GLORYING IN THE CROSS

**DATE: 4/20/2016 Wed.**

**TEXT: Galatians 6:11-16**

**INTRODUCTION**

As we near the end of the Book of Galatians we find Paul using this final contrast between himself and the Legalist

Throughout his writings, the apostle often contrasted himself with his critics

He did not make these comparisons to make himself look better

But, rather was often forced to make personal disclosures about himself to defend his integrity and the truthfulness of his message

**II Corinthians 12:11 *– “I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing”***

The churches wanted to see some facts, so Paul gave them some

As he brings this epistle to a close, the apostle again wanted the Galatians to compare him with the Legalist

The difference was as obvious as night and day

In so doing, he wanted the churches to repudiate the false teachers and to accept his apostolic authority once again

3 major contrasts are listed

Let’s stand to read the Word of God and then pray

And think on this thought – **“Glorying in the Cross”**

**vs. 11 -16**

**~~~Prayer~~~**

First, let’s look at the Contrast …

**I. IN PERSONAL CONCERNS – vs. 11, 12**

Why was Paul interested in the Galatians?

Why were the Legalist?

What did each expect to give to the churches?

What did each expect to get from them?

Motivation is often difficult to determine, but the apostle tried

First, let’s look at …

**A. Paul’s Concern - v.11**

***“Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand”***

The opening words ***“ye see”*** are an exclamation

You might also say *Behold!* or *Look!*

Paul wanted their attention

He wanted them to see that he wrote the Epistle himself

The words *“****large a letter”*** does not refer to the length of the letter but the size of Paul's handwriting

We know that Paul suffered from poor eyesight

This was probably the *“****thorn in the flesh”*** that Paul spoke of **II Corinthians 12:7**

Paul also alluded to it earlier when he told the Galatians in **4:15 –**

***“… if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me”***

Because of poor eyesight, Paul would dictate his letters to a scribe (secretary)

**Romans 16:22 - *“I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord”***

Tertius was Paul's secretary

Paul spoke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

**II Peter 1:21 *– “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”***

And Tertius faithfully *transcribed* as Paul dictated

But here, Paul penned his letter personally himself

His poor eyesight forced him to write in large letters so that he could see what he was writing

Paul was so Concern for these folks, that he wanted them to understand that

It would have physically hurt Paul to write this letter

But he did it because he loved them

He was willing to suffer in order to minister to them

**Paul’s Concern**

Next, let’s look at the …

**B. Legalist’s Concern – v.12**

A Legalist is someone who says that someone must keep the Law to be saved, or to stay saved

**Acts 15:1** ***– “And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved”***

Whereas Paul was concerned with others, the False Teachers were only concerned about themselves

This fact is revealed in 3 ways

**1.** Their Character **– v.12a**

***“As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh”***

The Legalist were only interested in their own appearance before their peers

They were men-pleasers – **1:10**

***“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ”***

The phrase ***“a fair shew in the flesh”*** describes a person who is religious (Show off)

It's an outward facade with no inward change

**2.** Their Compelling **– v.12b**

***“they constrain you to be circumcised;”***

The Legalist were a bossy bunch

They attempted to impose their Religion on the Galatians

They wanted to make converts to their own cause

Paul said, ***“... they constrain you to be circumcised”***

The word ***“constrain”*** is a verb and shows that the Legalist were putting constant pressure on the believers

This was the same verb used to show the …

… pressure that was put upon Titus to be circumcised, referred to in **2:3**

It was the same verb used in Paul's question to Peter, referred to **2:14**, when he asked …

***“Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?”***

Just as Paul and Titus resisted the legalistic constraint on two occasions …

The apostle now wanted the Galatians to do the same

**3.** Their Cowardliness **– v.12c**

***“only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ”***

Keep in mind, these Legalist claimed to be Christians

They had supposedly accepted the deity of Christ and believed in the necessity of His death and resurrection

For this reason they were accepted into the local churches as genuine believers

The issue of their salvation and convictions did not surface until the gospel was received by the Gentiles

