

GAL 10



A part of being a Christian (and most especially a discerning Christian) is learning what things WE MUST say “YES” to—and likewise--what things we MUST say “NO” ...(especially as it relates to the GOSPEL)

AND that is WHAT our VERSES are dealing with TODAY...

They represent the 9th truth in this series that I am calling ...

GOSPEL BOMBS...(this being PART 7 of that series)...

AND this 9th TRUTH is...

9. Getting the gospel right requires saying “no” to hypocrisy and antinomianism, and “yes” to faithful obedience and God’s grace in Christ alone.

Paul who started dropping these gospel bombs (or bombshell truths) BACK at the very beginning of chapter one has taken US through WHAT many today would consider to be shocking facts about the GOSPEL (and what it means to actually get it right)—HENCE why I am calling them “bombs”...

(However) I believe they were just as shocking and explosive to his original audience (the Galatian churches)---AND that NOT ONLY because of what he actually communicates—BUT the way in which he does it...

(As I said in earlier discussions of the book) Paul is a man on fire---on man on the warpath for the PURITY and SOUNDNESS of the GOSPEL---something that was quickly being lost in the Galatian churches --and was (now) threatening his own church...

And the individuals most responsible for such reprehensible activity was the Apostle Peter and a group known as the circumcision party. Both were attempting to convince the churches outside of Jerusalem to adopt circumcision (as well as all the OC clean laws) as part of the necessary requirements for a Christian.

And though there is whole lot of “soap opera” with HOW it got to this (or why Peter and James and even Barnabas are now in a agreement with it---some of which we will discuss here in a moment) the BOTTOM LINE is---IT IS A “DIFFERENT GOSPEL” (according to Paul)...

A GOSPEL (therefore) other than the ONE handed down by Christ and on which the churches were established...a GOSPEL which (though based on good intentions in relation to the law)---meaning Peter and these guys weren’t attempting to establish a “works-based salvation” --(as we discussed and disproved last week) was (nonetheless) completely contradictory to the LAW and ignorant of HOW the true GOSPEL—the SOUND GOSPEL (the gospel being preached and defended by PAUL) was (in no way shape or form) attempting to UNDERMINE it.

Which MEANT (if Peter & co.) were going to GET it right...THEY NEEDED proper discernment (in relation to several areas of their theology)...THEY NEEDED to KNOW WHERE to say “NO” and where to say “YES”—and the FIRST PAUL deals with is the area of application...an area which requires...

9.1. Saying “no” to hypocrisy.

9.1.1. (14) = IOW: You don’t live like a Jew---yet you are making them live like one (that’s hypocrisy!)

9.1.2. What Paul means (then) when he makes this claim (that Peter is “not living like a Jew”): (15-16)

“**Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners**” = how Paul is using these two terms (“Jew” and “Gentile” is not to identify a person’s ethnicity (or race) but their spiritual state as clean or unclean, in covenant or out of covenant relationship w/ God. In this sense, “Jew” is just a term referring to those who are in covenant with God and spiritually clean (“by birth”—referring to their circumcision 8 days after birth). Jews are essentially “born clean—or in covenant w/God” versus Gentiles who were not in covenant and unclean (therefore “born sinners” and rebels before God).

9.1.1.3. Support: (Mat 5:47, 6:7, 32, 18:20; Eph 2:11-12)

9.1.1.4. “**yet**” (as Paul states) “**we know that a person** (including a Jew) **is not justified by works of the law** (meaning here ---as we discussed last week—and consistent with what was stated in the previous verses---circumcision). Paul says, though we thought we were truly clean b/c of that (and therefore justified before God), we realize (now) that this (along with the other OC clean laws) could not ultimately remove sin—and therefore could not ultimately make US clean/justified before God **but** (that this could only happen) **through faith in Jesus Christ** (meaning He is only One Who can make anyone Jew or Gentile truly clean—since he is the only One who can secure real payment for sins whereas all the OC clean laws could do was give temporary pass-over for sin-Rom 3:25; Heb 7:19, 9:4, 10:11-12).

“**So** (then, as Paul continues in the rest of the verse) **we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by the works of the law no-one will be justified.**”

IOW: We have followed the same PATH that we tell the UNCIRCUMCISED/UNCLEAN/ without GOD/sinner GENTILES to follow --- we (too) are seeking to be CLEAN/JUSTIFIED (not through those OC clean laws) BUT through faith in Christ...Which MEANS we (too) LIVE LIKE GENTILES!

So why are you BUSTING their chops? (Paul says) why the PUSH to TRY and GET them to DO something you yourself KNOW doesn’t work?

It’s HYPOCRISY ----GOSPEL HYPOCRISY (believing and pushing something within the Christian faith as though it were necessary YET either not practicing it yourself—OR—violating it through other things you approve of—which are based on the same principles).

If we are going to GET the GOSPEL RIGHT—we MUST rid our thinking and practice of all such things (otherwise) not only we will send a confusing message—BUT (possibly even) preach a false gospel...

THAT’S where Peter’s hypocrisy was leading him and it can do the same for US.

