

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

GALATIANS LESSON 4

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Timothy Sparks and Ben Bailey.

Ben Bailey:

"You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

Timothy Sparks:

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There is a lot being said in the religious world today about the impossibility of a Christian falling from grace. Yet Paul, in Galatians 5:4, says: "You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."

Ben Bailey:

Some of the Christians in Galatia said that even if you were a Christian, you still had to follow the Old Law and be circumcised. As a result, they were in the position of adding to the Word of God. Paul said that, as a result of this, they had been "estranged" [literally, "cut off"] from Christ, and had fallen from grace. The terminology is intended to convey the point that they didn't just fall a little farther from the center of grace. They had actually fallen **out** of grace! One of the most impressive attributes of the inspiration of the Bible is that God's Word can defeat error even before it has been created. Today, men say (in these exact words): "You cannot fall from grace." The Bible, however, says, as Paul pointed out in Galatians 5:1-4: "You **have** fallen from grace." As Romans 3:4: puts it: "Let God be true, but

every man a liar.” We must trust God, not man. As Paul pointed out in Galatians 4:16, we do not want to become your enemy because we tell you the truth, yet we **must** tell you the truth. Within the pages of the New Testament, there are numerous passages which teach that a person **can** fall from grace and lose his soul. In Revelation 3:5, Jesus commended certain Christians by saying: “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will **not** blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” When Jesus said that He will **not** blot out from the Book of Life certain names, that implies the possibility that He **can** blot out those names! Peter said in 2 Peter 1:10: “Be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.” If we must work to ensure that our calling and election remain “sure,” then, again, it is obvious that we can find ourselves in a situation where our calling and election are not sure. Perhaps one of the best examples in the New Testament of someone who did, in fact, “fall from grace,” is the case of Simon as recorded in Acts 8. Simon was baptized, leaving behind his former use of witchcraft and magic. He becomes a child of God, but then he sins. He witnesses the gift of miracles, and seeks to buy the ability to perform them. Peter told Simon: “You are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity” (Acts 8:23). Peter also said: “Your money perish with you” (vs. 20). The implication is obvious: Simon, a baptized child of God, **could** perish after he had become a Christian. This clearly teaches us that once a person is saved, he **can** fall from grace.

Timothy Sparks:

There is another example in 1 Corinthians 10. Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians that, in ancient times, 23,000 people had sinned against God and had “fallen.” Then, in verse 12, he says: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” Why would the inspired apostle warn about “falling from grace”—if it is impossible to fall from grace? The simple fact is that a person can fall from grace. In Revelation 2:5, Christ spoke about “removing the candlestick” of certain Christians (i.e., removing their names from the Book of Life) if they did not repent. In Revelation 3:16, Christ said of some of the Christians in Laodecia: “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.” Why would Jesus warn Christians about having their candlestick removed—if the candlestick couldn’t be removed? Or, why would He warn some that He would “vomit them” out of His mouth—if it was impossible for them to fall from His grace? We learn from passages in both the Old and New Testaments that it **is** possible to fall from God’s grace. Some, of course, want to go to passages like John 10:28 and say that no one can remove us from the Father’s grasp. That’s true. No one can remove each of us as individuals from God’s hold on us. **But we can remove ourselves!** We learn this from such passages as Luke 15, where the account of the prodigal son is found.

Ben Bailey:

Luke 15 provides the perfect example of a son who can be lost. The story is about a son who wakes up one day, decides that he wants his inheritance right then, and heads off to a far country. The young man wastes his inheritance, and eventually ends up in the muck and mire of a hog pen, feeding the pigs that he finds there. He comes to his senses and says, “Even the servants in my father’s house have greater than I.” So, he decides to return to his father, and ask to be treated, not as a son, but simply as a servant, from that point forward. You know the story. The father greets him, welcomes him back when he repents, and restores him to his rightful place in the household. The son represents any one

of us. The father represents God. The far country represents sin. At any time, we can leave God, fall into sin, and abandon our inheritance. Here is a clear-cut case that teaches us how it is possible for us to sin and fall from grace. At the same time, however, it also teaches us that we can repent and return to God. In the case of Simon's sin in Acts 8, we see what is often referred to as "the second law of pardon. When Simon sinned, what did Peter tell him to do? Peter said: "Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity' Then Simon answered and said, 'Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me'" (Acts 8:22-24). While we want to make the point that one **can** fall from grace, we also want to stress that one does not **have** to fall from grace. And if one **does** fall from grace, he can repent and be restored to a right relationship with God by repenting and making the appropriate changes in his life. Yes, the Bible teaches that we can fall from grace. No, we cannot be "ripped from God's grip," so to speak. But yes, we can remove ourselves from God's grip and grace. Jude said: "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (vs. 21-22).

