

Monday, March 14, 2022

Read Galatians 1:1-5

### Credentials

**“Paul, an apostle – not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.” Galatians 1:1**

We all understand the importance of credentials. When you go to a surgeon, you want to know a few things: what school did he or she attend, an ability to explain and understand the options for your treatment, experience in performing the procedure that you need, etc. Such things are valuable. If a surgeon was laying out their credentials, it would be truly odd if she said, “You have nothing to worry about, I was the sixth grade geography bee champion.” This might qualify her as a potential ringer for your Trivia team, but not as a surgeon.

So when Paul begins the letter to the Galatians by offering his credentials, we should understand these words as important. This is the foundation upon which Paul will build the entire letter. It’s all the more noteworthy that Paul lists only one credential: apostle. Literally, he is a “sent one.” This is why he goes on to add clarification. Paul is not sent by a group of men or through any old man or even by humanity in general. Paul is sent through Jesus Christ and God the Father.

Why does this matter? When Paul speaks, He is sent to speak for Jesus. When we read the words of Paul, he’s not giving his opinion or passing on the decisions of some group of men. Paul speaks for Jesus. So, in a real way, these are Jesus’ words. And who is this Jesus? “raised from the dead” by God the Father and “gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age.”

Paul is sent by Jesus (the crucified and risen Lord) to speak these words. Whenever we read Paul’s letters, we should receive them in just this way: these are the words of Jesus, our Savior, shared by Paul, His credentialed apostle.

Prayer – Dear Jesus, lead me to receive all words of Scripture as from You. Amen.

*Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jason*

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

Read Galatians 1:6-9

### One Truth

There is one truth - that is Jesus Christ. In Him alone are revealed the penalties of sickening selfishness, of combative refusal to accept God's Way of Salvation. In Jesus alone comes the power to defeat the devil in our personal lives and in our attitudes/actions/efforts in the world. At the end of the Letter of Revelation (22:18-19) the Apostle John warns the fate of those who add or subtract from the Bible (which is God's message about Jesus and Salvation). So the Apostle Paul says the same thing in Galatians! God's curse lies on those who try to change, in any way, the message of Jesus the Christ.

Some people try to make the Gospel harder - they want to add conditions to your salvation. They might demand that you DO something in a certain way to qualify for the "free" salvation Jesus promised. Jesus tells us to believe - and then says "no comes to Him but by God's calling, guiding, and power intervening to change us. But adding our sinful efforts don't make His acts better, at best they could only "smear" what He does perfectly.

Other people wish to make the Gospel easier - somehow they think that it is hard to receive that which is free! On their part they try to remove the seriousness of sin - they will claim that some sins are not serious, or that one should just "try" to do good. Essentially they want to make God un-serious, to make heaven a home to sin ("Just little ones"?). But that wouldn't be heaven but hell instead.

NO! Jesus is the way, the only way. I am so glad He came, lives in me, and tells me in his word to pay attention and put my thoughts in His ways.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for coming to me. Thank you and keep me safe from these strange false teachings. Asking as one of Jesus' people, Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad*

Wednesday, March 16, 2022  
Read Galatians 1:10

### Servants of Christ, Not Man

In Chapter 1 of Galatians, St. Paul wastes no time in getting to the point—the Gospel that people have heard is from God, not from Paul himself. In other words, it is trustworthy—Paul didn't just make it up. And there is no other Gospel besides the one that Paul preached. Verse 10, our verse for today, points out that what Paul preaches he preaches not in order to make men approve of him, but because he is faithful to God.

Our world today often doesn't want to hear the true Gospel—that Jesus Christ is salvation for all who repent and believe. Grace offends people—most of the time we don't want other people to receive grace when they do wrong. We want them to be punished. On the other hand, when we sin, we excuse it away, making it so that we often act like we don't even need to be forgiven, because it wasn't *really* our fault. All of this self-deception is spiritually dangerous!

Paul makes the truth plain—we must seek to serve Christ rather than seek the approval of other people. Because God's Word offends others, some Christians try to soften it when they talk about it. They ignore parts of Scripture that they deem too harsh or too merciful. And often what people end up doing is making a God in their own image—they assume that God thinks just like they do, rather than confessing that they are but humble servants of an almighty God.

It can be hard to tell the truth of the Gospel. People in our culture don't want to listen, and so we are tempted to water down God's Word to seek their approval. But here St. Paul's words in v. 10 can encourage us—it is better to be faithful to God because he is always faithful to us. While the approval of other people is always changing, God doesn't change. Cling to the life-changing truth of the Gospel—even if it's not popular with those around you!

Prayer: Lord, make me a better servant to you. Give me the courage to teach people the truth of your Word without trying to change it for the sake of men. Enable me to stand firm in the light of the Gospel when I face worldly temptations. Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Alex Smith*

March 17, 2022

Read Galatians 1:11-17

### Trust in Jesus

Paul had a very interesting relationship with the Christians in Galatia. One could say that it was a love-hate relationship of sorts, but the Galatians never hated Paul and Paul certainly never hated them. No, instead, the Galatian Christians were more of an annoyance to Paul. They were like a child who is completely confident that he knows what is best. The people of Galatia repeatedly questioned Paul's authority, asking, "are you REALLY an apostle? We have several generations worth of tradition that disagree with what you're saying, Paul. We're open to listening to you, but how do we know we can trust you?"

They doubted Paul and found themselves relying on their traditions, their laws, and themselves. Though they knew about Jesus's sacrifice, they still didn't trust that God's promise of salvation had actually been fulfilled. Jesus's gift of grace was too free, too easy, and too new. It was too good to be true. It couldn't be trusted. It was much better and far more comfortable to simply do things as they'd always been done.

And then we get to our passage. Paul writes to the Galatians saying, "look, whether you believe that I'm an apostle or not, you can't deny that things have changed. I used to be like you; trusting the Jewish traditions, laws, and myself. But that only led to me being wrong, violent, and selfish! Now, I have been changed, not by man, but by God Himself. I'm proof that everything has been changed."

We are often like these Christians in Galatia. We are completely confident that we know what's best. We think that worshiping in the right way, singing the right hymn, or even reading the right devotion will contribute to our salvation. We rely on our traditions, laws, and ourselves. But that trust is misplaced because all of those things are human, imperfect, and fallen parts of Creation. Trusting in them can only lead to being like pre-conversion Paul: wrong, violent, and selfish. It's foolishness!

So instead, put your trust in Jesus, who has changed everything. Salvation isn't a game that we're trying to win. No, salvation is a game that Jesus has already won for us. All we need to do, all we can do, is trust in Him. That's wisdom.

