

False Teachers

The Believer's Life and Walk: Free and Spiritual, Galatians 5:13-6:18

Galatians 6:11-18

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

A Walk Boasting in the Cross of Christ

(Galatians 6:11-18) Introduction: this passage concludes Paul's letter to the Galatians. Paul's heart was pounding with concern over the Galatian believers and their churches. They had allowed false teachers to enter their ranks, and many of them had begun to listen and follow the false teachers. The churches were on the precipice of deserting God and destroying their witness for Christ and world missions. Usually Paul dictated his letters to a scribe, and when he was through dictating the letter, he closed the letter with a brief blessing and his signature. But note what he did as he closed this letter to the Galatians: he took the pen himself and closed the letter, closed it with a strong exhortation and with a defense of his ministry and of the gospel. He declared in no uncertain terms: believers—minister and layman alike—are to **walk boasting in nothing but the cross of Christ**.

- 1. An important section—Paul himself writes (v.11).**
- 2. False ministers make a good showing in the flesh—seeking popularity (v.12-13).**
- 3. True ministers boast in the cross of Christ (v.14-17).**
- 4. Conclusion: a benediction of grace (v.18).**

1. (Galatians 6:11) Paul— Scripture: this is an important passage of Galatians, so important that Paul took the pen from his scribe and wrote it himself. The reference to writing a *large letter* means large print. Why did Paul write with large print? Several explanations are given.

1. Because Paul wanted to boldly emphasize the points of what he was saying. It should be noted that this is possible, but the scribe could have done this as well as Paul.
2. Because Paul could not write well, so he had to write in bold print in order for it to be read. This too is unlikely, for Paul was a well educated man.
3. Because Paul had some kind of eye problem or blurred vision. Of all explanations, this seems most likely. **(See 2 Cor. 12:7-10; Galatians 4:14-15.)**

There is no question that Paul chose to personally write this section because he wanted to emphasize its message and to verify that he was the true author of the letter. Why he wrote in large print is unknown.

The lesson for us is this: the message of this passage is important enough for Paul to take the pen from the scribe and write it himself. Therefore, we need to give utmost attention to what is said.

2. (Galatians 6:12-13) False Teachers— Flesh: false ministers seek to make a good showing in the flesh, that is, they seek worldly popularity; they want to be accepted and approved by the world.

Remember: false teachers had infiltrated the churches of Galatia (see [Galatians 1:6-7](#) for what they taught). They opposed both Paul and the gospel he preached. Their major stress was that a person had to undergo the basic ritual of religion, that of circumcision (baptism, church membership, etc.). They made circumcision necessary for salvation. If a person was circumcised, he was well on his way to being saved. Paul attacked this position and made a strong charge against false teachers. He charged them with being driven by worldly motives. **Keep in mind that he was dealing with false teachers and ministers *within the church*. What he had to say is a strong lesson for teachers of every generation.**

1. The false teachers sought to gain the approval of their peers and to escape persecution. They sought the favor of men over the favor of God. Many of the earliest ministers of the gospel were priests who saw Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. However, they accepted Him only as an addition to the law. They said that Jesus Christ came primarily to show how God wants us to live; therefore, He only added to the law. The law was still important in approaching God: we were to approach God through both the law and Jesus Christ. Therefore, it was unpopular in the ministry of that day to proclaim that Christ alone was the way to God. The ministers who proclaimed Christ alone were persecuted through ridicule, mockery, abuse, and rejection. A minister who preached salvation through the cross of Christ alone was thought to be destroying both the law and established religion. Therefore, the ministers of established religion persecuted the ministers of the cross. As a result, it took real courage to stand up and proclaim the truth. **Most chose the easy way out and went along with the established ministry in order to avoid the persecution.** It seems to me that there is no difference today.

Thought 1. How many go along with the *established and popular religion of the world* instead of proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ and His Word? How many fear the ridicule, rejection, and abuse of the cross? How often is a minister tempted to tone down the message of the cross to keep from offending some in the congregation? How many ministers have to fear reaction if they proclaim the simple message of salvation by faith in the cross of Christ *alone*? How many have to fear reaction from their peers and denominational leaders?

2. The false teachers sought to make a good showing by adding to their statistical numbers ([Galatians 6:13](#)). Note exactly what Scripture says: they wanted to have people circumcised so that they could boast in their numbers. Their interest was not so much in teaching people to obey the Lord and the law as it was in building up their own security. They wanted recognition through the appearance of a growing ministry. They sought the approval and acceptance of people more than the welfare of the people. Of course, keeping the law and leading the people to obey God was important, just as every man's teaching is important to him. But their primary concern was the appearance of a growing ministry so that they could secure their own livelihood and position with the people.

Thought 1. People are impressed with increased numbers on statistical growth. Everyone knows this, both religious and lay leaders. As a result ministers are often drawn into the temptation to stress growth in baptism, church attendance, Bible study, programs, or activities. Increased numbers...

- build image
- boost egos
- convey success
- enlarge reputation
- secure position
- increase opportunity
- point to gifts and abilities
- stress charisma
- open doors
- help to increase income
- attract attention

3. (Galatians 6:14-17) Ministers: true ministers boast in the cross of Christ.

The cross of Christ is the *only boast* of a true minister of God, for there is no other approach to God. God accepts a person only if he comes to Him by way of the cross. There is no other way to become acceptable to God. Therefore, the true minister has no other message, no other truth of which to boast. **Paul gave four reasons why the cross is the minister's only boast.**

1. The cross crucifies the world to men and men to the world. What does this mean?

a. First, the cross crucifies the world to men. The world has all kinds of attractions that appeal to men, and men lust after the attractions. There are such attractions as...

