

Hold on to Hope (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] This passage begins the third section of Paul's letter to the Galatians.

! He first defended his apostleship in chapters 1 and 2, and then in chapters 3 and 4, he focused on justification by faith, and now he applies the doctrine of justification by faith to practical Christian living.

We'll see him emphasize that the right doctrine should result in right living, and his subject is the sanctification that should result from our justification. One thing we'll see is that the life of genuine faith is more than the belief in divine truth, it is also bearing divine fruit.

Last week we ended with Galatians 5.1. That verse serves as a bridge to tonight's text, and we're only going to cover Galatians 5.2-6 tonight, but let's read Galatians 5.1-12.

Starting with verse 1 of chapter 5, it says, For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Look, I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.

[1 : 22] I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law.

You have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly await for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion is not from him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. But if I, brother, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted?

In that case, the offense of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves. We'll take that passage in two parts, and the main idea applies to both parts of the lesson that we'll see this week and next week.

[2 : 31] And here is that main idea. Paul lists the consequences for believers who turn to false teaching, and he summarizes the characteristics of false teachers. So those of you who pay attention to the last line of your handouts likely have noticed that this lesson title is different than what last week's handout said it would be.

And the working title for Galatians 5, 2 through 12 was Live in Your Freedom. That fits, but in this passage, Paul encourages true believers to live in their freedom by holding on to their hope.

We hold on to our hope when we understand and avoid the consequences of falling victim to false teaching. And we hold on to hope when we understand how to recognize false teachers before those false teachers can hinder us.

And so that's why we see those two things in the main idea. Again, Paul lists the consequences for believers who turn to false teaching, and he summarizes the characteristics of false teachers.

We're going to break the passage into just two sections, and we'll only look at the first one tonight. In verses 2 through 6, we see the consequences of the flawed message.

[3 : 47] So, consequences of the flawed message. In this section, Paul summarizes what will happen if the Galatians turn to the bondage of following Judaism.

And as we read verses 2 through 6 again, listen for the consequences of following the law. Here are Galatians 5, 2 through 6.

He says, Look, I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.

You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law. You have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love. When an authority figure starts a sentence with look, that usually is a bad sign.

[4 : 58] And from the first word of verse 2, Paul wants to make sure that he has the Galatians' attention. He wants them to know that he's speaking from his position of authority as an apostle of Christ.

And Paul wants to be certain that the Galatians are aware of the serious consequences if they follow the Judaizers' teaching. Notice how he starts verse 2.

He starts verse 2 by saying, Look, if you accept circumcision. As the false teachers were pressing it, circumcision was neither a physical operation nor a ceremonial rite, but a theological symbol. It stood for a particular type of religion, and that was namely salvation by good works in obedience to the law. The slogan of the false teachers was, Unless you are circumcised and keep the law, you cannot be saved.

And you can see that if you go over to Acts chapter 15 and look at verses 1 and 5. So the false teachers were declaring that faith in Christ was insufficient for salvation.

[6 : 02] They were only taught that circumcision and law obedience must be added to faith in Christ. Salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone.

In Christ alone, teaching that requires faith in Christ plus anything else is false teaching that must be rejected. Because some of the Galatians were accepting that false teaching, Paul then listed the consequences of following the false teaching.

The first consequence for someone who turns to Judaism or any works-based religion is that Christ will be of no advantage for that person. The atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ was perfect and complete, but it cannot benefit a person who trusts in anything else.

That something else, whether circumcision or any other human act or effort, stands between that person and Christ. The Galatian church members believed themselves to be saved.

Obviously, they wouldn't have been church members if they didn't think they were saved. And most probably were. We've seen Paul affirm their salvation in this letter when he calls them brothers.

[7 : 12] But we know that every church includes people who are truly saved and people who really are unsaved, but think they are saved. And the truth Paul presents here applied to both groups.