Prayer: "Almighty God, grant that we, who have been redeemed from the old life of sin by our Baptism into the death and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, may be renewed by Your Holy Spirit to live in righteousness and true holiness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

- *The Treasury of Daily Prayer*, "Prayer for spiritual renewal," pg. 1320.

*Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Micah Brown*

Friday, March 18, 2022  
Read Galatians 1:18-24

"And they glorified God because of me"

We all know the story of Paul. He was a zealous Jew who persecuted Christians and Jesus appeared to him and converted him so that he began to preach the Gospel. But in knowing the story, we can very often gloss over the wonder of what Christ has done in Paul. Paul wasn't a grumpy guy who didn't get Christianity. He was persecuting and putting Christians to death. Paul was more or less a terrorist who made it his life's goal the murder of Christians. The church did not see Paul as an opponent but as a fearsome and violent enemy. Paul was an agent of Satan, no doubt about it. We can hardly say too much about what an awful man Paul was while he was still Saul.

So, when Christ appears to this man and convicts him of persecuting God Himself, we might expect that the miracle is that Paul stopped persecuting the church. And this would be a miracle, but this is not what happened. Paul did not return home and take up tentmaking again. Instead, Paul became perhaps the most important human in the history of Christianity after our Lord Himself. This is the wonder that we see Paul talking about in our text for today. The churches see this murderer turned into the greatest preacher and evangelist of Christianity. Through Paul, God shows how powerfully He can use sinners for His own purposes. If God could turn Paul into such a powerful voice for Christ, imagine what he can do with us who have never even come close to killing anyone! Most of all, we are bound to follow the lead of the churches in Judea and glorify God because He has worked through the gravest of sinners to bring the saving message of Christ to a world that dearly needs to hear it.

Prayer: Lord of the Church, we thank you for the apostle Paul. Let us see in him an example of your unlimited forgiveness and of your unstoppable work even through sinful humans. Work through us also to bring the word of Your Son to Your world. Amen

*Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney*

Saturday, March 19, 2022

Read [Galatians 2:1-5](#)

### “The Law and Christian Freedom”

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 introduced many colossal changes to the former totalitarian regime. No longer was the KGB watching every move of the people. No longer could the government dictate their every action – take their property, hire or fire them, or impose policies that could ruin their lives. Freedom! But what also took place during that turbulent time was the overthrow of former institutions: security, law enforcement, and order. Criminal elements took advantage of the chaos. Politics abhors a vacuum, and some leaders created their own “fiefdoms” in which they ruled with Soviet-style control. And today, Russia has in many ways returned to the corruption and absolute power of the old days.

In Paul’s time, Judaism had similarly been “overthrown”. All the laws, the powers and authorities, the rites and the ceremonies had been developed and “perfected” over thousands of years. God had given the Law to Moses, and rules and regulations had been built around that (by people) to ensure the faithful could stay well clear of unlawful behavior. They were convinced they could be righteous if they tried hard enough. But Jesus overthrew that teaching, and Judaism was divided. The Jews eventually retreated back into even greater legalism, while the Christians floundered in their new-found freedom. What of the Law? Circumcision, ceremonies, identity?

Paul writes about this in Galatians. He’s already introduced himself as an apostle and the former chief of sinners; now he gives his first example of how Christian freedom can and must coexist alongside the Law in the Church. He relates how, after a lengthy time in mission to the Gentiles, God revealed to him that he should talk with the leaders of the Church **“to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.”** He’d been teaching that Gentiles (people outside the Jewish tradition) did not need to adopt all the former Jewish rites and ceremonies when they became Christians. And, when he returned to Jerusalem, everyone agreed that was the case.

This might sound like a trivial argument to become embroiled in, but the Gospel was at stake in this conflict. We will hear, as we proceed through Galatians, how Jesus came *not* **“to abolish them [the Law and the Prophets] but to fulfill them.”** We have been freed from slavery to the Law, but in Christian freedom use the Law to guide our good works.

Prayer: God of Grace, through the salvation won by Your Son, Jesus, You freed us from bondage to the Law. In our newfound freedom, help us to use Your Law and Gospel to guide our deeds. Amen.

*Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson*

Monday, March 21, 2022

Read Galatians 2:6-10

### No Partiality

**“God shows no partiality.” Galatians 2:6**

Almost everyone has had the experience of being in the presence of someone that made you tongue-tied. There is a decent chance it was a hero of yours that you had the opportunity to meet, and in the moment your words were limited.

If you haven't had that experience, you certainly have been influenced by someone that you respect. Their words just have more weight compared to the arguments of others. When they speak, you listen.

With each one of these situations, we have moved closer to what Paul is getting at in his statement that “God shows no partiality.” Paul goes even further in saying, “those who seemed influential added nothing to me.” What Paul is getting at is of vital importance.

First, God doesn't show partiality because He is the God of all. He has created all. He sent His Son to die for the sins of all. We can fall into the trap of thinking that since God values all, that this means He values us less. I say this because we have limits on what we can give. God has no such limitations. His infinite love, wisdom, and power means that He can value all, while we always favor some over others.

Paul applies this to himself and the leaders in Jerusalem by saying “those who seemed influential added nothing to me.” The standing of others (or even himself!) is nothing compared to the Word of God. Simply having greater standing in the world or even in the Church is less significant than what God has to say. We need not take the opinions of even well-respected people as gospel truth...because we have THE GOSPEL in Christ. So, we value the words of pastors and teachers and parents as they share God's Word because our hope is not built on their words, but on the mercy of God, which is for all.

Prayer – Dear Jesus, I rejoice that you do not show partiality, but have given Your life for all. Lead me to be influenced not merely by the notoriety of a speaker, but by those who faithfully share Your life-giving Word. Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason*

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

Read Galatians 2:11-13

### God, Support Me

Whenever I get self-confident, when I think I have it all under control, the devil steps in and challenges me. I am so certain that I know our Lord and that I can live in His ways no matter what - and then suddenly there will come a test. Do I love Jesus more than ...

Sometimes the test comes out in the world, but at least then I feel sure that I have the support of my friends, especially of those who also love the Lord. But then comes the time when error creeps into the church. Sometimes, it is my fellow churchmen (and/or women) who having been deceived by the devil, try to lure or even force me into following their errors.

Then I face the truth - do I trust my Lord, even if it means my best friends should be opposing me? Do I believe that He will care for me, even when I am alone proclaiming the truth? What does the Bible tell us?

