



## CrossRoads Notes:

Turn your Bibles to Galatians 3:1-5

*Title: Grasping the Liberating Grace of God*

*Theme: Liberating Grace*

*Series: Living in the Aroma of God's Grace*

Galatians 3:1-5, "You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Have you suffered so much for nothing--if it really was for nothing? Does God give you His Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? Consider Abraham: 'He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.' Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham." (Galatians 3:1-7)

**Introduction:** *There is something about us that causes us to want to take control of our lives rather than walk in step with God's will for us. This is even true with our spiritual growth.*

There was a young man who was powerfully touched by the Holy Spirit of Christ at his salvation. He was so excited about his new relationship with the Lord Jesus that he wanted to do all he could to please Him, and that was great. However, as time went along he felt like he had to start paying the Lord back for all the things he had done wrong. That is when he started losing his joy and started relying upon his works to obtain favor with God. His walk with the Lord started to become a burden to carry, rather than a walk that revealed the grace of God in his life.

The good news is that it was not long before he allowed the Holy Spirit to replace his joy by reflecting on the grace of God. Now the Word of God to him is not rules and regulations to be observed to gain favor with God, but rather revelation of the righteousness of God and Christ which are available to him by faith in Christ alone.

**Proposition:** *I would propose to you that Christians have the greatest opportunity in this church age to enjoy and express a life that is liberated by the Holy Spirit of Christ. There is much that God's Word has for Christians in regard to overcoming everything that threatens to hinder the Spirit-filled life.*

**Interrogative Sentence:** *Just what does the Bible say about God's liberating grace?*

**Transitional Sentence:** *It begins first with a little understanding of what the apostle was trying to get his readers to see in regard to the direction they were taking.* It was by faith in what was preached, the gospel of Christ that enabled them to receive the Holy Spirit of Christ.

Judaizers were teaching in a sense that the new Christians needed to be circumcised in order to get all of God's blessings or to gain favor with God. The term "in human effort" is a reflection of a heart problem meaning "an independent reliance on one's own accomplishments against a spirit of dependence upon, and submission to what the Holy Spirit moves and empowers the child of God to do."

Christians who begin to walk away from the heart of the gospel begin to find their righteousness in religious observances and ceremonial performances. This results in disputes which prevent the expression of true Christian love through Holy Spirit given gifts which are meant to edify the Body of Christ.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned eighteen times in the Book of Galatians and He is the evidence of true conversion. Romans 8:9 says, "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the [Holy] Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." (Romans 8:9) The term "Spirit" in Galatians 3: 3 and 5 is given to the Person central in giving freedom and in enabling Christians to grieve over sin. He baptizes, indwells, seals and gives empowerment. Without His presence in the heart and life of the child of God, all acts of religious worship are nothing but expressions of an empty slogan.

There is another truth the Holy Spirit wants you to grasp from the phrase "suffered much" before we move on to living by God's grace. The Greek Word "suffered" (pascho)  $\pi\alpha\sigma\chi\omega$  in Galatians 3:4 can mean "to experience." (The Complete Word Study Dictionary; Thayer's Greek-English Dictionary; Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament; Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

The truth worth grasping in this first part of today's message is that Christians who have tasted the Lord's goodness should never consider relying upon religious works of any kind to gain favor from God or have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

**Transitional Sentence:** *The child of God who is living in the aroma of God's grace is willing to ask himself probing questions like, "Do I feel guilty when I take time to relax when I have so much to do? How often do I feel dissatisfied or discontent with myself or in my situation? Do I have a tendency to see something wrong with things rather than take notice what is right? Am I frustrated with what the Lord is doing? Is my relationship with Jesus a burden rather than a blessing?"* If any Christian can answer yes to anyone of those questions he is probably afflicted with the sin of perfectionism. Perfectionism is trying to prove your worth by being perfect.

This is not the same as trying to rely upon the power of God to reach the goal set for us by Jesus who said, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

That goal is only accomplished by surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus Christ as we allow the Holy Spirit to create us into the image of Christ.

Christians who walk in the grace of God know that they do not need to wait for perfect conditions before they can walk in obedience to what the Lord tells them to do. Ecclesiastes 11:4 says, "Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap." (Ecclesiastes 11:4) They do not wait for a call before they start preparing for any service to the Lord. No, they start preparing to exercise their Holy Spirit given gifts now, with an expectancy that the Lord is going to open the door of opportunity. If they preach, they are prayerfully preparing now to have the message ready when the call comes. If it is teaching, they are preparing teachings now, so they are ready when the door opens. If is serving someone, they are making sure they have time open, ready to serve when the call comes. This principle is the same for all the Holy Spirit given gifts found in Scripture.

