mean that a person can lose their salvation (i.e. fall from the grace of God and lose his/her salvation)?

2. What About Today?

- In regards to how a believer should respond to principles from the Mosaic Law, a believer should obey abide by certain principles of the law that are affirmed within the New Testament. A believer is no longer required to be circumcised (if a male), does not need to distinguish between clean and unclean foods, and is no longer required to observe the Sabbath. However, sometimes we might find beneficial principles from some of those laws. For example, believers are not required to observe the Sabbath, but it is probably wise for us to take breaks or rests from certain activities every now and then. In regards to our engagement with direct New Testament imperatives, that is not up for debate. We should obey them explicitly, but God also wants us to do so with the right attitudes. **How might you explain the difference between following Mosaic principles but directly obeying New Testament imperatives? What role does your own heart attitude play in this process?**
- The danger we face today is when we focus on doing things either in our own strength or trying to obey God's Word with the wrong motivations and attitudes. God doesn't want our obedience, so that we *earn* His grace. He wants our obedience because He loves us and knows our ultimate good.

What expectations do you have for yourself (or others) that might be drifting too closely towards a merit-based system of spirituality?

How can a believer grow "by grace through faith" even after being saved "by grace through faith"? What role does the Holy Spirit play in this process?

- When looking at the context of the book, the phrase "fallen from grace" does not mean that a person loses his/her salvation. When God promises eternal life, it is eternal! But, a believer is very capable of falling away from a grace-based mentality and theology. We might think that we need to do more (or other people need to do more) in order to be more *well-deserved* recipients of God's grace. Let's not do that. None of us are well-deserved recipients, but God offers His grace to us anyways. May our hearts be submissive and grateful to the King of Kings!

FAMILY PRAYER: Thank the Lord that your salvation AND your spiritual growth are gifts from Him and empowered by His Spirit. Ask Him for help to STAND FIRM in the truths of His Word and to cling to the freedom He's provided in Christ.