Paul found an occasion to confront an Apostle of our Lord, someone who had been taught by Jesus, who had received the truth by visions - but yet, out of fear, had compromised the very lesson God revealed to him in a vision! But what about the Prophets in the Old Testament? Think of Jeremiah confronting a church crowd in the temple - all threatening his life - for telling the truth. Think of Amos, a farmer, confronting the church crowd with the truth. God supported them! He will and can support me too. But Help me, Lord!

Prayer: You know everything Lord Jesus. Give me grace to rely on You when people attack me for your truth. Thank you for the Promise that You will. Amen

*Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad*



Wednesday, March 23, 2022

Galatians 2:14-16

### Justified through Jesus

In verse 16 of our reading for today we get a beautiful and straightforward articulation of justification by grace through faith. “We know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.” Paul is emphasizing to his readers the always important distinction between law and Gospel. The problem with what the Jewish Christians had been doing was that they were insisting that Gentile Christians follow all of the Jewish laws, as if that were necessary for salvation. Here, Paul makes it clear that the law cannot justify.

This is because all of us have sinned—indeed we have original sin even from our conception, as the Psalmist says. Therefore, it is impossible for us to hope to justify ourselves according to our obedience to the law. Unfortunately, this is still the idea that most people, even many Christians, have. They believe that if they do enough good works, and are a “good person”, then they will be rewarded with heaven. This kind of thinking is spiritually dangerous! Paul here warns us that it is faith in Christ and what he has done that justifies us before God and grants us salvation.

On the other hand, this doesn’t mean we don’t care about God’s law anymore. On the contrary, we should desire for our lives to be in sync with God’s will. The law shows us where we have gone astray: Martin Luther compares it to lightning and thunder at one point—warning signs of wrath to come if one does not repent. The law shows our sin and our need for justification by Christ—we cannot save ourselves, but faith receives the work of Christ.

After justification by faith, the Holy Spirit aids in our sanctification as we put aside sins and fight against temptation and do good works for the sake of our neighbor. However, we do so knowing that nothing we do can merit salvation. This proper distinction between law and Gospel is the central tension of the Christian life—which is why Luther and other theologians such as Walther put so much emphasis on it!

Prayer: Lord, help us to see that we can never hope to justify ourselves. Remove our pride and stubbornness and give us eyes to see that salvation comes only through the work of Jesus and by faith through him. Help us to live in this forgiveness, knowing that you have redeemed us. Amen.

*Today’s Devotion was written by Seminarian Alex Smith*

Thursday, March 24, 2022

Read Galatians 2:17-21

Hello, I am...

The Christians in Galatia are having an identity crisis, and it's ripping the community apart. Paul noticed a sharp divide between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile converts. On one hand, the Jews couldn't forget the laws of their past traditions and bring themselves to live like Gentiles, and on the other hand, the Gentiles couldn't subject themselves to all of the traditional rules of Jewish culture. The Christian community in Galatia was quickly beginning to look like a faction society: either you were a Jewish Christian or a Gentile Christian, and these two groups didn't get along. They were wearing the laws of their pasts like nametags that either said, "Hello, I am a Jewish Christian" or "Hello, I am a Gentile Christian," and this divided them, weakening the kingdom of God.

Today, we live in a society where this is the reality. All of the different modern denominations and sects of Christianity are proof of this. It's easy for us to look at practices and confessions of other denominations and despise them based on points of disagreement. We wear our nametags saying, "Hello, I am an LCMS Christian" and they wear theirs saying something different. We think differently, believe differently, and practice differently, and it's important that these differences are recognized. But we too often forget something even more important: our similarities. We are all united by our Christian identity. We can all repeat the words of Paul and call them our own: "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." All people are different, and these differences are important not to ignore, but there is nothing more important than the unity found in Christ.

So, reflect on yourself and the nametags you wear. Continue to wear your LCMS nametag because that states what you believe. But I encourage you to wear an even bigger nametag that simply says, "Hello, I am a Christian," because that states who you are. You have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer you who live, but Christ who lives in you. We are one body of Christ, redeemed, sanctified, and saved. There is surely nothing more important than this.

Prayer: "Merciful God, we humbly implore You to cast the bright beams of Your light upon Your Church that we, being instructed by the doctrine of the blessed apostles, may walk in the light of Your truth and finally attain to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

- *LSB*, "Prayer for the Church," pg. 305.

*Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Micah Brown*

Friday, March 25, 2022

Read Galatians 3:1-5

### By Hearing with Faith

Paul's letter to the Galatians is likely his most distressed letter that we have in the Bible and for good reason. The Galatian church was turning away from the truth it had been taught to a crass legalism that said the Gospel is fulfilled only through works of the law. Paul calls the Galatians then and us now to repent of any notion that we can do anything to add to Christ's work. Christ has been crucified for us and in that crucifixion has made a promise which we can either believe by faith or take him to be a liar. It makes no sense to somehow earn what is freely promised, that simply does not fit in this scheme. One can either hear the promise and respond with faith or ignore the promise and lose the Gospel. If works are involved, it's a different Gospel and there is no other Gospel that saves.

This is why Paul is so concerned for the Galatian church. They have begun to go astray after a different Gospel that would take salvation away from the power of the Word of God and the faith that receives his promises and place salvation in adherence to a set of legal requirements, allowing us to accomplish salvation for ourselves. This is the same deception that Satan first used in the garden, telling Adam and Eve that God's Word was untrustworthy and that they themselves could become like God. We fool ourselves when we try to put ourselves in God's position and do what is necessary for salvation rather than doing what he commands and listening to his Word and believing his promises. This is not all that's necessary for salvation, but the rest has already been done by Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending your Word to become flesh for us. Help us to resist our sinful urge to accomplish our own salvation and instead strengthen our faith in your works. Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney*

Saturday, March 26, 2022

Read [Galatians 3:6-9](#)

### “By Faith”

As happens so often in the New Testament, in today’s reading Paul takes us back to the Old Testament. Abraham, the man of God, the Father of Israel, had begun life far from the Promised Land. He was a Chaldean, growing up in the city of Ur, a home to the heathen god, “Sin”. His father took him from that place to Haran, another city of the same false god. Throughout history, there has always been a remnant of the faithful, but Abraham was probably not one of them. His father was an idolater, and Abram was the son of an idolater.

But despite that, God called Abram to follow Him. He promised him a home in Canaan with descendants “**more numerous than the stars.**” And our reading quotes Genesis 15, where we’re told that Abraham “**believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.**” Why does Paul share this story with the Galatians?