To those who really were unsaved, he was saying that they could not be saved, that they couldn't gain any eternal saving benefit from Christ if they trusted in circumcision.

To those who were truly saved, Paul was saying that such behavior was inconsistent with their salvation and that they certainly could experience no benefit of spiritual growth in their lives if they began trusting in circumcision in addition to God's grace.

Martin Luther meant no words when he summarized the first consequence. And the Old English translation is awkward, but the message is clear. Listen to what Luther said.

He said, This place is, as it were, a touchstone, whereby we may most certainly and freely judge of all doctrines, works, religions, and ceremonies of all men.

[8 : 17] Whosoever teach that there is anything necessary to salvation, whether they be papists, Turks, Jews, or sectaries, besides faith in Christ, or shall devise any work or religion, or observe any rule, tradition, or ceremony whatsoever, with this opinion that by such things they shall obtain forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and everlasting life, they hear in this place the sentence of the Holy Ghost pronounced against them by the Apostle, that Christ profiteth them nothing at all.

Another consequence of turning back to the law comes in verse 3. Paul says there in verse 3, I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.

The freedom Jesus has to offer is emancipation from the old slaveholders of humanity, and that's namely sin, death, and the devil. Every human being is born into this triple slavery.

We're born in sin, and thus we're evil by nature. We're destined to die having been made mortal by God's curse against Adam's sin, and finally we're tormented by the devil who tempts us to sin and drags us down to the very pit of hell.

Another way to say all this is that Christ has freed us from the law, which is one of Paul's primary concerns throughout Galatians. Believers remain subject to the moral law, which is God's eternal will for his people, but Christ has freed us from the law that leads to sin and death.

[10:02] And this is the law that we break when we sin. It's the law that Satan uses to accuse us of our guilt, and it's the law that sentences us to death. But the gospel of free grace says that the law no longer has that kind of power over the true believer.

Jesus Christ has conquered sin, death, and the devil. Paul here tells the Galatians that if they want to follow that law in one part, they must follow every part of that law.

Jesus was the only person who kept the law perfectly. We know that no ordinary human could do that. Paul said earlier in Galatians that everyone who tries to live under the law is cursed.

Listen to Galatians 3, verses 10-12. Galatians 3, 10-12 say, For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse.

For it is written, Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them. Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for the righteous shall live by faith.

[11:15] But the law is not of faith. Rather, the one who does them shall live by them. These verses are consistent with what James taught in James 2, verse 10.

And here is James 2, verse 10. For whoever keeps the whole law, but fails in one point, has become guilty of all of it. Even if a person were somehow able to keep all of the law for all of his life, if he broke a commandment during his last minute on earth, he would forfeit salvation.

Or if he managed to keep all the laws perfectly except one, he would suffer the same fate. And that's why the Jews of Paul's day often referred to the law of Moses as a yoke, calling it the yoke of the commandments, or even the yoke of the kingdom of heaven.

The irony, though, is that even though the Jews called the law a yoke, they did not recognize that they were enslaved by the law. Peter saw it very clearly, though.

At the Jerusalem council, Peter referred to the law as a yoke that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear. That comes from Acts, chapter 15, verse 10.

[12:31] We know that Paul saw the same thing, and that is why Paul referred to the yoke of slavery in Galatians 5.1. Paul recognized that his people, the Jews, had become beasts of burden.

They were loaded down with the law. But Christ came and his sacrifice freed believers from that burden. Now the Galatians, both Jew and Gentile, were in danger of following the Judaizers back into the burden of the law.

The next consequence of turning back to the law is falling from grace. And we see that in Galatians 5.4.

Paul says there, You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law. You have fallen away from grace. This verse has wrongly been used by some people and some denominations to say that true believers can lose their salvation.

The Bible is clear that true believers never can lose their salvation. And we'll look at a couple of places there to prove that. In Romans 8.30, Paul wrote, And those whom he predestined, he also called.

[13:47] And those whom he called, he also justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified. But even better than Romans 8.30 is what Jesus said in John 10, verses 27 through 30.

