

Faith Worketh By Love

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Galatians 5:1-6

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Now this is a very, very important subject that I will be dealing with today. The title of the message is, "Faith Worketh By Love." Now remember that. Faith, true faith, saving faith worketh. It does work. But it does not work by law, by rules, for reward, to gain favor with God. True faith works by love.

Now I am going to read from Galatians chapter five. I wish, oh how I would like for you to get your Bible, find a Bible and open to Galatians chapter five. How important it is for you to see these Scriptures for yourself. You know the Bereans. God's Word says they were more noble than some more folks because they searched the Scriptures to see if these things be true. They searched the Word of God. They heard the apostle Paul and they still went home and searched the Scriptures to see if he was telling the truth.

Now they weren't insulting Paul. Our faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, in the Word of God. And it is no insult for me or to me for you to search the Scriptures to see if I am telling the truth. I want to know the truth and I want you to know the truth.

And if you would just open your Bible now to Galatians chapter five, Galatians five, I am going to read six verses, six verses from the fifth chapter of Galatians. And as I read these six verses I am going to point out four statements for you which ought to catch your attention, which ought to catch our attention and hold it until we determine what the apostle is saying. These are four vital statements in these six verses. Now let's start with verse one, Galatians five. Now you follow as I read.

The apostle Paul says—and he is writing to believers. He is writing to people of the churches in Galatia. And he says in verse one, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty where-with Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold. Let he have your attention," he says, "Behold, I Paul, the minister of the gospel, the apostle of Christ Jesus, I Paul, one who has seen the Lord and gotten my gospel straight from God, I Paul say unto you, you believers that if you be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing."

What did he say? Well he said, "If you be circumcised to gain favor with God ..." Circumcision included all the doings and denials and duties and devotions and days of religion under the law. If you do this to find favor with God, Christ will profit you nothing.

All that Christ did in covenant mercies from the foundation of the world mean nothing to you. All that Christ did in righteous obedience walking on this earth in the flesh representing a people means nothing to you. It profits you nothing. All that Christ did on the cross, his suffering and dying, his soul agonies, his intercessory prayers mean nothing to you. All his mediatorial glory means nothing to you. If you be circumcised Jesus Christ and all that he has done and all that he is shall be of no value, no profit to you.

Now that is serious, isn't it?

Do you know why I said that statement ought to catch your attention? If I am guilty of what Paul is dealing with in this book of Galatians, the letter to the Galatian churches, if I am guilty of what Paul is talking, what he is condemning, what he is talking about in these verses, then Christ Jesus profits me nothing. That is too horrible even to think about. His death, his intercession, his righteousness is of no value to me at all. Now this is serious.

But it gets more serious. Let's read on, if it is possible.

Verse two. "For I testify to every man that is circumcised, that goes into this law business, this keeping the law to find favor with God, to gain any acceptance with God. I testify to every man that keeps days and duties, that he is a debtor to do the whole law, the whole law. And Christ is become of no effect to you who try to be justified before God by the law."

What did he say? Well, he said, "Christ Jesus is become of no consequence to you, no effect his death is all in vain and it will not help you at all."

Now this is serious, isn't it? He said...And this, when I read this, "Christ shall profit you nothing, Christ is become of no effect to you."

Then he made another statement. Listen to this in the third verse. "You are fallen from grace. You have departed from grace. You have departed from the only way that God saves a sinner by grace. For by grace are you saved. And you have departed from grace."

The only way God redeems, accepts and justifies a sinner is by his grace. And you have departed from grace. Christ profits you nothing, is become of no effect to you and you have departed from grace, fallen from grace.

And then the fourth statement, verse five, he says, "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus," now watch this. "...neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision." It doesn't help a man to be circumcised or not to be. "But faith worketh by love. But faith worketh by love."

Circumcision doesn't profit anything. Striving to obey the law doesn't profit anything. And not obeying the law doesn't profit anything. But faith worketh by love. True faith

does not work because of duty or for reward or for acceptance with God, but solely, totally, completely motivated by love.

Well, let's go back over this Scripture now and see if we can find some answers here. Paul makes four tremendous statements. Christ will profit you nothing.

Now I don't want to be in that condition, do you? "Jesus Christ is become of no effect to you." I fear that. "And you have departed from grace."

