

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

GALATIANS 1-2

The book of Galatians is explosive.

Label it, “the TNT of the Bible.” This short letter blew up erroneous doctrines that were threatening the faith of a group of new believers. It blasted away bondage, and created a fall-out of love and liberty. *It's da bomb.*

The book, Galatians, gripped the heart of a medieval monk named Martin Luther, and transformed his way of relating to God. It became the catalyst for a revival that history now calls “The Protestant Reformation.”

Luther wrote of this book as he would his wife, “This Epistle is my epistle. To it I am, as it were, in wedlock. Galatians is my Katherine.” Proving that all great preachers are married to a lady named “Katherine.”

One thing is for sure, I believe all Christians should be married to the message of this book... We begin...

“Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia...”

Ancient Galatia is today, central Turkey. The original Galatians were immigrants from France. Julius Caesar once commented on the Galatians, “They are fickle. They are fond of change. They are not to be trusted.”

And that’s the type of people we find in Acts 13-14 when Paul first took the Gospel within their borders...

It was at the gate of Lystra that Paul healed a lame man. At first, the superstitious Galatians assumed Paul was a Greek god. *They tried to offer Paul a sacrifice.*

Later, these same *fickle folks* were swayed by Paul’s enemies. They took up rocks to stone him. *They tried to make him the sacrifice.* He narrowly escaped.

And in a sense, rocks were still being thrown at the Apostle Paul when he wrote this letter. Certain Jews were threatened by the grace Paul preached. And when they couldn’t kill him, they tried to assassinate his character and throw shade on his apostleship.

Where were his credentials? Who appointed Paul?

This is why he introduces himself, “an apostle (not from men nor through man, but

through Jesus Christ)”

Ultimately, Paul's commission came not from a man, or church, or denomination, but from Jesus Himself!

Shortly after Calvary CSM started I went to the local Baptist church to ask if we could use their baptistry. People had come to Christ, and needed to be baptized.

But when I went to pick up the key, the pastor asked me, "The deacons want to know, are you ordained?"

I said, "I guess so. God is blessing our ministry." "No, do you have an official ordination?" It wasn't enough that God was using me, they wanted to see paperwork.

The irony is that you can have a wall full of ordination certificates, and it only amount to *wallpaper* unless God's hand is on your life. *God's ordination* is the only one that counts, and it's the one Paul appeals to here..

He greets them, "Grace to you and peace..." Here's Paul's familiar greeting. Grace and peace have been called "the Siamese twins of the New Testament."

The term "*Siamese twin*" refers to siblings conjoined from birth. Siamese twins share a vital organ and remain connected for life. The first twins referred to as "*Siamese*" were *Chang* and *Eng Bunker*. They were born in Thailand in the early 1800s, but came to America and married sisters. They fathered 21 kids.

And you think you've got strange family dynamics?

But likewise, grace and peace stay joined together. You can't have one without the other. You can't enjoy *peace with God* without first knowing the *grace of God*. And grace, rightly understood, always produces peace. The two work together to bear fruit in believing hearts.

Verse 3, "Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

In most of his letters, this is where Paul inserts the prayer he'd been praying for the church. But his heart is too heavy for that in regards to the Galatians.

There's a burning issue he needs to address!

"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel..." Remember, the Galatians were gullible and fickle people. Thus, they were prone to false doctrine.

Paul says they were "*turning away*" from the Gospel of grace. The phrase literally means "*defecting to the other side.*" The verb tense implies they were not there yet, but they were getting close. Their faith was vacillating. *They were losing their grip on*

God's grace.

They were being lured away by a *"different gospel."*

If you study world religions you'll identify hundreds, if not thousands, of religions. But I suggest there're really only two types of gospel. **The hand of man reaching upward, and the hand of God reaching downward.**

All religions except one, can be summarized as man's attempts to please God. They emphasize *keeping rules, or performing rituals*. It's **self**-reliance.

But Christianity is God's hand reaching to man! God is reaching down through Christ - doing for us, what we could never do for ourselves. This is *the true Gospel!*

In fact, Paul says this *"different gospel"* is really not good news at all... verse 7, *"which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ."* The Galatians were buying into a distorted version of truth... I believe Satan still distorts God's truth, and in three ways: he **twists it, subtracts from it, or adds to it**. At times he even does all three...

Satan can **twist** the interpretation of a verse. He makes it say what it was never *intended to say*. Thus, the old adage, *"A text out of context becomes a pretext."* Satan is good at taking verses out of context.