Listen to what Jesus said in John 10, 27 through 30. So believers are held firm both by Jesus and the Father.

The foundational truth that believers never can lose their salvation is extremely important to remember. Given that, let's talk about what Paul means in Galatians 5.4 when he says that you are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law, you have fallen away from grace.

Being severed from Christ is a more graphic way of stating that Christ will be of no benefit to those who try to be justified by the law. He's restating the same point again.

He comes back to that point here because it explains how a person can fall away from grace. The word translated as severed means to be separated or loosed from.

[15:22] And fallen is from a word which means to lose the grasp on something. Simply stated, a person cannot live by both law and grace. To attempt to be justified by the law is to reject the way of grace.

In Galatians 5.4, Paul is contrasting the ways of grace and law, works and faith, as a means of salvation. His primary point in this passage and throughout the letter is that law and grace cannot be mixed.

As a means to salvation and even sanctification, they are totally incompatible and mutually exclusive. To mix law with grace is to obliterate grace.

And when we looked at verse 2, we talked about how the Galatian church, like any church, would have included people who were true believers and some people who really were unconverted, even though they thought themselves to be believers.

Verse 4 applies differently to true believers and to those who mistakenly believe that they are believers. John MacArthur said, For a believer to start living again under the law to merit salvation is, in fact, to reject salvation by grace.

[16:37] Contrary to the teaching of the Judaizers, to add circumcision and other works of the law to what Christ accomplished by grace is not to raise one's spiritual level, but to severely lower it.

Legalism does not please God, but offends Him. It does not bring a person closer to God, but rather drives Him away. What's another way to define something that separates us from God?

Well, that's another definition for sin. And for believers, we sin if we seek to be sanctified by works after we have been saved by grace.

By their actions, believers who seek to be sanctified by works are saying that something else must be added to what Christ already has done. True believers never can lose their salvation, but true believers can lose the joy of their salvation.

Believers who lose the joy of their salvation fail to live in the freedom that Christ has provided for them. The believers had forgotten what Paul taught them about the results of Christ's atoning death on the cross.

[17:53] And that teaching was the same thing that Paul summarized in Galatians 3, verses 13 and 14. Here are Galatians 3, 13 and 14 again.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree, so that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith.

Everything we've just discussed about genuine believers never losing their salvation is true.

Scripture supports that, and we've looked at just a few of those supporting passages.

However, if we or any other professed believer consistently resorts to legalism, we should consider whether the professed faith really is genuine. Paul said to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 13, 5, examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith.

Test yourselves, or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you, unless indeed you fail to meet the test. Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1, verses 10 and 11, Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election.

[19:19] For if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. For in this way, there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So these warnings from 2 Corinthians 13, 5, and 2 Peter 1, 10 and 11 are sobering, and we need to take them seriously. We also need to remember, though, that these warnings are here for our benefit.

God wants us to be certain that we are saved, and we can be certain that we are saved. Listen to 1 John 5, verses 18 through 20, and these verses are verses that Pastor Mike will soon cover on Sunday morning.

John wrote in 1 John 5, 18 through 20, We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one, and we know that the Son of God has come and given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true.

[20:34] And we are in Him who is true. In His Son, Jesus Christ, He is the true God and eternal life. Did you hear how many times John mentioned what we know in those verses?

So it's clear that God really does want us to know that we are saved. True Christians confuse themselves and others when they try to live by works because the mark of true discipleship is continuing obedience to Christ.

The security of salvation from the divine side is guaranteed by God to His own. But from the human side, it's manifested by perseverance in grace. And Paul here is calling for perseverance in grace by the genuine believer.