At which time they began to argue that physical circumcision was essential to salvation – **Acts 15:1**

There is a cost to Follow Christ

If these Legalist had denied the necessity of circumcision, they would have been ostracized by other Jews

They would have been excommunicated from the synagogues, exploited financially, and probably harmed physically

The Legalist knew that, thus they were afraid to take a stand for justification by *faith alone*

They were more closely identified with the Pharisees and the Priests than they were with the Apostles

Paul was Concerned for the people, while the Legalist were not

**THE PERSONAL CONCERN**

Next let’s look at the Contrast …

**II. IN THE GLORY GIVEN – vs. 13, 14**

There is a vast difference between Law and Grace

The Bible tells us that the Law was a ministration of Death, but Grace is a ministration of Life

***“Ministration”*** – is talking about *a pronouncement, a formal declaration of something, the job a preacher does*

**II Corinthians 3:6, 7 *– “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, …***

***…but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” “But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:”***

The Law is good in that it reveals the Holiness of God,

But Grace is more glorious because it declares His Love and Mercy

Unfortunately, Man began to think that somehow, by keeping the Law, they were made righteous

Through the Law men glory in themselves, but in Grace they glory in God

First, let’s look at

**A. The Glory of the Legalist – v. 13**

The Glory of the Legalist was for themselves

They took the credit

**1.** Their Glorying was Inconsistent **- v.13a**

The Legalist were blind to their own spiritual dilemma

They claimed that the keeping of the Law was necessary for salvation,

But they themselves did not keep it!

Paul observed – ***“For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law”***

They charged that the uncircumcised Gentile converts were not saved because they did not obey the law … yet they were not obeying the law

They were obviously ignorant of this discrepancy which was so apparent to Paul

These false teachers fall under the same condemnation that Jesus pronounced upon the Pharisees in **Matthew 23:3, 4 –**

***“But do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not” “For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers"***

In other words, they were hypocrites

Jesus called them ***“blind guides”***

**2.** They Gloried in their Converts **– v.13b**

These False Teachers were not concerned about the salvation of the Galatians

Rather they wanted one more reason for which they could glory in their religious achievements

Paul says – ***“They desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh”***

If they could get the Galatians to submit to the rite

They would boast over their ability to make Jewish proselytes out of Gentiles, and to change the results of Paul's ministry

Each convert would become one more argument to convince people of the truthfulness of their position

Each convert would become evidences of their religious zeal and dedication

Again these Legalist fall under the condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees

Jesus said in **Matthew 23:13, 15 - *“…for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in …” “for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves”***

The Legalist would lead many astray

This is the reason why their error was so serious;

It was not just an academic issue

The converts of the Legalist would end up in hell

**B. The Glory of Paul – v. 14**

**1.** In Christ’s Cross **– v. 14a**

The Legalist gloried in what their converts could do for them,

Paul gloried in what Christ had already done

His critics gloried in self, but he gloried in the Saviour

They gloried in the flesh, but he Gloried in the Cross

***“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”***

Paul prayed that there would never be a time when he was ever un-loyal

The opening words ***“But God forbid”***

Literally mean *May it never come to pass*

Paul was saying … *As far as I am concerned, may it never come to pass...*

The apostle was resolved that no one, or nothing would ever persuade him differently

Not only in **the Cross of Christ**

But also …

**2.** In His Own Cross **- v. 14b**

The cross is not only the place of glory but it is also the place of separation

The cross was an offense to both the Jew and Gentile

It was a place of shame

It was the worst execution that the world could administer

Jesus challenged His disciples in **Matthew 16:24 -**

***“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me”***

**2:20 *– “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me”***

When we confess that we are trusting only in the crucified Christ for our salvation,

We immediately, are placed at odds with the world

In so doing, we make a clean break from it

The world had nothing to offer Christ and it should have nothing to offer the Genuine Believer