I have heard that all my life, fallen from grace, fallen from grace. You know, I hear somebody say about somebody has committed some sin and transgressed and they say, "Well, he has fallen from grace." No, he is not the one that has fallen from grace. The man that is making the statement is the one that is falling from grace. Fallen from grace has to do with trying to find favor with God for your goodness. It has nothing to do with your sins. Your sins will never keep you from Christ. Your works will. Your sin will never prevent you from coming to Christ. Christ delights to show mercy. He is the friend of sinners. He died for the ungodly. But your righteousness will keep you from Christ. People who have fallen from grace are guilty of trying to establish a righteousness. It is not the man who has sinned that has fallen from grace. It is the man that thinks he hasn't. He is the one fallen from grace.

And faith worketh by love.

All right. Let's go back to the start here. Go back to verse one. Let's work this out here and see what Paul says. "Stand fast. Stand fast in the liberty, the freedom wherewith Christ hath made us free and don't become entangled again in the yoke of bondage."

Now, the people to whom Paul was writing, like many of us, had been brought up under the laws and rules and duties of religion. They were brought up in Hebrew homes, in Jewish homes, in religious homes and they kept the sabbath days. They kept the feast days. They kept the holy days. They kept the ceremonial days. They paid tithes, 10% of even their herbs, 10% of everything.

And they offered sacrifices and the men were circumcised as a seal of the covenant and they read the law. They had specific days on which to read the law, read it to their children, try to keep the law. They did all this to find favor with God. They did all this to establish a holiness before God. They did this to win eternal life. They thought by doing these things and keeping these ordinances and keeping these statues and keeping these laws and walking in morality that they would gain eternal life.

But Christ our Lord has come. God sent his Son into the world. And representing us, representing every believer before God Jesus Christ made of a woman, made under the law, walked this earth in the flesh, tested, tempted and tried in all points as we are yet without sin, in perfect obedience and went to the cross of Calvary and bore our sins and died for our transgressions, was wounded for our transgressions and by his obedience he has imputed to us a perfect holiness, a perfect righteousness a perfect sanctification without the

law, without our obedience to it, but by his own. And by his death he has reconciled us to God and honored the justice of God and brought us to God and given us a perfect holiness. And he is our rest. He is our sabbath. He is our sanctification. He is our holiness. He is our acceptance.

“Now,” Paul said, “Christ has set you free, free from the law, free from its curse, free from its penalty, free from its power. He has delivered you from the curse. Don’t get back under that doings and denials and deeds and days and works. Don’t become entangled again in the duties and the laws of religion to find favor with God. Don’t do it. If you do Christ profits you nothing.”

Isn’t that what he is saying? “Behold,” he said. Now listen to me. Let me have your attention. “Behold, I Paul...” And he knew all this because he came out of works. He listed all of his works under the leadership of Gamaliel, a Hebrew of Hebrews a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin, blameless in regard to the law. And he said, “I count these things but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him. Behold, I Paul, say unto you. If you be circumcised...” There is nothing wrong with being circumcised, but circumcision here is a summary of religious duties. In other words the male Jew was circumcised to show that he was in obedience to the law, that it was a seal of the covenant, that it was a token that he was different from other men. He was under the sabbath law, the tithing law, the feast laws, the laws of days and duties and so forth. And Paul is saying here now, “If you do anything in religion, any denial, any duty, any doing,” if a person does any of these things to find favor with God then Christ profits him nothing because as far as favor with God is concerned Christ is all. Christ is all and in all.

Paul said, “In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of God, all the fulness of the godhead bodily is in Christ and you are complete in him.” He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. And if you add anything to Christ then you count him out. He is going to be all or nothing at all. He is going to be Lord at all or not Lord at all. He is going to be all of our redemption, all of our sanctification, all of our holiness, all of our acceptance, accepted in the beloved or he is not going to have any part and you stand on your own.