The Galatians have heard the Gospel. They’ve come to faith – they’ve read, learned, and digested God’s Word and have been counted as having that same righteousness that Abraham had claimed. But now, they’re arguing over which laws must be kept to retain that righteousness! So Paul tells them the story of Abraham, the man of God, aka, the “son of an idolater”. We like to think of him as the first of the Patriarchs, a hero of the Bible. He had so much faith we still sing that, “Father Abraham, had many sons...” He’s a saint, someone to emulate, a role model for any Christian.

But where did Abraham’s amazing faith come from? Not his father, the idolater. Not his neighbors, the neighbors of idolaters. Not the god, “Sin” (I think that name says it all). No, Abram was given faith just like the Galatians had been – God spoke His Word, and His Spirit changed their hearts. There were no good works within Abram (the son of an idolater) that earned him righteousness; it was the faith that God gave him that made him an heir of righteousness.

But Paul doesn’t stop there. “Galatians”, he might have said, “those countless offspring promised to Abraham are not the fruit of his loins, they are those who, to this day, live by faith.” The Galatians, and you and I, are righteous because of faith, just like Abraham’s faith, given by God to us “sons and daughters of idolaters”, not earned or created by any of our own deeds.

Prayer: Gracious Father, thank You for the faithfulness to Your promised salvation of Your Son Jesus, “who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.” Amen.

*Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson*

Monday, March 28, 2022

Read Galatians 3:10-14

### Cursed

**“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.”**

Galatians 3:13

When I think of a curse, my thoughts immediately drift towards fairy tales. This may be a result of once having two little girls in our home, but this is my immediate connection to curses. The evil witch curses the kingdom/prince/princess/etc, and only by a noble and valiant effort can the curse be undone, and the residents of the kingdom live happily ever after.

This notion of a curse as a magical incantation is not exactly what Paul has in mind in Galatians 3, but it is a good place to start. In this context, think of a curse as the mirror image of a promise. A promise is something good that is declared to you. A curse is something bad declared to you, and this condemnation is a punishment.

Yet the remainder of the fairy tale plot fits well with the work of Christ. Dwelling under the curse of the Law on account of our sin, we are trapped. There is no way to extract ourselves from the curse. But a noble and valiant champion has come to fight for us to gain our release from bondage. Of course, the most remarkable part is that in order to free us from the curse, He must become “a curse for us.” He must embody our punishment and rebellion, even if he bears no responsibility. Still, in His taking it all, we are set free from the curse, and simply by faith we and all in His kingdom may live happily ever after.

Prayer – Dear Jesus, I am humbled when I consider Your willingness to become a curse for me and for all in order to earn my release from everlasting bondage in sin and death. Having been set free by You, may Your Spirit be at work in my heart to love you more deeply and follow You and Your Word joyfully. Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason*

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Read Galatians 3:15-20

### God's Promise to Abraham...for Me

God blessed Abraham, with a promise that his descendant would save the world with faith. Now a promise concerns the future, what is true now is not a promise but a reality; but God promised Abraham! But the value of a promise depends on the giver. But this promise is from God and must be trustable!

And we see the fulfillment of the promise in Jesus, whose coming, dying in our place, rising from the dead brings to those who trust Him, life. Life now in Him and life forever in heaven with Him there also. So, we see that God has kept His promise.

But that promise is not just for Abraham - it is also for me! I see that God has made the promise that not just Abraham, but that those whose faith lives like Abraham's in God's promise have life. So that promise given to Abraham, demonstrated in Jesus, means that I too have the right to life.

If God's promise is fulfilled, then I have life right now. Yes, I am under constant attack by sin; tortured by my failures even as I look to Him for help and success. Yet, I know that I am preserved and guarded in Him. I have the reality in my life as I see Him acting in and around me. But I also have that promise, so when I question myself, my reasoning, my memories, I fall back on the fact that God's promises continue to be true and faithful.

Prayer: Thank You my Lord for the reminder that Your promises never fail. Keep me in Your care knowing that You have and will keep me in Your Promises. Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad*

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Read Galatians 3:21-25

### Law and Faith

What do you think of when you hear the word “guardian”? Many of us probably think of a parent, or a parental figure, a “legal guardian”. Maybe we also think of police officers, firefighters, or military personnel. Guardians are generally those who watch over us and protect us in some way. In our reading today, Paul makes the point that the Law, given by God, acts as a guardian. But what does this mean?

If you read through the Old Testament, God’s Law is talked about constantly. These were God’s words of instruction for how his people were supposed to live. Breaking God’s Law was sin and required sacrifice for atonement. The Law showed the Hebrews what God expected of them, and also served as a curb—it kept them from going off into even worse sin because they were told right from wrong.

Paul points out that the Law was a necessary guardian—but now, Christ’s coming has changed things. Verse 25 makes this plain: “But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.” Christ, the fulfillment of God’s promises, releases us from that strict observation of the Law and all the other sacrifices that went with it. We no longer have the Law as our mediator before God—we have Christ. And there truly is freedom found in Christ!

The next question we might ask is “Well, what do we do with the Law then? What is its purpose now?” And here again Paul gives an answer. Paul is clear that Jesus does not take away the Law in the sense of telling us “go and sin, it’s ok.” We still have the Law as a moral guide. But as people who have received the full promise of God in Jesus, we are able to live in the light of the Gospel that Jesus has removed the burden of the Law and reconciled us to God. We see that Law and Gospel are not opposed to one another, but related. Knowledge of God’s Law (and our failure to keep it) drives us to repentance. We are then reminded of the Gospel and absolved of our sin. This is why absolution and the sacraments mean so much—they directly give us that grace.

Prayer: Lord, keep me in your Word. Show me both the error of my ways and the mercy of the Gospel, accomplished through your life, death, and resurrection. Comfort me when I feel convicted and give the Holy Spirit to me that I might walk in your truth. Amen.

*Today’s Devotion was written by Seminarian Alex Smith*

Thursday, March 31, 2022  
Read Galatians 3:26-29

### A Pineapple Keychain

My fiancé has three younger siblings who are as thick as thieves. When I first met them, I remember feeling very intimidated. They'd known each other their whole lives, know everything about one another, and spend a lot of time together each day. I, on the other hand, was new. I didn't understand the inside jokes, share the same memories, or have the same bond with each of them. I was an outsider. They let me spend time with them and invited me to family functions, but there was a sort of disconnect between them and myself. I may have been **with** the family, but I was by no means **part** of the family.