9.1.1.5. Modern Examples (of Gospel Hypocrisy)

9.1.1.5.1. Saying that the obedience (good works) of a Christian are just the fruit of the Spirit (not themselves) , yet when they persist in unrepentant sin, you discipline them (not the Spirit) out of the church.

9.1.1.5.2. Telling Christians they can't drink alcohol because they might commit the sin of drunkenness yet never telling people that can't eat because they might commit the sin of gluttony , or have money because they might become greedy, or have sex because it might lead to immorality.

9.1.1.7. There is another reason this particular push for the observance of OC clean laws proved to be HYPOCRISY—and that is because it proved to be a violation of the very thing PETER and the circumcision party were (no doubt) attempting to protect —(Deu 4:2)—though this verse teaches you cannot take away from God's law (as Jesus did in Mat 5:17-18) it also teaches that you cannot ADD—which is what Peter & co. were guilty of (since Christ had replaced the OC clean laws by the clean law of himself—they now became an addition to a closed system—something else implied by Deu 4:2 and why Paul says what he does in Gal 5:2). Hence in this way Peter & co. were also guilty of HYPOCRISY: violating the very law they were condemning others based upon).

9.1.1.8. In sympathy (however) for Peter (even the circumcision party) WE AT LEAST KNOW that their reasons for attempting to enforce the OC clean laws (especially circumcision) upon the Gentile Christians was NOT because they DIDN'T know what Paul HAS just stated in verses 15 and 16. They knew that CHRIST alone was the only way to GAIN justification (Act 10:34-35, 43).

Their agenda was INSTEAD related to the issue of antinomianism.

Which BRINGS US (then) to this second subject within our GOSPEL BOMB...

9.2. saying “no” to antinomianism.

9.2.1. This (too) is an important part (a crucial piece!) in getting the GOSPEL RIGHT —based on what Paul says in our verses...

Which means THOUGH PAUL stood against Peter in regard to re-implementing the OC clean laws—HE did NOT stand against his concern in this AREA---but rather with HIM...(and the circumcision party)...

(As I have already mentioned—and we have discussed before in this letter) the circumcision party (and Peter) was (INDEED) concerned about CHRISTIANITY being taken over by the heresy of antinomianism.

This (I believe) was the major impetus behind them moving in the DIRECTION of requiring the observance of the OC clean laws. AGAIN, not because they thought the work of Christ (for justification to be insufficient or anything else like that) BUT instead because of their WORRY that by allowing the removal of such laws (they would at the same time) be guilty of the very same things their nation HAD been guilty for so many years – and that was ANTINOMIANISM—or the belief that I don't have to agree to practice (or give myself in practice) to ALL that GOD has commanded in order to stay within in His good graces—BUT rather I can be “selective”.

IOW: That I can make a distinction within God's law as to what is “essential” versus “non-essential” (or as it often communicated today, what things are “salvific-issues” versus “non-salvific-issues”)---AND (then) based on that KIND of DISTINCTION—not worry about those things I have deemed “non-essential” or “non-salvific”. If it is convenient for me to abide by those particular laws, then so be it, but if it is NOT (and especially if it will create any sort of suffering in my life), then I can simply IGNORE them

(since they are again “non-essential” or “non-salvific issues”---THINGS that will NOT put me in eternal jeopardy—though I may be completely disobedient in my observance of them).

That (then) is what I mean by antinomianism--“selective obedience” to God’s commands.

And that again (I believe) was the concern of the circumcision party (and subsequently Peter): that by removing the OC clean laws from the requirements under the NC, precedent WAS SET in the direction of the “selective obedience” (of antinomianism)---AND —that eventually ALL of God’s law (including His moral commands) would be treated in the same way (as not necessary any longer)

Their concern (then) was THAT THIS was the beginning of the “slippery slope” —or as Charles Spurgeon put it---“the downward spiral” ... THAT SOON Christianity (like Judaism before it) would be thinking that AS LONG AS they HAD the HOLY SACRIFICE---everything else was optional (e.g. Hos 8:11-13, 9:1; Amo 5:21-25; Pro 7:10-20).

This (unfortunate position of the Jews) is what (ALSO) eventually LED them to their final apostasy in rejecting Christ. Remember, they were good with Christ (at first) until He began demanding something more than what they had originally signed up for...

(IOW): they were good with Him as Savior (becoming their healer and holy sacrifice) –BUT LORD?---no way! Obedience to all that God had commanded, living truly holy lives?---NO WAY!!

This is WHERE the JEWS broke their spiritual necks---and Peter and the circumcision party are fearful the same will soon be said of Christianity (that they think because they have trusted in Jesus as their holy sacrifice and Savior before God, it doesn’t what they do w/God’s law).