Satan also **subtracts** from the truth. He dilutes its meaning. Tozer once said, *"Some have so watered down the Gospel that if it were a medicine it could not cure us, and if it were a poison it would not harm us."* A Gospel without repentance of sin is no Gospel at all!

And at times Satan **adds** to the truth. This was the strategy that was threatening the Galatians. False teachers, called *"Judaizers,"* agreed that salvation was by grace through faith, **but...** (and be careful of *the buts...* *Read the fine print!*) They added to the cross.

Here was their spiel... Yes, Jesus died to forgive us, but if you really want to please God you need more.

And they had a long list of add-ons - mandatory dos and don'ts. The bottom line is that faith in Christ was not really enough - it's up to us to add to His work.

This is what Paul calls *"a different gospel"* - it was not a Gospel at all... A wise, old pastor once advised a young apprentice, *"Preach a full Gospel - Christ and nothing less. A plain Gospel - Christ and nothing more. And a pure Gospel - Christ and nothing else."*

Paul continues in verse 8, *"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed."* This is

strong language. The Greek word translated "*accursed*" is "anathema," or "damned to hell." Paul couldn't have refuted this with more force!

And he repeats it to make the message even more emphatic... "*As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*"

Even if an angel dressed in white robes, and with shining lights, comes and sits at the foot of your bed, and preaches to you a Gospel different from the grace Paul had delivered to them, "*let the angel be damned!*"

If Joseph Smith had listened to Paul, when he heard *the baloney from the angel Maroni*, millions of folks wouldn't be headed to hell under the lie of Mormonism.

If Muhammed hadn't listened to a supposed angel there would be no Islam... Paul knew "*angels*" come in two varieties - *faithful* and *fallen*. And "*fallen angels*" or "*demons*" specialize in inspiring different gospels.

This is why we need to be firmly grounded in the truth of God's grace. *For to recognize another Gospel you have to know the true Gospel.* This is why it's vital for God's people to become educated in God's Word.

Did you hear about the woman who bought a parrot to keep her company - *but she couldn't get it to talk.*

She went back to the pet store, and complained to the owner. He said, "*Does he have a mirror in his cage? Parrots love mirrors.*" So she bought a mirror, took it home, put it in his cage, but he still wouldn't talk.

She returned to the pet store, and complained again. This time the owner said, "*Does your parrot have a ladder. Parrots love ladders. And a happy parrot is a talkative parrot.*" So she purchased a ladder, took it home, put it in the cage, but not a peep from the parrot.

She went back a third time. This time the owner told her, "*Try a swing. Parrots love swings. Get'm swinging, and he'll talk up a storm.*" So she bought a swing...

Two days later she returned to the pet store. When the owner asked her about the parrot the woman announced he was dead. The man was shocked!

He asked the woman, "*Did your parrot ever say anything?*" The woman replied, "*Yes, just before he died, in a very soft, faint, weak whisper, he asked me, 'Don't they sell any food at that pet store?'*"

So often churches think they need **mirrors** - pop psychology and introspection... Or **ladders** - step by step rules and self-help... Or **swings** - experiential, feelings-based religion... They try to entertain God's people with mirrors, ladders, swings - but what God's people really can't live without is the Word of God!

Verse 10, “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men?” Paul's stoning in Lystra was proof his goal was to obey God, not to please people.

“For if I still pleased men, I would not be a servant of Christ.” Hey, living the Christian life requires making choices that are not always popular. And if my goal is to be well-liked, and fashionable, and accepted-at-all-costs its only a matter of time before I'll compromise.

We need to settle this issue *in our hearts* before it comes up *in our lives* - *who do we intend to please?*

One author puts it this way, “It is a great freedom to know who owns you. If you do not know to whom you belong, you are apt to be the pawn of anyone whose identity is strong enough to overwhelm your own sense of inadequacy.” This is so true! *Who owns you?*

Verse 11, “But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.” In other words, the Gospel Paul preached was not his own idea. Rather than result from his own *imagination*, his Gospel came by God-given *revelation*.

“For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation...” Paul's gospel wasn't produced by his *imagination*, and neither was it the result of Jewish *education*. He sure wasn't taught God's grace in the Jewish Yeshivas where he attended. His former rabbis were upholders of the law, not dispensers of grace.

He adds in verse 14, “being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. The gospel didn't come to Paul through *imagination*, *education*, or *perspiration*. He was “*exceedingly zealous*.” He worked hard at climbing the ladder of legalism and Judaism. But that's not where he found God's amazing grace.