Well, in Galatia there was a disconnect between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians. Both sides were looking at the other and saying, "They may be Christian, but they're not like *us*. We follow our laws and share our traditions that they just don't understand. *We* are on the inside. *They* are on the outside." They thought that their traditions and laws directly related to their standing with God. For them, *real* Christians had a certain understanding of tradition. To not have this understanding meant being **with** the family, not **part** of it. This is wrong. Paul makes it clear that our standing with God isn't based on our background or understanding of tradition. No, our standing with God is based on our faith in Jesus Christ which is given by the Holy Spirit. Through baptism, Christ claims people and adopts them into the family of God regardless of ethnicity, social status, gender, or anything else.

And so it is with you. Through baptism, Christ has claimed *you* as His own and thus *you* "have put on Christ". And now, wearing Christ, *you* are a child of God. *You* have been adopted into the eternal family of God, not merely as an outsider, but as a member. *You* are not only **with** the family, but you are **part** of the family. And now, being part of the family of God, *you* share in the only insider information that matters: the promise of salvation given to Abraham and his offspring.

This past Christmas, my fiancé's siblings gifted to me a keychain with a pineapple attached to it. It was only once I realized that they all had matching keychains that I understood the true gift and its significance. They had given me acceptance. May you go forth today giving the gift of acceptance into the family of God as He has given you. May you witness one's faith, open your arms, and say "welcome to the family". Amen.

Prayer: "Merciful Father, through Holy Baptism You called us to be Your own possession. Grant that our lives may evidence the working of Your Holy Spirit in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, according to the image of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen."

- LSB, "Prayer for life as a baptized child of God," pg. 310.

*Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Micah Brown*



Friday, April 1, 2022

Read Galatians 4:1-7

### Heirs

In our present, American culture, you can be anyone you want to be, and the circumstances of your birth don't determine your success at all just how hard you're willing to work. At least, that's the lie that we tell kids to motivate them to work hard. In the culture that Paul was writing to, people didn't see their success so individualistically, the circumstances of your birth were just about the most important thing about you. Nothing could matter more than who your father was, and nearly the only way to be successful was to come from a successful family. There was no such thing as a rags-to-riches story because hard work wasn't the mark of a great man striving for success, it was the mark of a slave who would never own anything.

Even still, we have in this first section of Galatians 4 a rags-to-riches story. Paul talks about how we were enslaved to the "elemental spirits", i.e., our passions, desires, lusts. We had nothing of our own but everything we did was to feed the endless hunger of our master, our own sin. But the coming of Christ into the world changed all that. We are no more slaves to sin but sons of God. Christ came to win his brothers and sisters back from the slavers, to redeem us, to free us, and to claim us for the Father. And as sons and daughters of the Father, we are heirs. Heirs of His heavenly kingdom not through any work of ours but only through the loving embrace of Jesus who gave the price of his own life to free us from our slavery and bring us into an everlasting family.

Prayer: Abba, Father, we thank You that you have made us Your children and given us Your Holy Spirit. Because You gave Your Son to die for us, help us to live in a manner worthy of Your children lest we lose the great inheritance that You have set aside for us. Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney*

Saturday, April 2, 2022

Read [Galatians 4:8-16](#)

### “Don’t Turn Back”

Modern conveniences – who can live without them? Who mixes up cookie dough by hand when an electric mixer does it so well? How many of you still have a typewriter – that you use? I’ll bet you don’t know many people’s phone numbers, because your phone does it for you! Imagine, if you will, the following scenario:

Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla, is driving his fabulous, battery-powered electric car through outstate Missouri. Being electric, it runs very quietly, but suddenly – it’s totally silent, and slowly comes to a halt. He’s miles from anywhere and there’s not even a farmhouse in sight. As he pulls out his phone to call for his helicopter, he discovers – he has no signal. Stuck! But slowly, a speck in the distance becomes a cloud of dust. Then, it looks like a horse-drawn carriage coming down the road! When it finally arrives, a man with a funny beard gets out and offers Elon a ride into town.

After returning to civilization, Mr. Musk, out of gratitude, sends one of his latest, brand-new electric cars to this man, who obviously needs some help getting into the 20<sup>th</sup> century! A month later, he travels to see how the man likes his gift, only to discover he’s removed the windshield and attached a hitch and drawbar to the front, so his horse can pull his fancy new buggy (of course)!

That’s about what Paul was feeling toward the Galatians, in our reading. He’d come to them earlier and had been graciously received by them. As they heard his Gospel message, this message of Christ’s salvation latched onto their hearts so firmly Paul described it, “**you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me**” (rather than Paul to have left). That’s a figure of speech of course, but vividly describes the life-changing gift Paul had delivered to them. Salvation, eternal life, and an end to their slavery to the Law!

But, a little like (for most of us) turning the gift of an expensive, wondrous car into merely a shinier, horse-drawn carriage would be, the Galatians were turning the Gospel of Christ into the same old rites and ceremonies of the past. After being baptized into a new life in Christ, where He fully and freely paid for every one of their sins, they hitched this gift of freedom from the Law to a new law of works. They couldn’t be saved unless they did X. Paul was brought to his wit’s end: “**I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.**”

But, just like He did for the Galatians, and Paul, and all sinners; Christ died for you. You are freed from slavery to the Law and are now bound to Your loving Savior, Jesus.

Prayer: Jesus my Redeemer, You fully paid the price for my sins by Your life and death for me, freeing me from bondage to a Law that I’m unable to keep. By Your Spirit, help me to use this freedom to serve and praise You. Amen.

*Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson*

Monday, April 4, 2022  
Read Galatians 4:17-20

### The Pain of a Parent

We know only a handful of things about Paul. He was originally a Pharisee. He was born with the name Saul. He had a side business of making tents. He was single. This last point is significant because today he talks as a parent.

Paul may not have had children of his own, but where he shared the Gospel and people believed, he had spiritual children. So, he refers to the people of Galatia as “my little children.” He is not speaking down to the Christians of Galatia. He is speaking in love for them. Paul is sharing his pain as a parent.

Parenting is the most rewarding effort on the earth. It is also among the most challenging. So much so that God built into creation the reality that two are meant to share the challenge and the rewards. And also, the pain.

There is little in this world more difficult than watching your children make decisions that draw them away from Christ and into pain. No wonder Paul can speak of the whole of the people Israel and wish he were punished in order to save them. Many a parent has wished to take harm upon themselves, if only to spare their child. So, Paul grieves for the straying children of the Galatian church. For Paul, it is as though “I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!”

