

## **Those who Sow Confusion will Pay the Penalty**

Galatians 5:1-15 (**vv. 7-10**)

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### **I. Biblical Background**

When the Gentiles started to join God's community, the sense of unity was threatened. Some insisted that new Gentiles had to observe the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament, including the requirement of circumcision. Circumcision was more than just a community preference, it was a standard that God had required of Abraham's family as a sign of the covenant God had established with Abraham (Genesis 17).

In spite of this historical precedent, Paul takes a strong position in Galatians 5. He does not argue that the requirement of circumcision should be dismissed because it was inconvenient and painful, rather he argues that insisting on circumcision was creating a false barrier for Gentile Christians that contradicted the truth that Christ's grace was sufficient to save you.

### **II. The lesson: Those who sow confusion will pay the penalty.**

#### **1. v. 1. Christ set us free from circumcision that enslaves us.**

Christ freed us so that we may enjoy liberty. Don't go back and submit yourselves to slavery. If we go back to the law (legalism) it is bondage. Christ died for us on the cross so that we don't have to work for salvation. It's by faith we are saved, through faith (.Eph 2:8,9).

**2. v. 2. If you are circumcised, Christ is no value to you.**

Paul tells them don't let yourselves be circumcised, you will be depending on it for salvation, and Christ will have no value to you.

The law separates us from God. There is no way we can keep the law. If you keep the law of circumcision, it is as if you don't need Christ.

**3. vv. 3&4. Circumcision obligates you to the whole law.**

If you except circumcision, you have to obey the whole law. If you are trying to be justified by the law, you are being alienated From God. You have fallen away from grace.

**4. vv. 5&6. Faith expressed in love is more significant than circumcision.**

By faith we thrive for righteousness promised us by Christ. We walk by faith not, by sight. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrew 11:6). If you are in Christ, neither circumcision nor un- circumcision mean anything. The only thing that matters is faith expressing itself in God and love for one another.

**5. vv. 7&8. You were running a good race.**

Paul said you were doing so well. You were foolish to let someone get you off track. Who has persuaded you to

alter your path? I know it wasn't from God, who called us to faith.

**6. v.9. A little leaven spreads thru the entire lump.**

Just the tiniest persuasion of the wrong gospel can ruin the whole thing. It was sinful leaven that added circumcision to Jesus for salvation.

**7. v.10. Those who caused confusion must be dealt with.**

Those who introduced confusion to the gospel must be dealt with appropriately. Gospel diversion will be disciplined either by the Lord in His good fatherly supernatural way or God working through church leadership.

**8. v.11. Why is Paul being persecuted?**

They accused Paul of sending mixed information and preaching circumcision because he allowed some to be circumcised that wanted to, along with Timothy. But Paul has nothing against circumcision as long as it is not replacing salvation through Christ crucified. Paul asked "If you say I'm preaching circumcision, then why are you persecuting me?"

**9. v. 12. False teachers should emasculate themselves.**

Paul got a little angry at the agitators and said he wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves. Definitions of emasculate:

- a) Make someone or something weaker or less effective;
- b) Cut off male genitals.

Also, there were in Galatia a pagan sect that made themselves *eunuchs* by castrating themselves to show religious devotion (Matt19:12).

### **10. v.13. Do not use freedom to sin.**

We are called to be free, but do not use this freedom to do whatever you feel you want to do as far as sin and the way you treat your fellowman. Treat people the way you would want them to treat you.

### **11. v.14. What is the greatest commandment?**

When Jesus was asked "What is the greatest commandment?" Jesus answered "Love God and love thy neighbor as thyself." That sums up all of the commandments.

### **12. v.15. The law cause us to love.**

If we don't love from freely pursuing Jesus, and indulging in all His goodness, we will just be a flesh show that beats each other up over who's flesh is fleshier.

## **III. Conclusion**

As we set our aim on the mission of God's glory among all nations, let the hope of future grace have its pruning effect as we stay on track with the Holy Spirit and his people. Keep an eye out for gospel diversions in yourself

and discipleship relationships. Satan distracts with such foolishness. Be careful not to walk down fringe pathways, dragging the name of Jesus and your fellow Christians through those abnormal ideas. Worship the Lord in covenant fellowship, on mission, in unity, loving one another, at peace and full of joy.