



(For access to all available commentaries and sermons of Charlie's click [HERE](#))

Galatians

For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

Galatians 5:5

The first word explains Paul's intent for the rest of the verse. "For" (in Greek: gar) is setting this verse in contrast to the previous verse. Side by side, they read -

"...you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."

This is in contrast to -

"...we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."

Those who look for justification through the law by their own efforts are contrasted to those who trust in the operation of the Spirit for justification. The first is of human origin; the second is of divine origin. The first results in falling from grace; the second results in the hope of righteousness by faith. The first displays a lack of trust in Christ; the second displays a complete trust in Christ. There is an absolute divide between the two, and it again shows that works and grace are mutually exclusive.

Concerning the words "by faith," according to Vincent's Word Studies, they are connected to the word "wait" rather than the phrase "hope of righteousness." In other words, the thought is, "...we through the Spirit eagerly wait (by faith) for the hope of righteousness." Our hope is not in the law to grant us righteousness, but rather it is in the fact that the Spirit has acknowledged our faith, and our faith continues to be what we cling to. The hope of righteousness is the object of our faith.

Life application: The law cannot save anyone. But the fulfillment of the law can. What does that mean? Christ fulfilled the law and thus by faith in His accomplished work we have a sure and grounded hope that we will stand before God, having been declared righteous because of the work of Jesus. However, if we attempt to please God by deeds of the law, then our hope is in the law, not in Christ. One cannot have it both ways.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. Galatians 5:6

Paul has used circumcision as the benchmark for his argument against pursuing deeds of the law. If a person was not circumcised, he was excluded from the covenant people. It didn't matter if he did everything else the law required, if he weren't circumcised then he would not be counted as part of the congregation. Because of this, it stands as representative of the entire law for Paul's discourse.

What he tells the Galatians now is that this main tenet, upon which everything else followed, no longer mattered at all. The word "For" explains the words of the previous verse which said, "...through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." The Spirit is contrasted now with the flesh by saying that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything."

The division is complete. In Christ, circumcision, or the lack of it, has no bearing at all. If this is so, then any observance of the law also has no bearing at all. The law is a unified whole. It cannot be considered "the law" if any part of the law is

overlooked or disregarded. Thus, with the setting aside of circumcision, the entire law is set aside. Why is this so hard for people to understand?

Instead of circumcision availing anything, Paul says that it is rather, "...faith working through love" which has practical power. Vincent's Word Studies notes that the word "working," being in the middle voice, does not mean "faith which is wrought by love." It is not passive. In other words, as the Pulpit Commentary states, it does not mean "...faith through love doing works of beneficence,' but 'faith evincing its vitality and power through the love which it begets in us.'" They continue by saying, "Love is not contemplated as a separate acting of the Spirit, added on to faith as it were by an extrinsic effort of the soul, but as a product of faith itself, by which faith exerts its own internal energy."

Why is this important? Because if doing things produced faith, then we would be following the same principles as that of Roman Catholic doctrine. We could claim that by doing things we have earned our faith. This is not the case at all. It is clear that Paul was struggling with presenting precise and exacting words which could clearly show us what it means to have "faith working through love." Our love of God and what He has done for us through the giving of Christ is what impels our faith forward. This is something that circumcision could never do.

Life application: Do you have faith in the promises of God at all times? Does your faith weaken at times? If so, then go back to the beginning and contemplate what Jesus did for you there on Calvary's Cross. That should spur your faith back up to optimum levels of love!