I appreciate the honesty of this passage. We can fall into the trap of seeing Biblical figures like Paul as stoic, emotionless, religious robots. Paul tells us otherwise. He loves the people of the church in Galatia. He suffers the deepest pain to see them stray or minimize the hope of Christ. This passage reminds me all the more of the persistent love of our Heavenly Father and our brother Jesus. Your Lord knows the pain of straying children. He is both patient and persistent in calling us back to Him, forgiving us, restoring us as His own. If you (in some way) know the pain of Paul in your life, lean on the faithful love of Your Heavenly Father for you. Leaning on Him, be both patient and persistent in the midst of your pain. He will sustain you.

Prayer – Dear Jesus, comfort parents who feel the pain of Paul with children who have strayed. Call back those who stray into Your merciful arms, and in the meantime, surround hurting parents with your patient and persistent love. Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason*

Tuesday, April 5, 2022  
Read Galatians 4:21-31

### I am Free

I am free! That promise of God is a reality, what desires to control me, where my desires, feelings, drives attempt to push me, all that has been conquered. Not by me, oh, no, for I still find them bothering me. But rather Jesus has conquered them, and in so doing has removed the power they used to have. So, I am free.

But now I find that freedom has changed me. While pressured and controlled by my godless self, freedom seemed to me to be only an absence of consequences, a parade of license to do whatever seemed good to me then. But my selfishness has/had a cost, it is not consequence-less, no, Jesus took the consequences on Himself - on Calvary. That cost of freedom for me changed me, I now can do what I want, but what I want has changed!

Where I used to flee from God, to hide what I was, to worry about consequences, now I seek out my relationship with God. Now I am His child, I am excited to be doing good, to be participating in God's various activities around my life. I am free to help others - without a cost to them. I am free to smile, to listen, and promote them.

I am truly free now. I am free because I can do what I want. And what I want is to be with God always; I want to be doing, to be doing only that which makes Him happy. Yes, I am free!

Prayer: Thank you God for my freedom. I thank you too that You keep me close to You that those other ideas and pressures are no longer part of me. Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad*

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Read Galatians 5:1-6

### Freedom of Faith

In these verses, Paul speaks about circumcision and uncircumcision. At first glance, this may seem like a very contextual problem that we don't necessarily need to concern ourselves with. But on closer look, it still relates to us in important ways!

Circumcision was related to the law. Paul bluntly tells the Galatians that accepting circumcision in this way is choosing to put yourself under the law, rather than living by the Gospel, which frees us from ceremonial observations such as circumcision. What is really going on in the desire to choose the law is a choice to reject the freedom of the Gospel. And as Paul says in 5:1, that would be like returning to slavery even if one has been freed!

For us today, the issue is not really circumcision. But sometimes we can be guilty of making traditions or customs into laws which we then burden ourselves with or demand that others follow for us to consider them "true" Christians. This misunderstands the place of things—traditions and customs are not bad in themselves, but turning them into a law would hurt the proclamation of freedom through the Gospel.

Instead, let us rejoice in our freedom. Our sins have been forgiven, and Christ has fulfilled the law on our behalf. We are still called to live moral lives and obey God's laws in that way—but in other areas of life we have been given great freedom. Let us enjoy it and be glad!

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the freedom you won for us by your life, death, and resurrection. Keep me from turning that freedom back into a law and then despairing of my ability to keep it. Keep my eyes focused on you. Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Alex Smith*

Thursday, April 7, 2022  
Read Galatians 5:7-12

### Stumbling Blocks

Paul must have been a runner because this is not the only time we find him comparing the Christian life to a race. In 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Paul encourages his readers to faithfully run the race of the Christian life so that they may obtain their imperishable prize of eternal life. In 2 Timothy 4:7, feeling that his life was coming to an end, Paul writes that he had fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith, meaning he remained faithful to Christ all the way up to his death. Even the author of Hebrews gets in on the metaphor when he encourages his readers to “run with endurance the race,” set before them by remaining faithful to Christ through trials.

But here in this passage, we don't see Paul encouraging people to continue running the race of faith. No, we see Paul begging people who have fallen to get back up. The Christians in Galatia have begun to doubt the power of the cross. They saw the cross as an offense (or more accurately, a stumbling block) to salvation. They saw Jesus on the cross as weak and this caused them to falter in the race of Christian life. Thinking Jesus was weak, they began to rely on their old laws again. Then relying on these old laws led them to condemn anyone who didn't follow them. Soon they had a misplaced faith in their laws and works rather than in Jesus. They faltered, which caused them to stumble, and eventually they fell down. They stopped running the race.

But they didn't need to stay down. When they stumbled and fell, Jesus was right there through Paul to pick them back up again so they could continue running. Jesus has overcome the hardships of this world, the stumbling block of our sin, and the threat of the devil. Though everything evil around us and within us wants us to stop running, Jesus empowers us to keep going.

So what makes you fall? While running this race of the Christian life, what are your stumbling blocks? Whether they be doubt, temptation, greed, selfishness, uncertainty, or anything else, they cannot stop you from living the faith because Jesus picks you up every time you fall. May we run with endurance the race set before us so we may obtain our imperishable prize and, like Paul, be confident in saying, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” Amen.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, founder and perfecter of our faith. You have defeated the evils of this world and won for us new life, setting the race of salvation before us. Guide us in our lives and strengthen us to rely on You from whom alone comes grace, mercy, and peace, so that we may faithfully run the race according to Your will. In Your name that endures, amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Micah Brown*

Friday, April 8, 2022

Read Galatians 5:13-15

### Called to Freedom

There is nothing more sacred in our country than freedom. It means all kinds of things to all kinds of people: freedom to live where you want, freedom to do what you want, freedom to say what you want. Whatever it is, our modern culture is obsessed with freedom and the worst sin someone can commit is telling someone else what they should do, limiting their freedom.

Paul tells us that as Christians, we too have freedom, freedom bigger and more real than even the best government can guarantee. This sounds very comforting to us, but what he means turns out to be exactly the opposite of what we normally mean by freedom. For us, our sacred right of personal freedom means that we can do whatever is best for us and no one else is able to determine what that is. The needs and desires of others must never infringe on our freedoms. This is all well and good in a secular world, but it is not the freedom that Christians are called to.

We have been called by God out of our slavery to sin and to the law. Gone are the days of wondering and worrying and working for our own salvation, trying to ensure that all will be right for us when we die. This is a self-centered view, this is the view of someone who is still enslaved to sin. But it is not our view. We are freed by Christ from our slavery to sin and from the need to slavishly follow the law. Most of all, we are freed from the most tyrannical false god of all: the self.