So we've spent considerable time talking about how Galatians 5.4 applies to true believers. Let's spend some time talking about how that verse applies to those who have yet to truly believe.

when we apply it to someone who is really an unbeliever, the principle of falling from grace has to do with being exposed to the truth of the gospel and then permanently turning your back on Christ. [21 : 48] That makes the person an apostate. And during the time of the early church, many people, both Jews and Gentiles, heard the gospel message, they witnessed the miracles confirming signs performed by the apostles and they became attracted to Christ and often made professions of faith in Christ.

Some even became involved in a local church and experienced the blessing of Christian love and fellowship. They were exposed first hand to every truth and blessing of the gospel of grace but then they turned away.

They had witnessed Christ's divine ministry in the lives of believers but they refused to stand fully with Christ by placing their trust in him and they fell away losing all prospect of repentance and of salvation.

So they came to the very doorway of grace and then fell away back into their works-based religion. Hebrews chapter 6 verses 4 through 6 talks about such people.

So here are Hebrews 6 4 through 6 For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened who have tasted the heavenly gift and have shared in the Holy Spirit and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come and then have fallen away to restore them again to repentance since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

[23 : 21] John Stott wrote this reminder about what we've already seen in Galatians. You cannot add circumcision or anything else for that matter to Christ as necessary to salvation because Christ is sufficient for salvation in himself.

If you add anything to Christ you lose Christ. Salvation is in Christ alone by grace alone through faith alone. Let's move to Galatians 5 verses 5 and 6 now.

Paul still is talking about the consequences of following false teachers who teach the necessity of works but he changes how he approaches the consequences.

Instead of showing what people who follow the law lose Paul reminds people who trust in grace alone about what they already have. Look at Galatians 5 5 and 6 again.

For through the Spirit by faith we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything but only faith working through love.

[24 : 36] So another consequence of trusting in works is to lose our hope of righteousness. If we try to prove ourselves to be righteous by keeping the law we're going to fail.

We're going to fail because it's impossible for us to keep the law and that failure will steal our hope and it will steal our joy because we will find that we never can be righteous on our own.

Notice how in verses 5 and 6 the pronouns change. They change from you to we. So Paul includes himself and he describes true believers here who stand in the gospel of grace.

The emphasis in these verses is on faith and he makes two statements about that faith. He says first by faith we wait and then second in Christ what matters is faith.

The way we become righteous in God's sight the way that we're justified is by faith alone and that is the same message that we've seen throughout Galatians. That faith leads to our hope of righteousness so we need to spend some time reminding ourselves about what that biblical hope is.

[25 : 51] When he talks about hope Paul expresses confidence and that's the confidence that comes from or is based upon the imputed righteousness of Christ that is given to all believers.

Paul says that the hope of all true believers arises from faith and faith alone. This confidence is based on the faith that has been worked by the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart during the work of regeneration.

It's a spiritual exercise of the heart and it's a reflex action of someone who is born again. True believers have the hope of righteousness because of what Christ already has done.

Consider how different the true believers hope is from what the Judaizers were trying to sell to the Galatians. The confidence of the Judaizer, his hope of righteousness, was based upon performance.

It was faith plus works. It was faith plus circumcision and Jewish ceremonies. Paul declares that such an attempt obligates the Judaizer to live by a work system and his confidence in part rests on his performance.

[27 : 02] People trying to live by the law have no hope of righteousness because it is impossible for any human to keep the whole law perfectly. Ordinary humans are unable to keep the law perfectly for even one second.

And for proof of that, listen to the requirements in Deuteronomy chapter 6 verses 4 through 6. Here are Deuteronomy chapter 6 4 through 6.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. So how many of you have managed to love the Lord your God with all your heart even for just one second?

we're all in trouble then if we want to rely on works. And that's why we can say that a consequence of trusting in works excludes us from the hope of righteousness.

[28 : 13] If we're excluded from the hope of righteousness, then we lose that hope, even if we genuinely are saved. In other words, we lose the joy of our salvation when we seek to be sanctified by works.

So let's dig a little deeper into Galatians 5, 5 and 6. These verses really are very uplifting for the believer. And here is verse 5 again. He says, For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

Remember we said that Paul makes two statements about faith in these verses. And the first is that by faith we wait. We wait for the hope of righteousness.