And Paul is acutely AWARE of that! Which is why he says what he does (then) in the next verses:

9.2.2. (17-18)

(17) **“But”** (δέ)= an adversative particle which (in this case) signals qualification of what has come before it (i.e. the truth that the OC clean laws are no longer needed in light of Christ’s ability to actually grant real—or payment---justification). The qualification: Justification in Christ is not a license to sin (i.e. a ticket to antinomianism). If we continuing practicing sin (**“if in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too are found to be sinners”** –practicing sinners (1Jo 3:6-9)) (then) Christ will be of no benefit to us (**“Is Christ a servant of sin? Certainly not!”**—i.e. He does not “serve”/save those who continue in sin). THE NC GOSPEL (therefore) is NOT antinomian in the least bit—NOR leaning in that direction...For if I (after rec’ing justification in Christ) turn back again to the practice of sin (18-**“If I rebuild what I tore down...”**), (then) I prove myself to be rebel to Christ (**“I prove myself to be a transgressor.”** –i.e. rebelling sinner)---which means I am no different than the unclean Gentile rebels of the world (**“Gentile sinners-14**); those who are not in covenant with God (and therefore also NOT possessing the justification of Christ)—which (I believe) is a HUGE PART of what Paul is attempting to DRIVE HOME HERE: CHRIST’S JUSTIFICATION is CONDITIONED UPON OUR COMMITMENT TO faithfully obey all of God’s law (with never even the THOUGHT) that He somehow has GIVEN us either a license to SIN---OR---that such JUSTIFICATION once granted cannot be taken away should we “rebuild” such sinful practices back into our lives.

IOW: WE must say “NO!” to antinomianism—that’s the GOSPEL of the NC (a LBS kind of GOSPEL—just as it was under the OC).

9.2.3. That's Paul's point in these verses (that is what he is attempting to communicate and re-assure Peter about—as it relates to GENUINE NC Christianity---it is (in no way shape or form)—a road to antinomianism.

9.2.4. And though Paul's approach to Peter and the circumcision party (in this letter) is QUITE HARSH (and rightly so—they were peddling a FALSE GOSPEL)---THAT didn't mean he wasn't sympathetic to THEIR CONCERNS on this issue (because he was!).

He knew that individuals WOULD twist the GOSPEL in that way (in a way that would make Christ the servant/Savior of people still practicing their sin, that would give people a license for sin, that would cause people to think that having him as their holy sacrifice was enough to remain good with God:

9.2.4.1. (Rom 6:1-2)

9.2.4.2. Ironically, Peter says that Paul's writings would be some of what was twisted to justify this position (2Pe 3:15-16 w/2:1).

9.2.4.3. The concern of antinomianism is just as relevant today (possibly more) in light of Luther's view of salvation and the GOSPEL being the predominant view within Evangelical Christianity (EC is essentially Lutheran): 1) hold to his "Reformed Roman Catholic" system of salvation; 2) embrace his LAW GOSPEL dichotomy (law and obedience to the law is opposed to the message of the gospel); 3) view JUSTIFICATION as permanent (once justified always justified which makes it then synonymous with salvation, obedience completely optional and Christianity a religion which is ultimately only about faith.).

9.2.4.4. Modern Examples:

9.2.4.4.1. Terrible Tullian Tchividjian (the poster-boy of modern antinomianism)

"God is the subject of all the verbs related to our salvation"

Jesus didn't say, 'Come to me and I will give you a to-do list to keep me loving you,' He said, 'I will give you rest.'"

"The terrors of the law and of God with me have nothing to do. My Savior's obedience and blood hide me from all sin in view."

9.2.4.4.2. *"CHRISTIAN CONDUCT. We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and that he should seek the well-being of his fellow-man; that his conduct should be one of pursuing blamelessness before the world; that he should seek to be a faithful steward of his possessions; that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. We disavow a legalistic approach to the Christian life and believe in the liberty of conscience."*

Per a Google search, one will immediately find over 20 churches and Christian organizations that have this statement in its entirety or at least the first long sentence—the portion where we find the word "should".

Should (def.) = a recommendation which **may or may not** have consequences if not performed (versus “Must” which refers to a requirement that is mandatory and therefore **will always incur** consequences if not performed). In Scripture our obedience is not just a duty—it is a requirement to salvation (not justification—but salvation –Heb 5:9; Joh 8:31; 2Co 5:10; Rom 2:7-8; Heb 12:14; Gal 5:21). Using “should” therefore reflects either—an ignorance to what the Scripture actually teaches regarding our conduct/obedience, or a clever way to make obedience simply “nice but not necessary” without it actually looking like such. Regardless of which one is the reason, it nonetheless establishes an antinomian view of Christianity.

9.2.4.4.3. *“Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone.”*

Google search reveals this to be popular as well.

Where this idea comes from: 1) a misunderstanding of Scripture: (Eph 2:8) –salvation – i.e. entering into a saving relationship w/God is through faith but it doesn’t end there. ; 2) a misunderstanding about the Reformer’s doctrine of Sola Fide (faith alone). It does not teach that we are saved through faith alone but justified (Rom 3:28). Calvin nor any of the Swiss Reformers taught that salvation was by faith alone (they knew one must also be faithful). They instead taught (and fought) for justification through faith alone (Rom 3:28).

The idea today seems to be: Christianity begins and ends w/faith alone. The confusion is caused because they misunderstand Scripture (they are sloppy with it!) and they make justification and salvation synonymous. Both which in turn makes obedience nice but not necessary and (again) engenders antinomian thinking and practice.

This (too) then **MUST** be **AVOIDED** at all costs...(if we are going to get the gospel right).

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