We are free from all this by the abundant love of God, but He has also done this with a purpose. He wishes that we should use our newfound freedom to serve others. Christ calls us to forget about our sin and forget about the legalistic commands and even to forget ourselves so that we can do what we are made to do: serve one another. And in making ourselves slaves to the needs of those around of, we join Christ in his work, sharing in his sufferings for the sake of others, ever mindful of the fact that Christ laid aside his perfect freedom to become a servant for our need. Christ suffered for us and has freed us so that we can take up our cross and follow him who alone can give us true freedom.

Prayer: Almighty God, when we were bound in the slavery of sin, you sent your Son to become a servant that we might be free. Teach us to reject this world that tells us to use our freedom selfishly and train our eyes on you so that we might learn to serve others. Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney*

Saturday, April 9, 2022

Read [Galatians 5:16-21](#)

“Walk by the Spirit”

**“Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.”** Paul continues his letter to the Christians of Galatia, seemingly going in a new direction. This long list is one that all Christians would agree describes immoral living, living in a way not pleasing to God. And Paul concurs, saying, **“Those who do such things (to walk in their way) will not inherit the kingdom of God.”**

So, it appears we’ve turned a page in his letter, moving on from his marveling over people turning from the freedom from slavery to sin, won through the blood of Christ on the cross. So far, his entire message has been about this contrast between death, slavery, bondage, and separation from God vs. Christian freedom. Christians, by the free gift of God’s Son, are completely and totally free from all those former things! But now, free from the bondage to God’s Law, these Galatians are steering themselves into a different bondage to “Christian law”. So, Paul, having preached against their deadly mistake, changes to a message about moral living, right?

But. That’s the word he begins this part of his letter: “But”. That means that he’s not entirely moving on. True, his message is strongly in favor of a Christian’s life demonstrating God’s love through their moral living. But. His message, by connecting to the previous message with that little word, compares the above list of truly dreadful sins to the behavior of the Galatian Christians. Their decision to put their trust in their own pious observance of religious ceremonies – leads to the same condemnation as the angry idolaters and drunken sorcerers: **“those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”** They, too are **“walking by the desires of the flesh”** rather than **“walking by the Spirit.”**

It’s easy to see the sinner described by that long list of obvious sins. It’s harder to see the sin in the Christian who looks to his or her good behavior for an assurance of salvation. Isaiah said, **“We are all like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are as filthy rags.”** Even our best deeds don’t save us. Walk in the Spirit to the foot of the cross. There and only there, your salvation awaits you. And that free gift of Christ frees you to walk with Him.

Prayer: Gracious Father, through the gift of Your Son Jesus, You have freed me from temporal and eternal bondage to sin and death. Help me now to walk in Your Spirit. Amen.

*Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson*



Monday, April 11, 2022

Read Galatians 5:22-26

### The Fruit of the Spirit

One of the only plants that I have ever gotten to grow was a potato plant. In my first congregation, I was given the old farmer's advice to plant potatoes on Good Friday. The man who told me that used to plant a garden behind the church, so I thought that I would try it. I took a potato that was full of eyes, chopped it up (as I was told), and stuck the pieces in the ground. Over the next series of weeks, shoots popped out of the ground and grew into beautiful plants. The problem is that you can't see the "fruit" of a potato plant. So when the plants were big and luscious, I thought it was time to dig up my potatoes. Not so. The microscopic potatoes were worthless, and I had killed the plants.

Unlike with the potatoes, the fruit we bear is meant to be seen. Now, I don't mean seen as in to put on a show, but they are evidence of the work of the Spirit in our hearts. They are evidence that we "live by the Spirit." God's Spirit has made us alive with faith in Christ. By His work alone. But now that we are alive, it will show.

The list of the fruit of the Spirit is familiar: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Paul uses another image to help us: "if we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." To walk in the Spirit, to follow His lead into these fruits – that's God's desire for us as His people. Granted, we won't follow perfectly and sometimes our fruit will be microscopic, but day by day the Spirit who joins us to Christ leads us constantly to renewed forgiveness and by the cultivation of His Word brings about a harvest of His fruits.

Prayer – Dear Jesus, guide me by the voice of Your Spirit as I hear Your Word. As I live by the Spirit, help me to walk in the Spirit by giving fruitful evidence of all that You have done for me. Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Jason*

Tuesday, April 12, 2022

Read Galatians 6:1

### I Need Him and You

God hasn't left me alone to live in Him. Oh, He has been my salvation alone. I need no one else to be fit to go to heaven. Jesus died for me, paid the price I owed, made me right with God. Now I live in peace with Him.

But my mind has to keep working, I have to make decisions in this world. My basic selfishness, out of which Jesus rescued me, still affects my thinking and my decisions. There come times when I need help, when I need someone to point out to me when my life is not reflecting our Savior.

Paul directs the rest of you to help me. There are times when I need to be corrected. Someone needs to tell me "NO". Or maybe, I need to be told, "YES" as in do something now. It is hard to accept this fact. My own self-centeredness, of course, is sure that it needs no correction. But I do.

It is Jesus living in me, that humbles me, that enables me to accept that correction. He guides my responses, forces me to look at myself, to review the Bible teachings, and to say "thank you".

I need God's help for you to address my problems, but also, I need His help to accept that work of His in others, that work that helps me to be redirected closer to Him. It is good for me to listen to others, to see where the Bible is pointing them and myself to a truth I have ignored.

Prayer: Thank you God for bringing others to assist me, even against my desires. Thank you for loving me enough to not give me my way when it is wrong. Amen

*Today's Devotion was written by Pastor Art Bolstad*

Wednesday, April 13, 2022

Read Galatians 6:2-5

### Bearing Other Burdens

In these verses, Paul exhorts his hearers (including us) that we ought to be concerned for others besides ourselves. The natural human tendency is to think of ourselves first—this tendency toward selfishness and idolatry of the self is at the root of all sin.

We are cautioned by Paul not to be arrogant or consumed by haughty pride—not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. Any time we compare ourselves to other people this way, it tends to diminish them in our eyes. We become less sympathetic and empathetic. We start to demand more of others than we demand of ourselves. Again, our eyes turn inward, and we obsess over ourselves.

Paul points to a different, more godly way. Instead of criticizing others when they fail, or when they suffer under the burden from sin, we can help them! Not only should we, but it's also what we are commanded to do as Christians. We can encourage others, help them fight against the sinful flesh, and help our neighbor when they need it. By doing so we are able to help them bear their load.

We can do this in our vocations—in the various roles that God has placed us into. Whether you are a parent, child, spouse, manager, employee, etc., there are ways to help those around you and to show the love of Christ in your actions toward them. Though it is difficult to do, we have been given the Holy Spirit, who aids us in our sanctification. Thanks be to God!