We just talked a lot about that hope of righteousness. And before we go further, let's be clear about what the hope of righteousness represents. The hope of righteousness is the expectation for the future which our justification brings, and that is spending eternity with Christ in heaven.

for this future of salvation, we wait. We don't work for it, we wait for it by faith. We don't strive anxiously to secure it or imagine that we have to earn it by good works.

[29 : 35] Final glorification in heaven is a free gift, as is our initial justification. So by faith, trusting only in Christ crucified, we wait for that.

And when Paul speaks of waiting for righteousness, he's looking forward to the day of judgment when God finally will render his verdict on every person who has ever lived.

The Christian waits for that day with eager expectation, almost like a little girl looks forward to her birthday party. The Christian hopes for a favorable verdict, trusting to be declared not guilty on the day of God's justice.

This kind of faith comes only from the Holy Spirit, which is why Paul speaks of waiting through the Spirit. From this point on in the letter, life in the Spirit becomes one of the main themes of the letter.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned here because he is the one who gives the gift of faith. Ephesians chapter 1 verses 11 through 14 remind us how certain a true believer's hope is.

[30 : 49] The verses remind us that we already have the Holy Spirit as a down payment for our future inheritance. So here are Ephesians chapter 1 verses 11 through 14.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians, in him talking about Jesus, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory.

Notice the tense of those verses. Paul says, we have obtained an inheritance, and then he says, we have the guarantee of that inheritance, which is the promised Holy Spirit.

Believers already possess the imputed righteousness of justification, but the yet incomplete righteousness of total sanctification and glorification still awaits the believers.

[32 : 10] Creation itself also is going to be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. In this life, believers are still waiting for the completed and perfected righteousness that is yet to come, but we know that righteousness is coming for every true believer.

Paul expanded on this thought in his letter to the Romans. So, if you want to flip over to Romans chapter 8, verses 18 through 24, and you'll see how much Romans 8, 18 through 24, mirror what we see in Galatians.

Here are Romans 8, 18 through 24. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

[33 : 44] For this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

So there again you see Paul calling for believers to wait for their hope with patience. He doesn't say to work for it with patience. He says to wait for it with patience.

We receive that hope by trusting in Christ by grace alone. The hymn writer perhaps said it best, My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

And that hope keeps us going. Samuel Rutherford said, If Christ Jesus be the end and lodging home at the end of your journey, there is no fear.

Ye go to a friend. Ye may look death in the face with joy. Those who do not know Christ have a much different perspective on life, though.

[34 : 51] They have no hope when they suffer. Whatever the reason for the unbeliever's affliction, it does not come upon them for Christ's sake or for righteousness' sake, and it cannot produce for them any spiritual blessing or glory.

People who live only for this life cannot look forward to any resolution of wrongs or any comfort for their souls. Their pain, loneliness, and affliction serve no divine purpose and bring no divine reward. Christians, on the other hand, have the great hope that we've already been talking about. Hope that our afflictions eventually will end and that those afflictions actually will add to our eternal glory.

As followers of Christ, our suffering comes from men, whereas our glory comes from God. Our suffering is earthly, but our glory is heavenly.

Our suffering, relatively, is short, whereas our glory will be eternal. That means our suffering will be trivial in comparison to our glory, which will be limitless.

[36 : 00] And our suffering is in our mortal and corrupted bodies, whereas our glory will be in our perfected and imperishable bodies. The Judaizer's hope of righteousness was based upon adding imperfect and worthless works of the law in a vain attempt to complete the perfect and priceless work of Christ, which they thought was incomplete and imperfect.

So we, that is true believers, Paul says, through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness that is based upon God's grace. And now we're ready for that second statement of faith that we mentioned earlier, and that is that in Christ what matters is faith.