Timothy Sparks:

In Galatians 5, we also find another problem. Some Jewish Christians were insisting that Gentile Christians had to be circumcised, just as they would have had to be circumcised under the Old Law. Paul said: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love." Paul says in Romans 2:28-29, that under the New Law, it is circumcision of the **heart** that matters, not the **physical** act of circumcision. Paul's comments in Galatians 5 are undoubtedly the sternest comments he makes in the entire book. He wanted the people who were teaching that the Old Law was still to be obeyed to know that they were "severed from Christ" and had "fallen from grace." Another New Testament book with similar warnings is the Book of Hebrews. In Hebrews 2:3, the writer asked: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" Does this teach the concept of "once saved, always saved?" Definitely not! It teaches instead that if we do neglect our salvation, we will not escape God's wrath! Then, in Hebrews 6:6, we read: "If they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame." Hebrews 10:31 teaches us that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Why? Hebrews 12:29 provides the answer: "Our God is a consuming fire." These statements were made to Christians. In Hebrew 3:12-13, the writer warns against "an evil heart of unbelief" that results "in departing from the living God." He then goes on to say: "But exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Paul comes down hard in Galatians 5, because he does not want people to think that they have to obey the Old Testament. If they do, they will have "fallen from grace." In Galatians 2:21, Paul made it clear that "if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

Ben Bailey:

But Christ did **not** die in vain. He died for our sins, so that we could live the Christian life. Paul, therefore, is going to encourage the Christians in Galatia not to return to the Old Law or to lusts of the flesh, but instead to concentrate on the fruits of the Spirit. In Galatians 5, Paul discusses lusts of the flesh in which Christians are **not** to engage, and fruits of the Spirit, which Christians should possess in abundance. Paul listed among the works of the flesh adultery, which Jesus condemned in Matthew 19:9, and listed as the sole reason for divorce. Think about the damage that has been done to marriages because a husband or

wife engages in an extramarital affair. Think of how many homes have been ruined as a result of adultery. The Bible says in Hebrews 13:4: "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." Fornication is also condemned. The idea for "fornication" comes from the Greek word *pornea*, from which we derive our English term "pornography." Paul also condemns envy, strife, dissensions, licentiousness, ludeness (which would include dancing and evil thoughts), etc. The child of God should have none of these in his life. The challenge for each of us is to examine the list of the works of the flesh, and see if any of them is in our life. If such things are in our life, we need to get them out. At the same time, however, there are certain things that we need to put into our lives.

Timothy Sparks:

In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul provides a discussion of the fruits of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." While we certainly must be on guard against the negative influences around us, at the same time we must strive to use the fruits of the Spirit to project a positive influence. Love is listed as one of the fruits of the Spirit. In Galatians 5:13-15, Paul tells Christians to love and serve one another. Plus, we know that we are to love our neighbor as ourself. Thus, love serves and is productive. But, according to Galatians 5:15, if we do **not** have this love, then we will bite and devour one another. Rather than allowing the fruits of the flesh to have free reign within us, we should instead allow the fruits of the Spirit to have free reign. We also need to have joy. In 1 John 4:19, we are told that we love because He first loved us. We can't have true joy until we love God. Joy has been defined as God first, Jesus second, others third, and yourself last. We also need to have peace in our lives. Philippians 4:7 speaks of "the peace that passes all understanding," because, after all, Jesus is our "Prince of Peace." All of these types of things combine to form the fruits of the Spirit. Paul reminded us in Galatians 5:24: "Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." If we belong to Christ, then we crucify the flesh and the works of the flesh, with all of its passions and desires. In Galatians 2:20, Paul wrote: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." To be faithful, we must have these fruits of the Spirit.

Ben Bailey:

In Galatians 6:1-2, we learn an important lesson about bearing one another's burdens. "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." We have to help one another. We are, in so many ways, "our brother's keeper." We must look out for, and protect, one another. We especially need to help those who are in sin. Somewhere along the line, we adopted the philosophy that if a person is in sin, all we have to do is pray for that person. Yet in such passages as Jeremiah 7, 11, and 14, we see that God told His prophet to **stop** praying for the people. Had God simply given up on the people? No, not at all. Rather, He wanted another action taken. Sometimes, we need to stop praying, and go talk to the person about his or her sin. Yet notice from the last part of Galatians 6:1 **how** we are to go to a brother or sister who is in sin. Paul says: "Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted." It's not our job to go to someone with a threatening attitude and say, "You're going to come back to the Lord, or else!" That's not the way to approach someone in sin. Rather, we need to approach them in a spirit of love, as Ephesians 4:15 teaches when it refers to the fact that we must "speak the truth in love." Sometimes, when we try

to help another person who's in sin, our attitude is so bad that we do more harm than good. We need to approach a sinner with the right attitude, to let them know that we are concerned about their soul, that we love them, and that we want them to go to Heaven. Yes, we need to point out their sin. But we can do that in the correct manner, and in a spirit of love. Paul wants us to know that if we are truly going to fulfill the law of Christ, then we must bear one another's burdens. It's a wonderful thing for us to know that we are not in this alone. If I have a problem, or if you have a problem, we can encourage and love one another. Our load frequently becomes so heavy that we simply cannot handle it by ourselves. There is the emotional guilt of sin, the problems that the sin causes, etc. On occasion, we need to be able to go to another Christian to talk to them about the struggles we're enduring and the problems we're having. In James 5:16, we are told: "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed." Now **there** is burden bearing. How wonderful it is to know that we can go to another Christian to ask them for their help in our own struggles. Galatians 6 is "all about" bearing one another's burdens.