Prayer: Lord, help me to bear my own burdens and to assist others in bearing theirs. Enlighten us with the light of your son, Jesus Christ. Renew us when we fail with your forgiveness. Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Alex Smith*

Thursday, April 14, 2022  
Read Galatians 6:6-8

### You Reap What You Sow

“You reap what you sow” is a timeless saying that’s pretty well-known and common within our culture. It’s the concept of, “if you do good things, good things will then happen to you. On the other hand, if you do bad things, then bad things will happen to you.” Or, “an eye for an eye” and “you scratch my back, and I’ll scratch yours.” We have a lot of ways to express this idea in our culture. Yet this whole concept can be described in one word: karma.

Karma might sound nice, and it may seem like a good way to encourage people to help one another, but it isn’t quite an accurate way of thinking. While the motto of, “you were good to me, so I’ll be good to you,” sounds positive, there’s just one problem: sin. Whatever “good” you or I try to do is polluted by sin. In everything we do, there is always some ulterior motive, secret desire, or hidden and selfish goal. We, as fallen creatures, are incapable of doing good.

So, what does this say about karma? If all that we sow is evil, what then do we reap? Nothing but evil and sin. There is nothing we can do to earn goodness. There is no action we can complete to deserve “good karma.” We are incapable of good works, therefore, karma is a sham.

But we have a God who doesn’t require good works. Our God isn’t waiting for us to do good so that He can, then, reward us with good. No, we have a God who has already done good to us. We have a God of *grace*. Though we do not (and cannot) deserve anything but evil, God loves us. He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for you for forgiveness, He came to you in the Holy Spirit to adopt you into His family, and He daily fights against the schemes of the devil to preserve you as His child. This is **not** karma. This is grace, unmerited and undeserved.

So, in our passage, Paul suggests a new approach to karma. However, in this approach it’s not about getting what you deserve, but instead about delighting in what you don’t deserve. The way Paul sees it, all Christians have two distinct identities: a sinful human being and a redeemed child of God. He encouraged the Galatians to ask themselves, “which identity do I cling to? In which one am I planting seeds?” So, I ask you today, which identity do you cling to? In which one are you sowing seeds? The one of sinful flesh that leads to corruption and death, or the one of saving grace that leads to eternal life and joy? May we sow our seeds in the love of Christ for us so we may reap the benefits of His grace. Amen.

Prayer: “Heavenly Father, God of all grace, govern our hearts that we may never forget Your blessings but steadfastly thank and praise You for all Your goodness in this life until, with all Your saints, we praise You eternally in Your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.”

*LSB, “Prayer for thanksgiving to God,” pg. 310.*

*Today’s Devotion was written by Seminarian Micah Brown*

Friday, April 15, 2022  
Read Galatians 6:9-10

### Let us Not Grow Weary

It is clear that the central core of Christianity is the Gospel: the forgiveness of sins by the free grace of God apart from our works. This is the heart of our teaching without which we are doomed. Nevertheless, there is more to our confession. After painstakingly correcting the Galatians in the details of the Gospel, Paul moves on to add these words in chapter 6 about what the Christian life looks like in light of this freedom and forgiveness.

Even though we don't need to do anything to earn our salvation, still we must not ever get tired of doing good for our neighbor and fulfilling Jesus' commands. Paul even says that there is a reward for doing good just as there is punishment for doing evil. Now, it may well be that he is talking about some heavenly honor the God will bestow upon us for the faithful ways we serve him in this life. Or it may be that he simply means that we often gain a reward in this life for our kindness. Consider what Paul says in the next verse, that we ought especially to use our means to take care of those who are our brothers and sisters in the household of faith.

How great a reward it is to be a part of a community that cares for one another, bearing one another's burdens so that no one in the congregation lacks. And how great a reward would it be if someone takes note of the love that Christians live in and the Holy Spirit adds them to our number! Perhaps the great reward is gaining the eternal company brother or sister who was lost. Let us take as example Christ who never wearied of doing good even to the point of death and has chosen for his reward us, the church, to be his bride forever.

Prayer: Lord of the Church, you have made us one and taught us with your commandments how to do good for one another and for all your people. Give us strength never to weary of doing good but to delight in carrying out your will for your Kingdom. Amen.

*Today's Devotion was written by Seminarian Case Farney*

Saturday, April 16, 2022

Read [Galatians 6:11-18](#)

“To the Saints who are in High Ridge”

“**See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.**” I, Paul, an apostle of Christ, wrote those words. I ordinarily dictated my letters, but would often write my closing in my own hand with my signature, as “proof” that it was indeed I who was sending this greeting. You might think I pointed out the size of my script because I was proud of what I’d written, but nothing could be further from the truth. True, I am proud of my ability to write a sentence longer than can anyone else, but that’s just a tool of the devil to fill me with myself. No, I wrote and continue to write in large font because I continue to be so excited about the message I’ve been given. Jesus died on the cross for me!

On the day that Jesus died on the cross, though, I was known as Saul. And, as Saul (a miserable, proud man striving to prove to God how zealous for Him I was), I entirely missed what happened that Good Friday. It was the time of Passover, and the Romans chose this blessed time to kill some Jewish criminals. At the time, I was thrilled that they would finally rid of us of this blasphemer, this fraud, this man who claimed to be the Messiah! That day, I understood the message of the cross to be, “death to the imposter!”

But, as I wrote to the Galatians, I could have not been further from the truth. The cross wasn’t a victory of God over a false god, it was His victory over my sin! I, the chief of sinners, had persecuted His Church! I had hunted down followers of “The Way” and had killed or arrested them. And Jesus died for me! His ways are not my ways, Praise the Lord!

The Galatians and I were really very similar. While Jesus Himself appeared to me in person, I brought the Good News to the Galatians. Otherwise, we all discovered Jesus later in our lives. And we wrestled with our former false belief that we could “help God” to save ourselves. But the message of the cross threw that idea under the cart! Jesus had said, “**Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.**” Jesus prayed for my heinous sins to be forgiven! Then, He cried out, “**My God, my God; why have You forsaken Me?**” Because He took on my sins, God couldn’t even bear to look on His own Son!

But the message of the cross most loudly cried out, “**It is finished!**” There is nothing you or I could possibly do to help God to save me – Jesus finished it! It is done!

Prayer: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers (and sisters). Amen.

*Paul*

My apologies to Saint Paul for attempting to imagine what might have gone through his head.

*Today’s Devotion was written by Pastor Jeff Nelson*