Paul confessed that he was dead to the world and that the world was dead to him

***“…by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”***

He gladly bore the offense of the cross just as Christ bore the cross to Calvary

The Legalist wanted to *“show off”* to the world

But Paul only wanted to Please Christ

So far we have looked at the Contrast in …

**THE PERSONAL CONCERNS**

**THE GLORY GIVEN**

Lastly, let’s look at the Contrast made …

**III. IN OUR POSITIONS – vs. 15, 16**

The Key phrase here is ***“In Christ”***

Every believer has his standing ***“in Christ Jesus”***

In ourselves we only have condemnation

But ***“in Christ”*** we have found Divine Acceptance

Throughout the Epistles, Paul emphasized the realities which belong to the child of God because of his spiritual identification with the Saviour

Listen to all that we have ***“In Christ”*** from **Ephesians 1**

We have been …

-- Blessed

**Ephesians 1:3 *– “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:”***

-- Chosen

**Ephesians 1:4 –** ***“According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:”***

-- Accepted

**Ephesians 1:6 *– “To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved”***

-- Redeemed

**Ephesians 1:7a *– “In Whom we have redemption through His blood …”***

-- Forgiven

**Ephesians 1:7b - *“… the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace;”***

-- An inheritance

**Ephesians 1:11a *– “In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance,”***

-- Sealed

**Ephesians 1:13 *– “In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your***

***… salvation: in Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,”***

-- Washed, sanctified, and justified

**I Corinthians 6:11 *– “And such were some of you: but (now) ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God”***

**I Corinthians 1:30 – *“But of Him (the Father) are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption”***

The total benefits of salvation come to the believing sinner only because he is ***“in Christ”***

**II Corinthians 5:17 *– “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”***

**A. A New Creation – v.15**

***“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature”***

**1.** A New Position

No one can boast about their external identity because it does not *add to,* or *diminish from,* his acceptable position

***“... neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision”***

The Legalist were claiming that the circumcised Jewish Christians were superior to uncircumcised Gentile saints,

But this attitude was absolutely wrong

Throughout the Book of Galatian’s, Paul has argued that legalism was a major obstacle to justification and sanctification

From that standpoint the uncircumcised Gentile converts could have argued that they were better off in Christ than their circumcised Jewish brothers,

But this outlook was also equally as wrong

There is no advantage or disadvantage to either background

**I Corinthians 7:18-20 – *“Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised” “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God” “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called”***

**2.** A New Creature

What counts to God is ***“a new creature”*** or creation

God through Christ has turned believing Jews and Gentiles into one new man

He has made both into one – **Eph. 2:14-18 …**

The human distinctions disappear ***“in Christ”***

**Galatians 3:28 –** ***“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”***

The position or standing has completely changed from sinner to saint

To God and to the informed Christian this truth is what really matters

**B. A New Walk – v. 16**

***“And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God”***

***“Peace”*** and ***“mercy”*** are available to the justified believer who walks according to the standards of grace

This is not the Peace WITH God that comes from Salvation

**Romans 5:1 *– “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”***

But the Peace OF God that comes from a Devotional Life

It is that daily Rest which comes from trusting solely in Christ for Holy Living

This Peace and Mercy of God will not be enjoyed by those who are not saved

People who are not saved are always restless, anxious

In the Christian experience, Peace and Mercy comes only by walking in the Spirit

That’s what Paul means when he says …

***“according to this rule”***

As a prayer Paul was asking God to bestow mercy and peace upon his own kindred

He was burdened greatly for his own nation which had rejected the claims of Christ

**CONCLUSION**

When Christ carried His cross to Golgotha, he carried a weight that only He could bear

As He was Crucified, he bore the weight of the sins of the whole world upon His shoulders

Through His perfect sacrifice, we now know Forgiveness

And will soon know Eternal Life

Our feeble efforts cannot compare to His sacrifice

And nothing we do could make His sacrifice more perfect

Truly, we glory not in our works but only in His Cross

**THE PERSONAL CONCERNS**

**THE GLORY GIVEN**

**OUR POSITION**