Timothy Sparks:

Yes, it is. There are times, however, that we have to bear our own burdens. Jesus referred to it as "taking up our cross and following Him." There are times when we can, and must, help one another. But, as Jude 21 points out, there are times when we must "keep ourselves in the love of God." Christians, therefore, have received two divine injunctions about bearing burdens. We must first bear our own burdens. Then, we also must bear the burdens of others, as Jude pointed out when he wrote that "others [we] save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh" (vs. 23). In Galatians 6:6, Paul says: "Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches." This, in essence, is saying, "pay the preacher." Paul then follows up on that by saying: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life" (vss. 7-8). We will reap what we sow. Thus, Paul urges Christians to take care of—in a physical, monetary sense—those who preach the Gospel to them. While it is true that Paul chose not to accept pay for his services, in 1 Corinthians 9:14 he clearly set forth the principle that those who preach the Gospel have every right to live off of the Gospel. It is true, of course, that we reap what we sow. If we "reap the wind," then we can expect to "reap the whirlwind." God will not be mocked. He will bring every secret action out into the open (Eccl. 12:14). As Paul taught in 2 Corinthians 5:10: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." In Galatians 6:9, Paul says: "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." Then, in verse 10, he goes on to say: "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." The message is clear: we must do as much good as we can, especially in light of the concept of "sowing and reaping."

Ben Bailey:

We learn from Galatians 6:14 and 17 "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.... From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." It has been said that in these passages we find "three bears." We must bear our own burdens, we must bear the burdens of others, and we must bear the burdens of Jesus Christ. When people look at us, can they tell that we are Christians? In Acts 4:13, we

find a wonderful comment about the apostles. They had been told not to preach and teach about Jesus. But they did so anyway. The text says: "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus." Some Christians in the first century actually "bore the marks" of their faith. Paul, for example, had been beaten and stoned. These marks bore witness to the people's faith in Christ. I heard the story of a father who was reading to his son from Foxe's Book of Martyrs various stories about how first-century Christians had endured martyrdom as they perished because of their faith. The youngster looked up at his father and asked, "Daddy, do we have any Christians among us today?" Questions like that ought to make each one of us stop and think. If we had to endure such things (like being put in jail, or beaten), would we still be faithful to Christ and His Word? The only way we can do that is by living daily according to the teachings of the Gospel. Jesus put it like this in Luke 9:23: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." We must be like Paul and be willing to set aside the things of the world and be crucified with Christ.

Have you obeyed the Gospel? Are you a child of God? The Book of Galatians teaches that Jesus, the only Son of God, was given to rescue us from this evil age in which we live (Gal. 1:4). "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). Today, if you are not a Christian, you can come to the Lord, believing in Him with all your heart, genuinely repenting of your sins as you change your mind, change your life, and conform your will to God's. Upon your belief and repentance, you then can confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. You can be immersed into Christ for the remission of your sins, that you might arise from the watery grave of immersion to walk in newness of life (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4). "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). If we are faithful unto death, Jesus will give us the crown of life (Rev. 2:10.).

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Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR GALATIANS LESSON 4

1. When certain of the Christians in Galatia suggested that it was essential to obey portions of the Old Law, what did Paul say had happened to them (Gal. 5:4)?
2. Jesus said in Revelation 3:5 that He would **not** blot out certain names from the Book of Life. What is the implication of that statement?
3. In Acts 8, the story is told of a Christian whom Peter said “would perish” if he did not repent. Who was that person? What prompted Peter’s statement to him?
4. In 2 Peter 1:10, Peter wrote: “Be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.” What is the implication of this passage?
5. What was Paul’s point in writing in 1 Corinthians 10:12: “Let him who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall”?
6. In Revelation 2:5, Christ said that He was prepared to “remove the candlestick” of certain Christians. Why did He say that? What does it mean to have your candlestick removed?
7. According to John 10:28, no one can take us from the grasp of God. How, then, is it possible for us to be lost (Gal. 5:4)?
8. The story of the prodigal son in Luke 15 tells us at least two things. What are those two important points?
9. Galatians 5 explains that some Jewish Christians wanted some Gentile Christians to obey a certain portion of the Old Law. What portion was that?
10. In Hebrews 6:6, we read: “If they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.” What is the message of this verse?
11. In Hebrew 3:12-13, the writer warns against “an evil heart of unbelief” that results “in departing from the living God.” Explain how this correlates with Galatians 5:4.
12. List the works of the flesh as found in Galatians 5:19-21.
13. List the fruits of the Spirit as found in Galatians 5:22-23.
14. Galatians 6:1-2 teaches us to do something for other Christians. What is that “something”?
15. According to Galatians 6:10, can Christians help non-Christians? If not, why not? If so, how?