“For I testify...” Now watch this next verse three. “I testify unto you, I Paul say unto you and I testify further unto you that these duties, ceremonies, sabbath days, sacrifices, tithes, whatever to find favor with God, to win acceptance with God, to find a reward with God that you are a debtor to do the whole law. Once you get on this law road you have got a long road ahead of you. Once you get on this personal righteousness business of finding favor with God by what you do or by what you give or by how you act, you have got a tough road ahead of you. You have got the whole law to keep. If you choose to meet God on the basis of anything other than Christ, sabbath keeping, tithing, keeping the law, then you are obligated, you have obligated yourself to keep the whole law in every jot and tittle as perfectly as Jesus Christ kept it or perish.” That is what he said

You see, Christ kept the whole law. There was no...he knew no sin. He did no sin. He had no sin. There was no fault. The heavenly Father said, “I am pleased.” Now he could

never say that about you. But he better be able to say it about you if that is the way you are going to stand before him at the judgment. You will stand in Christ or on your own footing. And once you start on this thing Christ is become of no effect to you. "Whosoever you are that are justified by the law, Christ has become of no effect because you are fallen from grace." You have departed from grace. You have chosen the law road. You have chosen salvation by works. And if you choose the law and you choose salvation by works then you have got to keep it all perfectly. God can't be satisfied with any less than perfection. You can't mix law and grace. If salvation is by works it is not of grace. If salvation is by grace it is by pure grace and works mean nothing. Righteousness before God, holiness before God, acceptance with God for a sinner is only in Jesus Christ through Jesus Christ and because of Jesus Christ and that is grace, grace, grace.

Now if I try to add anything to what Christ did it doesn't matter what it is, if I try to recommend myself to God by keeping a day, well, I believe in Jesus, but I believe you better keep the sabbath day. Wait a minute now. If you do that to find favor with God Christ is become of no effect. You have fallen from grace. You have taken the works road. I don't care if it is 2%. Or by paying a tithe. I know people pay tithes. They pay 10% so diligently. Why are you doing that?

"Well, because it is required."

You are on the law road and you have got a long road. You have forsaken Christ. He has become of no effect. You are doing this out of duty. You are doing this because it is a law. You are doing this to find favor with God and you are on the law road. You, you have fallen from grace.

Doing good works. Why are you doing these good works?

"Well, I believe if I do enough good works I will go to heaven."

You are on the law road. Christ profits you nothing. You are fallen from grace, fallen from grace.

Look at the next verse five. Paul said, "Now but we...we through the Spirit, through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, through a knowledge given to us of the Holy Spirit of the liberty in Christ of the grace in Christ, we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness, the hope of holiness, not by works, but by faith.

"You mean a man is declared righteous and holy and perfectly accepted of God only by faith?"

Only by faith in Christ Jesus because he is everything. We are complete in him, complete. That is what the word says, complete. What is our hope of righteousness? Christ. What is our hope of acceptance? In the beloved. What is our hope of resurrection? He said,

“Because I live you live.” What is our hope of eternal life? “I am come that they might have life.”

It is all in Christ. You can't add even an atom, not an atom. “I say unto you,” Paul said, “If you be circumcised to find favor with God,” that is what I am saying now...

Now wait a minute. Watch this last verse. “Now for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision,” that's works. See, circumcision is a sign of all the works, sabbath days, tithing, feast days, holy days, keeping the law, all these things. That doesn't avail any thing, nor uncircumcision.

A fellow said, “Well, I don't do any of those things.”

Well, you haven't got any thing either.

But faith works by... What? True faith works. It works. It labors. It strives. It sacrifices. It gives by love, motivated by love.

Watch this thing. Well, Paul is saying this. “The man who keeps the sabbath to find favor with God will not be accepted because he is a debtor to do the whole law and he can't do the whole law. He is born in sin. He is shapen in iniquities. He is brought forth speaking lies and his righteousness will come short of the glory of God. And he will not be accepted.”

But neither will the man who doesn't keep it.

A fellow says, “Well, I don't believe in sabbath day. I don't keep it.”

Well, you are not accepted either.

Well, who is accepted? The man is accepted who worships God because he loves God. That is who is accepted, the man who knows God and worships God because he loves God.

It is not a matter of one day out of seven. He loves God every day. He worships God every day. Every day is the Lord's Day. Christ is his rest. Christ is his true sabbath. But he loves God and worships God not to gain favor with God. Christ gained that favor. Christ purchased that redemption. Christ worked out that righteousness. We worship God because we love God. I don't have to go to church. I don't have to read the Bible. I don't have to worship God on the Lord's Day. I don't have to. And if you have to, it is a duty with you, you are under the law. But we do it because we want to. That is where we want to be. That is the people with whom we want to be. That is what we want to do. We love God.

The man who tithes, the man who diligently tithes to find favor with God, he won't be accepted. If he does it out of a duty, if he puts aside the 10% because it is ordered and

under the law, tithing is not taught in the New Testament anywhere. It is all under the Mosaic, Levitical economy. The man who tithes is not accepted, but the man...