Verse 15, “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace to reveal His Son in me...” The gospel came to Paul not through *imagination*, *education*, *perspiration*, but through *revelation*. God **revealed** His Son in Paul!

And notice, God's plan for Paul's life started long before he came to Christ - *even before he was born*. From his mother's womb, God had a purpose for Paul.

And this is true of every human! God values human beings and has a plan for our lives from conception. This is why we need to fight for the life of the unborn.

Remember, on the Road to Damascus Jesus revealed Himself *to Paul*, but here he mentions a different experience when Jesus was revealed *in Paul*.

This may've happened while he was still blinded from the bright light. Or later, during his days in Arabia.

But truly the wonder of Christianity is that it's more than *a truth to be learned*, it's a *living Lord we experience* in our hearts! Christ was revealed **in Paul**...

So **“that I might preach Him among the Gentiles...”**

Paul always loved the Jews, but taking the Gospel to the Gentiles was his calling from the start... For after God called him, he tells us what happened. **“I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.”**

This is interesting. When Paul was first saved he didn't rush out to teach or even join a Bible Study. He wanted to seek the Lord personally and privately.

He went out into the wilderness of Arabia. He wanted to seek God before he consulted with anyone else. It just goes to prove that **God home schools His kids**.

Obviously, I like pastors and sermons - they can be helpful - but often we can spend so much time listening to men, we never slow down and listen to God.

It's unhealthy when folks can tell you what the pastor said on Sunday, but not what God said on Monday.

If we look to men and not God, we get **duplication** not *inspiration*. What makes an authentic Christian isn't *imagination*, or *education*, or *perspiration*, or *duplication* - but a personal **revelation** from God!

Years ago a sheep named **“Dolly”** was cloned by a British scientist. The experiment was hailed as a scientific breakthrough, and raised all kinds of ethical dilemmas. But I thought, **“Hey this is no big deal, the church has been cloning sheep for centuries.”**

Rather than producing genuine, thinking, Spirit-led believers, so often churches are full of cookie-cutter Christians. We're stamped from the same mold, rather than shaped personally by the Holy Spirit.

Christian musician, Steve Taylor, once wrote a song called **“I Want To Be A Clone.”** Here's a little snippet...

“I'd gone through so much other stuff that walking down the aisle was tough, but now I know it's not enough. I want to be a clone... I asked the Lord into my heart. They said that was the way to start, but now you've got to play the part. I want to be a clone...”

They told me that I'd fall away unless I followed what they say. Who needs the Bible anyway. I want to be a clone... So now I see the whole design. The church is an

assembly line. The parts are there. I'm feeling fine. I want to be a clone... I've learned enough to stay afloat, but not so much I rock the boat. I'm glad they shoved it down my throat. I want to be a clone..."

And the bridge ties it all together, "Cause if you want to be one of His, you've got to act like one of us."

Paul was nobody's clone - and he'd never expect us to be either! The goal is to be conformed into the image of Jesus - not into an image contrived by men!

Verse 18, "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days." *Oh, to have been a fly on the wall for that!*

"But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. (Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.) The false teachers had accused Paul of lying. *He doesn't lie!*

He continues piecing together his life after his conversion, "Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. But they were hearing only, 'He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy.' And they glorified God in me." Paul himself was the surest validation of the Gospel he preached. The grace of God had turned the *persecutor* into a *preacher*...

Chapter 2, "Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me." This was after Paul's first missionary journey.

Paul took Barnabas, his Jewish sidekick from Jerusalem - and Titus, one of his Gentile converts.

"And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain." Here's a good preamble for all Paul says in this chapter. He'll be unbudging in his stand for grace - but his *staunch conviction* was forged by *honest, humble reflection*.

Paul didn't serve the Lord in a ministerial vacuum. He went to Jerusalem... "*lest he had run in vain.*"

Sometimes Christians in ministry get isolated. We start to think our way is the only way. *Not Paul!*

He wasn't afraid to concede he could be wrong! He knew his Gospel was true, but he was open to the possibility there was something he'd missed. Thus, he went to Jerusalem *to bounce his ideas off the brethren*.

"Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be

circumcised." In Jerusalem, they found Jews who tried to force Titus, who was a Gentile, to conform to OT rituals. They wanted him to surrender his freedom in Christ and embrace Jewish tradition.

This was not what Paul expected to find among the Jerusalem believers. It was obvious to him, the church had been infiltrated - and Paul tells us by whom...