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| • position | • sex |
| • power | • pleasure |
| • acceptance | • honor |
| • recognition | • food |
| • money | • possessions |

The list could go on and on to include every appealing attraction on earth, but what is the end of it all? Deterioration, decay, death, and a sense of judgment. Even man himself ages, dies, and decays. There is nothing on earth that lasts and lives eternally. If man wishes to live forever, someone with unlimited power has to restructure this world. Someone has to destroy the world and remake it, everything in it, including the flesh of man. The glorious news is that God has done this very thing. God has shown that He loves this world, and He has demonstrated His love in the most perfect way possible. How?

God sent His Son into the world to *die for men* and to free them from the world. When Jesus Christ died upon the cross, He bore the penalty of our transgressions. He took the law's condemnation of death against us and bore the condemnation for us. Therefore, any person who believes that Jesus Christ died for him shall be saved from this world of death. God declares that he will count that person as having been crucified with Christ. The person never has to die. When the moment comes for the person to pass from this world into the next, God will transfer the person right into His presence to live eternally. It will all happen within the blinking of an eye. The person who believes in Christ will never die, never taste or experience death.

This is what is meant by the world being crucified to the believer. *The believer never has to go the way of the world*, that is, the way of sin, corruption, death, and judgment.

- ⇒ Jesus Christ died to deliver the believer from the world, all its bondages including the bondage of death.
- ⇒ The Spirit of Jesus Christ (the Holy Spirit) lives within the believer to give him the power to overcome the world in all its corruptible attractions. Through the Spirit of God, the believer has the power to conquer the lusts of the flesh.

b. Second, the cross crucified men (believers) to the world. What does this mean? When the believer dies to the world, he turns away from the attractions and pleasures of the world; therefore, the believer becomes unattractive to the world. Worldly men do not like what they see, for the believer is rejecting the life-style and pleasures of the world. Consequently, the worldly want nothing to do with the believer. They want him out of their way. They want him as non-existent, as a dead person to them. Therefore, when a person comes to the cross of Christ, the cross crucifies him to the world and its ways. He is no longer attractive to the world.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" ([Romans 6:6](#)).

"For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" ([2 Cor. 4:11](#)).

"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" ([Galatians 2:20](#)).

"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him" ([2 Tim. 2:11](#)).

2. The cross creates a new man. Nothing makes a person acceptable to God except God's very own Son, Jesus Christ. No religion, no law, no ritual—nothing can avail anything with God except Jesus Christ. Therefore, if any man wishes to live with God, he has *to believe in Jesus Christ and approach God in the name of Jesus Christ*.

Now a very practical question arises: How does using the name of Jesus Christ make a person live forever? Does a person become acceptable to God by just approaching God and saying, "God, I come to you in the name of Jesus Christ"? No! And there is one good reason. God knows who is really sincere and who is not. God cannot be deceived. ***Words and false profession***—just using the words "in the name of Jesus Christ"—will not save anyone. **A person has to be genuinely sincere.**

The point is this: when a person is sincere in his belief, God gives the person a new spirit—a recreated spirit. God actually places His divine nature, the presence of His own Spirit, into the person's life. The person is "born again" spiritually. He becomes what Scripture calls a *new creature, a new man*.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" ([John 3:3-6](#)).

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" ([2 Cor. 5:17](#)).

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" ([Galatians 6:15](#)).

"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" ([Ephes. 4:24](#)).

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" ([Col. 3:10](#)).

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" ([1 Peter 1:23](#)).

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" ([2 Peter 1:4](#)).

"Beloved, let us love one other: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" ([1 John 4:7](#)).

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten [born again] of him" ([1 John 5:1](#)).

3. The cross brings peace and mercy ([Galatians 6:16](#)). Note who it is that experiences peace and mercy: those who walk by the rule of the cross and of the new creature. A person who walks after the cross, seeking to live as a new creature in Christ Jesus will be given...

- the peace of God (see [Galatians 1:3](#)).
- the mercy of God. He will experience both the forgiveness of sins and the acceptance of God. And most wonderfully, he will be given the *perfect assurance* of eternal life and of God's care. (See [Ephes. 2:4-5](#).)

Note that the church and believers are called "the Israel of God." This simply means that the church and believers are the true Israel of God, the ones in whom God fulfills His promises. (See [Romans 9-11](#) and notes—" [Romans 9-11](#) for a full discussion of Israel and its place in God's world-wide plan.)

4. The cross gives purpose to the scars of life. Christ had suffered for Paul; therefore, Paul was willing to suffer for Christ. And suffer he did. He bore as much as any man has had to bear for Christ (see [2 Cor. 1:8-10](#) for a list of Paul's sufferings). The word for marks (stigmata) means the branding marks that masters put upon their slaves. The marks identified the slaves as belonging to them.

The point is clear: Paul had subjected his body so much and suffered so much persecution for Christ that his body bore the marks of such subjection and suffering. He could say that the marks upon his body were the branding marks of Christ—the marks that proved his slavery and service to Christ. Therefore, let no man deny his call and ministry for the Lord. He had strong evidence that he was a true minister of the Lord Jesus: the very marks upon his body. The cross of Jesus Christ drove Paul to serve Christ, even to the point of suffering beyond imagination.

Thought 1. The believer who suffers reproach, ridicule, mockery, and other persecutions because of his stand for Christ—that believer bears the marks of Christ in his body.

4. ([Galatians 6:18](#)) Conclusion: Paul ends the letter to the Galatians abruptly. He will have no more attacks upon his ministry nor upon the gospel of Christ. The churches and their people need to repent and get rid of the false teachers. Until then:

"Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen"
([Galatians 6:18](#))