Another fellow says, "Well, I don't tithe. I don't believe in tithing."

You are not accepted either.

Well, who is accepted? The man who is generous and the man and woman who gives because they love Christ. Faith worketh by love, because they love God's people, because they want to share what God has given them. They give out of love, motivated freely and fully because they love Christ, not to gain a seat in heaven.

The moral man will not be accepted.

"I will tell you this. I have lived a clean life and I have paid my bills and I have never done this, that or the other. I have never killed anybody, never stole anything."

You are not accepted. You have got a lot more to do than that. You have got to please God in every jot and tittle from the soul of your feet to the top of your head. You are not accepted.

"Well, preacher, I am not a law keeper, you know that."

Yeah, you are not accepted either.

But who is accepted? The man who loves God's Word and loves God's commandments and to whom the commandments of God are not grievous, but he obeys his Lord because he loves him. He loves him. He loves to please. He loves to glorify. He loves to magnify his name.

Truth faith works not for reward, but because of love. True faith gives not for reward. I hear these preachers always talking about the reward, that people are going to get in heaven. Christ is our reward. He is all the reward we need. He is all the reward we want. He is all the reward we expect. Christ is our reward.

And faith does work, but not for reward. It gives, not for reward, but because of love. And true faith worships. True faith worships. I don't have to go to a building to worship God. We go to the building because that is where the people of God meet together. That is where the people of God assemble together. We delight to worship him and fellowship with them.

But true faith worships God out of love for God, love for the presence of God.

"I am glad," David said, "When they said to me let us go to the house of the Lord."

A fellow didn't come and say, "Now, this is the sabbath day and you had better be in the house of God or you are going to lose your reward and if you go to the house of God, God will look with favor on..."

"No," he said, "I was glad. I was glad."

Faith worketh by love.

True faith witnesses, it witnesses. You don't have to organize the visitation to get God's people to visit. You don't have to organize the visitation to get God's people to witness. You don't have to get up in the pulpit and browbeat people who love God to get them to tell others about their Lord. They love to talk about Christ. They delight to talk about Christ. They would rather talk about him than anything. Oh, to find someone willing to listen, to find somebody who is willing to listen is a delight to the redeemed soul. He loves to. That's his choice.

True faith is obedience, not perfectly, not perfectly. We know that better than anybody, not perfectly. But I will tell you he wants to be perfect. He wants to be like because we love him. And true faith reads the Word of God. And you don't have to assign daily Bible readings either to get people who love God to read God's Word. They like to read God's Word.

Do you see what he is saying here? This is so important. He goes back here and he says this. Now, I'm telling you, I'm tell you. If you be circumcised, if you are doing your religious duties to find favor with God Christ profits you nothing. I don't care what that duty is. Please listen to me.

Paul said, "I Paul say unto you if you are doing these duties to be accepted of God, to find favor with God Christ will profit you nothing." He said, "If you are doing this to find favor with God, you are obligated to keep the whole law. You are obligated to live perfectly before God because you have departed from grace. You have taken the law road. You have left the free road. You have taken a toll road and you have got nothing to pay. The free road is Christ. It is Christ Jesus.

And he said. "And we wait, we wait expectantly, joyfully for the hope of holiness and righteousness in Christ Jesus by faith. For," he said, "in Christ," and that is where all acceptance is and joy is and redemption is in Christ. In Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision. And that destroys both of these positions.

A fellow says, "If I do this God will accept me."

A fellow says, "Well, I don't believe in that type of religion. God will accept me because I am a free soul."

He won't accept either one of you, neither one of you. Circumcision doesn't avail anything. Sabbath keeping doesn't avail anything nor sabbath breaking doesn't avail any-

thing. But faith, true faith in Christ, that faith that loves him and leans on him and believes on him. It will work. It will work. It will worship. It will witness. It will give. It will be obedient, but it is motivated solely and completely by love for Jesus Christ, a love for the Son of God.

Now if you want this message I have it on a cassette tape. It is entitled, "Faith Worketh by Love." And you order it. Send two dollars and I will mail you this tape and the one I am going to bring, another sermon next week on faith, the faith of Abraham. Abraham believed God. Write for this tape, "Faith worketh by love." Send two dollars. Here is the address. Until next week, God bless you.