"And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage)..." The phrase "*false brethren*" is the Greek word, "*pseudodelphos*." It's a compound word, "*pseudo*" or "*bogus*" and "*delphos*" or "*brother*."

Bogus brethren had infiltrated the church. The New English Bible translates the phrase, "*sham Christians*."

Paul was a *defender of the faith*. These guys were *pretenders of the faith*. They were probably Pharisees who sneaked into the circle. They may even have professed Christ and thought they were Christians, but they spewed **a dangerous mixture of faith plus law**.

We know this bunch as the infamous "*Judaizers*."

In Acts 13-14 these Jews followed Paul while he was in Galatia, now they've followed him to Jerusalem.

Always remember the people most dangerous to the Body of Christ aren't the *defiant blasphemers* or the *ardent atheists*. Our worst enemy is the *bogus brother*.

It's the fellow with a mixture of *grace and grunt*.

Lethal is the guy who teaches you can obtain God's favor by grace - but then, you have to maintain God's favor through this or that. Turn this guy loose in your church and one day you'll wake up to a divided church.

Playground have bullies, and sadly, so do churches.

And over time, the bully's version of righteousness becomes the dividing line between the spiritual haves and have nots. He or she defines who loves God and who's carnal. The rules they deem as important and the rituals they decide must be kept, become the badge everyone thinks they need to wear if they're going to be labeled "*spiritual*." A spiritual bully puts off airs that will kill the life and growth of a church.

It's grace that creates a mood of acceptance... It's grace that allows folks to grow at their own pace... It's grace that keeps people open to God, rather than stifled by their own failures... Let's not budge an inch when it comes to God's grace. We need to make grace the *modus operandi* in every area of our Calvary CSM.

In verse 5 Paul refuses to give in to the Judaizers, "to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."

And don't underestimate the pressure Paul was under to capitulate. To a Jew Titus getting circumcised was a minor concession - *besides the church was facing a major rift*. I can hear the peaceniks squawking, "*Paul, stop being divisive. You're threatening our unity.*"

Yet Paul understood **the one thing more important than our unity is the truth!** He discerned that at this critical moment *truth* was more important than *truce!*

The legalist appears sincere, disciplined, outwardly righteous - you think, "*how can I oppose him?*"

The ritualist has the weight of hundreds of years of tradition on his side - "*who am I to argue with him?*"

Yet if the people who know better don't stand up for the grace of God, the legalists will take control, create a spiritual bondage, and wreak havoc in the church.

As news analyst, Elmer Davis, once said of America, "**This will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave.**" So it is in the church.

Verse 6, "**But from those who seemed to be something whatever they were, it makes no difference to me...**" It seems Paul expected help from the elders in his confrontation with the Judaizers, but they took a backseat. It wasn't until the smoke had cleared and the winner declared before they publicly supported Paul.

These men were apostles - they had a name, a reputation, a stature - but they left Paul unimpressed.

Notice what he concludes, "**God shows personal favoritism to no man for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.**" Paul was on his own.

I'll never forget when God laid it on my heart to start a church, I went to a mentor of mine for confirmation. Dan Dehaan was a respected man of God in our area.

Dan started out cautioning me. *I could tell he wasn't in favor*. But it was as if the Lord stopped Dan in midstream. For he said to me, "**Sandy, there comes a time when you've got to start listening to God on your own. Only God can call this shot.**" *How wise he was!*

I've discovered you don't really begin to trust the Lord until you turn loose of everybody else's hand.

Kathryn Jensen puts it this way, "**Life is like being on a mule team. Unless you're the lead mule, all the scenery looks about the same.**" And it's true...

Verse 7, "**But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised**

had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles)," *And here's the realization that saved Christianity from schism.* God gives to different folks, different callings, to reach different people groups.

God used Peter's Jewish heritage to reach the Jews.

He used Paul's familiarity with Gentile custom to reach Gentiles. But one approach was no better than the other - both were used of God to reach people.

And this is still how God works. Some churches are used to reach a *family crowd*. Other churches relate to a *biker crowd*. God calls each of us to our own niche.

Verse 9, "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars... These were the big dogs.

This was Jesus' inner circle. Peter, James, and John were there on the Mount of Transfiguration and in the Garden of Gethsemane when no one else was invited.

But when those who "*seemed to be pillars perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.*"

After his showdown with the Judiazers, the men Paul came to Jerusalem respecting, ended up respecting him. In the final analysis - labels, titles, and reputations didn't mean much. *They still don't.* They were certainly no substitute for courage, calling, and conviction!