And we see that from verse 6. Verse 6 says, For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

When a person is in Christ, nothing more is necessary. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision can improve our standing before God.

All that is necessary to be accepted with God is to be in Christ, and we are in Christ by faith. We've spent considerable time talking about how following the law provides no benefit.

[37 : 26] So let's look at the second half of verse 6. It talks about faith working through love. Faith does work through love, and that's love for God and love for others.

True believers demonstrate their faith by showing love. And at first, we might think that Paul suddenly is highlighting the importance of a work. The difference, though, is the sequence and the motivation.

People led astray try to earn their salvation or their sanctification by doing good works. True believers are different. True believers give evidence that they already are saved when the true believers do good works.

True believers are motivated to do good works out of gratitude to God because of what God already has done for them. Listen to what Paul told the Ephesians in Ephesians 2, 8-10.

Ephesians 2, 8-10 say, For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

[38 : 42] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Notice the order.

Salvation by grace through faith comes first. Good works follow. Some people think that if you teach freedom in Christ, no one will want to serve Christ, but that is false.

The opposite actually happens. When you recognize that Christ has done it all, and you truly work this into your heart, you will adore Christ. An adoring heart leads to a holy life, and that's a heart and life that want to serve Christ.

Love's very nature is to fulfill the law's demands. And we'll see that Paul says a few verses later that the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. That comes from verse 14 of Galatians 5. A person does not, for instance, steal from or lie to someone he truly loves.

[39 : 54] And he certainly does not kill someone he loves. The person who lives by faith works under the internal compulsion of love and does not need the outward compulsion of the law.

Listen to that last sentence again. The person who lives by faith works under the internal compulsion of love and does not need the outward compulsion of the law.

We can see the same thing in what Paul wrote to the believers in Colossae in Colossians 1, verses 9-14. Here are Colossians 1, 9-14.

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

And here's the part I really want us to focus in on. So as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

[41 : 11] He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Remember the main idea. Paul lists the consequences for believers who turn to false teaching. And he summarizes the characteristic of false teachers.

We've only seen half of that main idea tonight. And if you remember nothing else from tonight, remember this. To trust in circumcision or any other personal effort as a means of grace is to supplement Christ's divine work with human work, and a supplemented Christ is a supplanted Christ.

A supplemented Christ is a supplanted Christ. To trust in human effort is to trust in law, which is totally incompatible with grace. John MacArthur's commentary included this illustration.

He said, an aspiring artist was commissioned to do a large sculpture for a famous museum. At last, he had the opportunity to create the masterpiece he had long dreamed of.

[42 : 25] After laboring over the work for many years, he saw it grow not only in shape, but in beauty. But when it was finished, he discovered to his horror that it was much too large to be taken out a window or door, and the cost of tearing down part of the building to remove the sculpture was prohibitive.

His masterpiece was forever a captive to the room in which it was created. Then MacArthur said, that is the fate of all human religion.

Nothing a person does to earn God's favor can leave the room of this earth where his self-made works are created. Warren Wearsby said, to live by grace means to depend on God's abundant supply of every need.

To live by law means to depend on my own strength, the flesh, and be left to get by without God's supply. So that's another way of explaining how we can fall from grace even when we're a true believer.

We'll look at the second half of this passage next time when we cover verses 7 through 12. In the meantime, hold on to the believer's hope. And here's one more cross-reference from Paul to remind us of that hope and tide us over until next week.

[43 : 44] To the Romans, Paul wrote these words in Romans chapter 5 verses 1 through 5 and they are very similar to what we've seen in Galatians tonight. Paul said in Romans 5, 1 through 5, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

through Him, we also have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope and hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You for this reminder of the hope that all true believers have.

And when we are tempted to doubt this hope, bring this passage to mind and remind us of the hope that we have as a guarantee because we have received Your Holy Spirit.

When we interact with people who aren't yet believers, let us use this hope to help bring them towards You so that Your Spirit can make them into a believer.

[45 : 13] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.