**Transitional Sentence:** *Once the children of God have enjoyed the blessings of walking in obedience and stop expecting perfection from each other they are able to relax in their relationship with Christ.* These Christians are able to look to the only place where they can find true liberty. Psalm 119:89-96 says, "Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures. Your laws endure to this day, for all things serve you. If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have preserved my life. Save me, for I am yours; I have sought out your precepts. The wicked are waiting to destroy me, but I will ponder your statutes. To all perfection I see a limit; but your commands are boundless." (Psalm 119:89-96)

There is nothing more liberating than the precious Word of God. While many who live in this world consider the commands of God to be binding, Christians find the written Word of God to be liberating. Revelation gives understanding and illumination makes the truths of God's Word come alive and intrigues us to want to accomplish God's will for us. When we fully understand what the Lord wants for us, we will have no problem crying out to Him for enablement and empowerment to achieve the task He sets before us.

Liberating grace is only enjoyed when Christians do not try to obtain righteousness by observing the law, but by allowing the written Word of God to reveal to them what is attainable to them through the nature and character of God and Christ.

**Transitional Sentence:** *Christians are given a liberty to overcome sin, to walk in the righteousness of Christ, and to know the joy of being called the children of God.* 1 John 3:1 says. "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God." (1 John 3:1)

The Holy Spirit moved the Apostle John to remind Christians that they are the children of God and this is something to be excited about. There are two English words which are closely connected yet at the same time whose meanings have a different effect

upon a child. One is parent, which describes a relationship in which a man is responsible for the physical existence of the child. The second is fatherhood. This word describes an intimate, loving relationship that has a powerful effect on the direction of the child's life.

Parenting of all men came from God because He has created us and He becomes our Father in Heaven when we accept Jesus Christ to be our Savior and Lord. The Holy Spirit moved the Apostle Paul to tell Christians, "...But you received a Spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry Abba Father. The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:15-16) Galatians 4:6-7 says, "...God sent His Spirit into your hearts, the Spirit who calls out, Abba Father." (Galatians 4:6-7) The word "Abba" is an untranslated Aramaic word. This is the word Jesus used in connection in prayer (Mark 14:36) and expresses the character of God as our Father when we are in great need or in trouble. Abba is a very personal term. Our position as His children makes Him a personal God to us.

In many families children inherit their parents' estates; each child is an heir and the children together are co-heirs. Similarly, since Christians are God's children, they are His heirs and they are co-heirs with Christ. Christians are recipients of all spiritual blessings. (Ephesians 1:30) Now and in the future they will share with the Lord Jesus all the riches of God's kingdom.

1 John 2:29 says that Christians are born of God, and we know it is through adoption. Being a child of God means that our old self is dying to sin and we have a new nature hungry for the righteousness of Christ. Through the washing of the Word of God and regeneration of the Holy Spirit repentant sinners start to become increasingly changed into the image of Christ. Christians were rebels and God's love enabled them to become born a second time to enjoy God's provision, protection and life changing power.

When a baby lies in the crib, parents often gaze upon the baby with great joy and hope. Most children grow up with parents who sacrifice a lot for them to achieve all they can. All children have the opportunity to choose just how much they want to enjoy their parent's provision, protection and life directing influence as they grow up. Every child of God can choose to enjoy the Lord's provision, protection and life directing influence.

**Transitional Sentence:** *The greatest thing about being a Christian is to be a child of God and we can rest in His mighty hand.* 1 Peter 5:6-7 says, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:6-7) Being under the hand of God symbolizes discipline and deliverance.

The children of God have a Father who is able to hand out the right discipline and bring about necessary deliverance. In due time, whether it be in suffering or enjoying the blessings of God, the Lord will bring success to all He is calling and enabling you to do. Everything we face in this life causes anxiety, whether it be starting a new job,

starting a new school, or starting up anything new. Having to contend with everything that comes up as the results of living in a sin-cursed world will cause anxiety. As long as you are walking in the center of God's will for you, no matter what happens is God-ordained and He will be with you every step of the way.

**In Closing:** Living in the Aroma of God's grace presents to all who see the lives of Christians that liberating grace produces kindness in the home, honesty in business, courtesy in society, fairness in work ethics, help to the weak, resistance to the wicked, strength to trust God, forgiveness to the repentant and the Love of God to all. Christians find liberty worshiping in Spirit and truth, understanding God's will through the written Word and casting all their anxieties into the loving hand of God.

Let us pray!