

**An Invitation and Calling:
Learning to Live in the Grace of Christ
September 16 – November 11 2012**

Some Responses to Galatians Series

Over the last weeks, we have been considering the invitation and calling of God to “live in the grace of Christ.” This series flows out of Paul’s letter to the churches in Galatia to whom Paul wrote, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you to live in the grace of Christ” (Galatians 1:6). Below are some responses from those who are part of the International Church of Bishkek community.

The series on Galatians has been working in our lives. I ran across a bit in "My Utmost" the other day that I thought really fit: "When we preach the historic facts of the life and death of Our Lord as they are conveyed in the New Testament, our words are made sacramental, God uses them on the ground of His Redemption to create in those who listen that which is not created otherwise....We have to see that we are in such living sympathy with God that as we proclaim His truth He can create in souls the things which He alone can do." (O.Chambers) (E.S.)

I was thinking today how blessed I am to be learning this powerful truth about God's all-abounding grace now, in my early twenties. That means that I will continue building my life with quite different building blocks than I would otherwise, without having been soaked in the power of this series on Galatians. (Z.B.)

Galatians is always full of useful instruction for me. How to escape legalism, ingrained lies and opposition to living in freedom in Christ? When God looms large and awesome in my understanding, then other concepts also fall into place: His love in sending the Savior as well as my need for a savior and for the empowering of the Holy Spirit. I have perpetual questions. Mostly they boil down to: Am I enough? Did I/Will I do enough? “Enough of ‘Enough?’ !!” Isn’t it the main point of the Gospel that no one is enough, no one can do enough. There is a song that expresses my gratitude for this work of grace through the cross of Christ; it is called, “Help Me Believe,” by Donna Stuart. (B.P.)

As I think of my own life in light of the series of Galatians, I think of a book I read by John Grisham, a Christian, called *The Testament*. In the book, a lawyer is trying to track down a woman serving people in the Amazon; this woman has inherited lots of money from a distant relative. When he finds her, the woman doesn’t want the money. Through the book, God has been showing the lawyer his own need for Jesus. After meeting the woman and seeing the simplicity of her walk with Jesus, he prays to God: “I’m sorry. Help me.” Such is the grace of Jesus. I am so thankful that he has shown me such grace. (J.S.)

Pride, by J.C.
October 10th 2012

My pride-filled heart.
Always wanting to be more right
Than someone else.
It oozes coolness
That seeps unseen into relationships
Creating mistrust
And distance.

And I am sorry for it,
For I have fed and watered pride's little resentments
And unchecked in my injury let them ramble through the garden
To take hold and risk bitterness.

I must come to terms with man being man;
That they will disappoint in their frail humanity,
I am the same after all,
And I cannot change another;
That authority and work is not mine but Yours.

I sit at the cross,
The only place that means we can together
Begin to cut back the pride,
And I can start to let go of my self
In order to stand in the grace
That will enable me to genuinely love again.
Not with my own love
But with Yours
Poured in and through my life.

And every day I will need to forgive and be forgiven,
Allowing your powerful Spirit to bring the rabid germ into submission
So that next time we meet
I at least stand healed
And are no longer trapped by wanting you to see things my way
But can smile at you and embrace with authentic warmth
Another child of God;
In fact, a brother.