Over the years I've seen people sashay into our church thinking they were somebody. They wanted to impose their brand of spirituality on the life of CC.

They thought they were going to straighten us out. They wanted to body slam the Body with legalism.

But we've resisted, and we'll continue to resist. This is the house that grace built. The church is the true *Graceland* - and with God's help we'll keep it that way.

And as Paul discovers, the battle for God's grace is never over. It requires vigilance... Verse 11, "*Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.*" Peter forgot the lessons God taught him when the Roman soldier, Cornelius, was saved by faith and faith alone.

God no longer divides men along racial or religious lines - as clean or unclean. Today, the only distinction God makes among us is whether we're in Christ or not.

In Antioch, Peter had lived by this truth. He hung out with the Gentile believers - *until the James' gang arrived from Jerusalem*. Now he ate only with Jews, not Gentiles. He was acting as if the Jews were seated in first class, and the Gentiles were stuck back in coach... as if Christianity had a first and second string.

Verse 13, "**And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.**" And this is why you can never go soft on legalism. It spreads like wildfire. "**Even Barnabas**" was influenced by Peter's hypocrisy.

Barnabas was Paul's sidekick. He should've known better, yet the deception of legalism was so subtle even Paul's most trusted ally lost his grip on grace.

Realize, legalism has a definite appeal. The idea, *I can do it - I can pull myself up by my own bootstraps* flatters my pride. A legalist measures himself against others, and points to his or her own self-righteousness.

Whereas, it's humbling to admit there's nothing I can do and trust in the merits of someone else, Jesus.

Paul continues in verse 14, "**But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles..."**"

Peter was a Jew, yet he wasn't a strict adherent to his own Law. How could he expect Gentiles to do more than Jews? Paul calls out Peter for his hypocrisy.

And this took guts! Realize, Paul went toe-to-toe with Pentecost Pete. Recall, the Lord Himself gave Simon the nickname "**Peter**" or "**rock**." Imagine strapping on the gloves and going a few rounds with Rocky Balboa.

There's an adage, "**A famous name never justifies an infamous act.**" Paul wasn't intimidated by even a pillar of the church like Peter. When a man's wrong he's wrong - no matter who he is! Paul didn't shy away from confrontation. He got in his *face* for the sake of *grace!*

Verse 16, "**Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus...**" Recall, this wonderful word "**justified**" means "**just as if I'd never sinned.**"

So here's the Gospel: "**that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.**"

Because I put my trust in His Son, God chooses to treat me as if I'd never sinned, even though I have and do and will. This is raging, bountiful, extravagant love!

You can try to force open the door to God's blessing with good works and strenuous

effort - but the door won't budge. Or you can put faith in Jesus, and you'll hear the tumblers click - instantly, the door will swing open, blessings will fall out, love will pour down. It's all due to God's grace and your willingness to believe.

Verse 17, "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!" For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." Paul says it's possible for a Christian to shoot himself in the foot. We can undermine grace.

God is treating us as if we've never sinned, but we can treat ourselves as if we have... God is loving you, and drawing you, and forgiving you, and even blessing you - and you're still beating yourself up with guilt!

Its self-condemnation. God sets us free from rules and standards we can't possibly keep, yet if we return to those rules - we invite back the guilt that comes with them. "Don't return to prison, once you're set free."

Verse 19, "For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God." Paul is a widower to the Law. His relationship with the Law is over. Paul died to the rules.

Like oil and water, honey and vinegar, hot summer days and chocolate bars, law and grace just don't mix.

Going forward, Paul is all about living by grace.

And you should be too. He tells us how grace works, "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." Paul lived what's been called "the exchanged life." *We die with Jesus. Jesus lives in us...* This is the life available to every Christian.

Paul knew that a miracle occurs when we become a Christian. We're crucified with Christ, and Jesus comes to live in us. His death and resurrection play out in us.

Thus, rather than you live **for Christ** by keeping a set of rules, your job is to **trust Jesus to do the living in you**. The life Paul lived was by faith in the power of another. And this is how we're to live - "by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

So, who's doing the living in your life? Are you *trying, trying, trying* to do, or be, or say? Or are you *trusting the risen Christ* to live His life through your's.

Paul concludes Chapter 2, "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain." If we could be good enough for God, if salvation could come any other way, *don't you think God would've spared His only Son?*

To say that a man can be saved apart from the blood of Jesus is to diminish the sacrifice Jesus made for us.

There are many issues on which Christians should take a stand, but none - *and I mean none* - are as important as God's matchless and amazing grace!