

Chapter Twenty-one

Our Divine Teacher

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Galatians 3:1-3).

The Apostle Paul had preached salvation through faith by the grace of God without the works of the Law. Many in the region of Galatia were happy in their new-found redemption and their complete freedom from the curse of the Law. But then certain legalistic Judaists, who made a practice of following Paul everywhere he went, also came to Galatia and began to teach these happy new converts that Paul was all wrong in preaching salvation by grace alone. They agreed with Paul that one is saved by grace without the works of the law, but then after that he is kept saved by his works and perfect obedience to the commandments of God. This greatly disturbed the Galatian Christians who evidently knew that they needed God’s grace to keep them, as well as to save them. But these legalists kept hammering away until the churches of Galatia were all confused.

Paul To The Rescue

The reports of this confusion reached the ears of Paul while he was preaching in the city of Corinth, and he immediately wrote this epistle under inspiration and dispatched it to the church of Galatia to correct this error. The mistaken teaching was that we are saved by grace, and then we are kept saved by our behavior and keeping of the Law. Paul’s answer is that salvation is all of grace – that one is saved by grace, and kept by grace. In our Scripture in Galatians 3, Paul expresses both surprise and indignation at the fickleness of these converts and says:

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you...” (Galatians 3:1).

Then he asks two questions. First, how were you saved? This is in verse 2:

“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (Galatians 3:2).

The answer, of course, was **“by faith,”** and not by the works of the Law. Then follows the second question:

“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Galatians 3:3).

Paul asks, *“How foolish can you be? If our God of grace by His mercy and love was willing to save us when we were ungodly sinners, will he not continue to love us enough after we are His children, to keep us unto the end?”* It is utterly unthinkable that God would sacrifice

His Son for sinners and then cast off His children. Let us ask Paul what he thinks about this. He has already clearly expressed himself in Galatians 3:1-3, but listen to him now as he writes to the Philippians:

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”
(Philippians 1:6).

This was the confidence Paul had for the Philippians Christians, and this same confidence he also had for himself. Listen to his testimony to Timothy:

“...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Timothy 1:12).

Paul had no fear of losing his salvation. However, he did fear, greatly fear, that he might fail the Lord and be chastened and lose his reward and become a castaway – (disapproved for the desired crown) – but he did not fear that the Lord would be unfaithful. Paul never doubted the faithfulness of God, but he was disturbed by the possibility of his faith the Lord. (Read carefully 1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

In Romans 8:33 Paul asks one of his striking questions so characteristic of him. It is a challenge:

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:33-34).

Anyone who will study these verses carefully in the King James Bible, will notice that there are two little words in verse 33, and the same two little words in verse 34, that are written in italics. The words are italicized to show that they are not in the original, but were added by the translators. The translators supplied these *“italicized”* words in order to make sense in their understanding of the meaning, however, in some cases, the translators addition, instead of clarifying the meaning of the original, obscure the true intended implication. If we were to read Romans 8:33-34, omitting the two italicized words *“It is,”* we would get the real force of this passage:

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?” (Romans 8:33). Now, omitting the words *“It is,”* from this 33rd verse, it reads, *“God that justifieth?”* Sounds preposterous – doesn't it? Can anyone believe that God, who justified at the moment of salvation, afterwards charges the believer again?

Now, in verse 34, omit the words *“It is,”* and it reads: *“Who is he that condemns? Christ that died?”*

Paul is asking, *“Will God now condemn us?”* He who died for us to save us, will He now again condemn us? Christ who is risen from the grave and ascended into Heaven, will He condemn us now? He who sits at God's hand to make intercession for us, will he

condemn us? Is He sitting at God's right hand placing His children under the condemnation of the law every time they stumble and fall? Of course not! He is there to make intercession for us. So Paul asks again, "Who is he that condemns?" Christ who died and rose and intercedes? Will he condemn us? Perish the thought! How hopeless would be our estate if this were so.

The Conclusion

No wonder Paul breaks out in a shout of victory and a burst of praise and cries out:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35, 37-39).

Paul says that death, life, angels, height or depth can never separate us from Christ.

Objections

The believer is free and delivered from the curse and the condemnation of the Law. One of the most frequent objections raised to this teaching is a passage in Matthew 5. It seems there are those who constantly use this passage to attempt to prove that we are still under the Law. This passage reads:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17-18).

Of course, Jesus did not destroy the Law, however, Christ fulfilled the Law by meeting its demands and paying its penalty for the believer and now that believer is . . .

"...delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6).

Someone argues that Luke 16:17 states that "no part of the Law shall fail while heaven and earth remain." The actual reading of the verse goes like this:

"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail" (Luke 16:17).

The truth of the matter is that the Law has not failed. It succeeded in doing what it was intended to do – reveal sin as a transgression and condemn the sinner, It did its perfect work, and having done its perfect work, left all men under condemnation; but Jesus Christ came to do what the Law could not do.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4-5).

Someone may ask, “Why did you stop at verse 18 when you were reading in Matthew 5? Why not read the rest of the verse.” Well, verse 19 states,

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19).

No one in his right mind reaches men to break God’s Laws. The Law still condemns the sinner and exacts its penalty, but for the believer Christ has born the curse of the law, and now the grace of God teaches us holiness, obedience and godliness. The believer desires to keep God’s will perfectly, even though he too often is overcome.

The Law Our Guide

Another objection is, “I agree that we are justified by faith through grace and not of works; but while we are not under Law for salvation, do we not need the Law to show us how to live and teach what is right and wrong for us as believers?” This is a legitimate question, but the answer is clear from the Scripture. The believer has within him another guide, a new teacher. When the sinner received Jesus Christ as Savior, he is **born from above**, born of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit moves in and takes up His abode within this believer. We become temples of the Holy Spirit, and He is there to guide us into all truth. Jesus said:

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

Nowhere in the New Testament is the Law said to be the guide for the believer. He has a better guide, even the **grace of God**. When a question of right or wrong comes up, the believer does not have to run to Exodus 20 to see what the Ten Commandments say about it. Look at the words of Paul to Titus:

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11-12).

It is the grace of God that teaches us how to walk pleasing to Him. How would it sound if we read the verse this way” *“For the law of Moses that condemns the transgressor hath appeared, teaching us that denying ungodliness...”*? No, that’s not what God says. It is not the Law that is said to teach us, but the grace of God is our Teacher.

Our Guide is not only a set of commandments, but a Person who creates in us a desire to serve the Lord by asking the one question, “Can I do this to the glory of God?” If the answer is no, it is wrong. Everything must be weighed in the balance of God’s will.

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31)

To the Colossians Paul laid down the rule that cannot possibly be misinterpreted or misunderstood:

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him...And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Colossians 3:17 & 23).

When faced with the problem of whether to do, or not to do a thing, ask yourself the question. *“Can I do this to the glory of God? Will it meet with His approval? Would I want to be doing this if Jesus should come?”* We should have no trouble knowing God’s will, if we really are in earnest to please Him because of our perfect redemption through the work of the Lord Jesus. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.