

## 20. Learning to Glory in the Cross

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to look for opportunities to minister to others. We saw that the Lord has given each person a certain period of time in which to serve Him. As Christians, each of us are to use that time to serve one another and to serve those who do not yet know Christ. This ministry for Christ is what gives our lives meaning and purpose and we want to help our physical and spiritual children live a life that has great meaning and purpose. In this topic, we are going to see that we also want to help our children learn to glory in the cross.

Paul said in Galatians 6:11, “See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!” We saw in an earlier topic that Paul had some kind of a physical infirmity when he visited the Galatians. In Galatians 4:15, we read, “What then was the blessing you *enjoyed*? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.” This statement would possibly indicate that the physical infirmity was a problem related to his eyes. Here, we see that Paul used large letters as he wrote this letter. Since the parchments on which they wrote letters in that day were very expensive, this would indicate again the possibility of eye problems or disease. However, we see that Paul was ready to suffer with physical problems in order to share the Word of God with others.

Paul was concerned about what the false teachers that had come to Galatia were teaching. Galatians 6:12-13 says, “As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.” Here, we see that the false teachers were like the hypocrites about whom Christ warned people. Matthew 6:5-7 says, “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.” We see that the hypocrites loved to try and impress people. Here, we see that these false teachers were doing the same thing.

The false teachers wanted to force the new Christians to become circumcised and keep the Jewish law so that they could boast that these new Christians were following their teachings. These false teachers had developed this false religion because they chose not to follow Christ and suffer persecution for His sake. Here, we see that false teachers often have somewhat of an understanding of Christianity but are unwilling to follow Christ. Instead, they choose to develop a religion of works that will cause others to be controlled by fear and follow them. Paul described such false teachers in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 where we read, “For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.” Their

end will be according to their works because all nonbelievers will be judged according to their works according to Revelation 20:11-15.

These false teachers had the same goal as the scribes and Pharisees. In fact, they could even have been scribes or Pharisees. Matthew 23:15 says, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.” Here, we see that the goal of the scribes and Pharisees was to get people who would follow them and their teachings. These false teachers wanted to boast that they had persuaded some of the Christians to follow their false teachings and keep the Jewish law. At the same time, these false teachers did not obey the law themselves. It is common that false teachers do not follow their own teachings but try to get others to follow what they teach.

Paul said that it was not his desire to boast that people were his followers. Instead, Paul described his desire in Galatians 6:14-15 where we read, “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. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.” Here, we see a goal that we have for our children. If they are going to boast about anything, we want to help them boast about the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. That will only be the focus of our children if that is our focus. Paul described the goal of his life in Philippians 1:21 when he said, “For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.” Our children will only develop that as a goal for their lives if they see that it is the goal of our life.

Paul said that the world had been crucified to him and he to the world. In Galatians 2:20, Paul said, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” If we glory in the cross, we will have this same attitude. We will realize that we have been crucified with Christ and now live the life that we live by faith. We will have that attitude as we grow in our understanding of the love of Christ that caused Him to give Himself for us. Our children will develop that attitude as they see it modeled in our lives.

Many people want to make rules for people to follow. For the Jewish false teachers, their key goal was to get people to be circumcised and agree to keep the Jewish law. Paul explained to the new Christians in Galatia that circumcision meant nothing. In the same way, uncircumcision meant nothing. Once we come to Christ, the same thing is true for us in our lives. Galatians 3:24-25 says, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” The law showed us that we were sinners that needed to come to Christ. However, once we came to Christ we are no longer under the Jewish law. That is why no Christian can ever grow in their spiritual life by trying to keep the law. We now have a life of faith because we have been set free from the law.

Because of the fact that we have been set free from the law, we are a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” We are a new creation because our sins have been blotted out and we have been given a new nature with new desires. Acts 3:19 tells us that our sins are

blotted out at the moment of repentance. That verse says, “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” Then 2 Peter 1:4 says, “By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.” Because we now have the divine nature in our lives, that new nature has given us the desire to please the Lord by the things that we do.

We see that the new nature has also given us the strength to walk in a new way as we yield to the Holy Spirit. Galatians 6:16 says, “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.” We have seen that the new commandment is to love one another as Christ has loved us. Ephesians 5:1-2 says, “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.” We are able to walk in love as we imitate God because 1 John 4:8 says that God is love. We also have been given an example of that love because of the fact that Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice to show us that love.

As we show our children by our example how to walk in this new way, we see that they will experience the peace and the mercy of God. This is another reason why we want to show our children how to glory in the cross. Philippians 4:6-7 says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” We can glory in the cross because the cross is what made it possible for both we and our children to experience the peace of God in our hearts.

Paul was so thankful for the cross that he counted it a privilege to bear the marks of suffering in his own body. Galatians 6:17-18 says, “From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.” Paul so chose to glory in the cross that he counted it a privilege to suffer for Christ. This was also true of the apostles. Acts 5:40-41 says, “And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” As we understand the love of Christ for us, we also realize that it is a privilege to suffer for Christ.

The Lord will bless your physical and spiritual children as they learn to glory in the cross of Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you show them by your example what it means to glory in the cross of Christ.