

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

**“Living in the Freedom of the Grace of Christ”
Study Helps: Week Six of Nine
Galatians 5:1-15, Oct 21 2012**

Focus for Week Six

The invitation and calling that God extends to all people to “live in the grace of Christ” (Galatians 1:6) is an invitation to freedom. Paul writes, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free” (5:1). In Galatians 5:1-15, Paul makes clear that this freedom is only possible through the “offense of the cross” (5:11). He also points to directions to live free in Christ that the Holy Spirit teaches and forms in those seeking to live in the grace of Christ.

Summary of “Time of Reflection” and Message

1. Time of Reflection: **“The Offense of the Cross”**
 - The invitation and calling **to live in the grace of Christ requires that we be offended.** In Galatians 5, Paul calls it the “offense of the cross.”
 - It is **important that we understand this offense in the framework of the call to freedom in Christ** that Paul writes about.
 - a. When God created the world and then humans, **God created humans to live free.** This freedom, however, was never separated from relationship with him; it was never separated from reciprocal love.
 - b. Humans were created to live in the lavish, never-ending, never-failing love of God; they were created to know they were loved by God. Out of God’s love, as God’s image-bearers, they then expressed his love to one another.
 - c. The fall changed that. With the fall, **Satan planted in humans**
 - 1) A longing for freedom **separated** from God.
 - 2) The **doubt** as to whether God’s love is sufficient.
 - 3) The **fear** that they were not truly loved.**They were no longer free.**
 - d. **Jesus came to restore our freedom.** He demonstrated the love of God. By dying for our sins he came to reconcile us to God and bring us back into the love of God.
 - e. **This leads to the offense of the cross.** We cannot know this freedom without coming through the cross of Christ.
 - f. All humans through history and yet today long to be loved; they seek to be free. This longing, this seeking arises in them from what was lost with the fall.

- g. Unfortunately, most humans live as if God did not provide a way through Christ into the freedom and love we lost. Most live offended by the cross of Christ.
- **So what is the offense of the cross?**
 - a. This never-ending freedom you seek and the perfect love you long to know cannot be earned by us.
 - b. It has been achieved for us by the cross of Christ.
 - c. This freedom, this love, can only be received as a gift of God's grace.
- **Why would anything so good offend?**
 - a. Each person must answer this question.
 - b. Are you offended by the cross of Christ? You are being called by Christ to come to him; he is calling you to be free.
 - c. Come to the cross. "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free."

2. Summary of Message

- **In Galatians 5:1-15, Paul provides directions how to live in the freedom earned for us by Christ.**
 - a. The **Holy Spirit makes us attentive to these directions**, beginning to work in us even before we belong to Christ (5:5; see also John 3:3).
 - b. These directions include the Holy Spirit
 - 1) Showing us the wrong way to live in this freedom.
 - 2) Teaching us and forming in us the right way to live in this freedom.
- **The Wrong Way to live in the freedom of the grace of Christ that the Holy Spirit shows us**
 - a. **"Let yourself" be burdened again by the yoke of slavery (5:1-3)**
 - 1) Mentioned 3x (5:1,2,3)
 - 2) Let yourself be "circumcised," Christ has no value (5:2)
Note: People at this time wanted to add the "requirement" of circumcision to the grace of Christ; each of us can think of the "requirement" people in our time or our situation try to add.
 - 3) If you seek to obey one "special law" to earn God's favour, you need to obey the whole law (5:3).
 - 4) The Problem? Seeking to be justified (i.e. made acceptable to God) by selective obedience to the law (5:4)
 - 5) The Result? Alienated from Christ; fallen away from grace (5:4)
 - b. **Strong words about those giving wrong directions (5:7-12)**
 - 1) They "cut in on you" (5:7a – "hindered, detained, impeded").
 - 2) They seek to "keep you from" obeying the truth about Jesus (5:7b).
 - 3) They use a "kind of persuasion" NOT from God who calls and brings one into the grace of Christ (5:8; see Galatians 1:6-7).

- 4) They are like bad yeast that works its way into every part of our being (5:9).
 - 5) They throw you into confusion; they will have to pay the penalty (5:10; see Galatians 1:7-9).
 - 6) They should “emasculate themselves” (5:13 – “cut themselves off,” “cut off private parts”).
- **Eight Right Ways to live in the freedom of the grace of Christ that the Holy Spirit teaches us and forms in us**
 - a. Stand firm in Christ: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free” (5:1).
 - b. Do “not let yourselves” be burdened by a yoke of slavery.
Note: Once Christ has brought us into grace, the Holy Spirit needs to transform our minds into this freedom.
 - c. Live through the Holy Spirit through whom we anticipate Christ and his righteousness (5:5).
 - d. Live what counts; that is, the Holy Spirit producing faith and outpouring in us Christ’s love (5:6)
 - e. Run a good race focused on Christ (5:7; see Galatians 6:14-15).
 - f. Take no other view, even when people pressuring you to do so (5:10).
 - g. Accept whatever persecution may come from this offense of the cross (5:11).
 - h. Use freedom well (5:13-15)
 - 1) Not indulging the flesh (example of such indulging in 5:15)
 - 2) Giving expression to the command fulfilled by Christ, formed in us by the Holy Spirit to “serve one another humbly in love” (5:14-15)

For Further Study

1. Read Galatians 5:1-15 and note on your manuscript statements of Paul that best summarize his argument that “it is for freedom that Christ has set us free.”
2. While circumcision was the “added requirement” to grace urged by those causing “confusion” (5:10) who were “cutting in” (5:7), **what are “additions to grace” that you or those near you can add** that distract you from “running a good race” - - living in the grace of Christ?
3. Review the summary notes above and make notes on your manuscript or in your journal from the **Take Away Question** below.
4. Take Away Question: “What are ways the Holy Spirit is making me attentive to the freedom possible when living in the grace of Christ?”