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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Galatians 2.

(2013).

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it

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Galatians 2.

Topics.

- After fourteen years Paul went up to Jerusalem.
- False brothers secretly brought in.
- Influential Jews had no power over Paul.
- Paul was sent to the Gentiles and Peter sent to the Jews.
- Paul opposes Peter to his face.
- We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners.
- No-one is justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Is Christ a servant of sin?
- If I rebuild what I tore down I prove myself to be a transgressor.
- I have been crucified with Christ.
- I do not nullify the grace of God.

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter Paul is amazed that the Galatians are being enticed into believing a twisted distortion of the Gospel. He talks of his encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ and tells the Galatians that he received the gospel by revelation and did not add anything to it from his own learning or by consulting with the apostles or any other man.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

After fourteen years Paul went up to Jerusalem.

Galatians 2:1-3 ----- ¹Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. ²I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. ³But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

Barnabas: (a Jew) the name means Son of exhortations or consolation (Acts 4:36) he was also called an apostle (Acts 14:14).

Titus: was a Greek and the son of Gentile parents (Gal 2:3).

Brothers: notice Paul refers to false teachers as brothers not because he is one with them in spirit or friendship (obviously), but because they belong to his nation Israel. Which means a brother in Bible language can be an enemy to Christ or a friend depending on the context which means that the word brothers does not always refer to Christian brothers since it sometimes simply refers to people of the same nation. The Jewish nation viewed a Jewish man or woman as a brother regardless of their belief or whether they were male or female.

The expression brothers is an ancient expression that shows a kindred spirit, either as belonging to the same family, the same nation or the same faith it does not always mean that two people are united in friendship. Another interesting fact regarding the use of the word brothers is that during the ancient Roman era even woman (especially those who had authority) were still referred to as brothers by the

Roman Empire. In Christ's time the word, brothers was not limited in its use to men only, but included both men and woman since it was an expression that signified a person belonged to the same family, the same faith, the same nation or the same group of people etc. The word, brothers was not used to differentiate between male and females during the Roman and New Testament era unless the context specifically states it.

Paul's journey so Far.

After Paul had encountered Christ in an extraordinary manner at Damascus (Acts 9:3-16) he left and travelled into Arabia, then later returned to Damascus. After three years of being converted he travelled to Jerusalem where he stayed with Peter for fifteen days and saw only James (the Lord's brother) (Gal 1:18-19). Now fourteen years after Jesus Christ had revealed himself to Paul at Damascus he travels to Jerusalem again taking Titus and Barnabas with him.

Paul had three reasons for going to Jerusalem: -

1. Because of a revelation (v2).
2. To proclaim to the Jews the Gospel he was proclaiming to the Gentiles (v1-2).
3. Paul was returning to Jerusalem, "In order to make sure he was not running or had not run in vain" (v2) meaning to see if the Gospel he had shared with Peter and James had taken hold in the city of Jerusalem since fourteen years had passed since Paul was in Jerusalem last.

Added to this it is certain that many Jews who had heard Paul speak throughout Judea and the surrounding nations had excitedly travelled to their beloved city and told their families and friends all that Paul had been teaching the Gentiles. Imagine Paul's enormous excitement as he neared the city that every Jewish person loves and the tremendous hope that the gospel had taken hold in the city of God.

NOTICE.

To the common citizens of Jerusalem he proclaimed the Gospel openly in public, but to the influential Jews i.e., those who had enormous religious authority over the nation of Israel he spoke with them privately (v2). There is a great principle we can all learn from this wisdom of Paul's.

There are people that we can share our testimony or the Gospel with while amongst others and they will not be offended, but there are also others who for various reasons it is better to share the Gospel privately especially if they hold positions of religious authority and influence since they will be under enormous pressure to defend what they believe and what they teach while in the company of those they teach.

Titus was Not Forced to be Circumcised.

Circumcision in the Jewish mind was without doubt deemed to be one of the highest standards of righteousness since they believed that an uncircumcised person was separated from God and therefore unclean. Because of this mindset no religious Jew (especially those in high positions of leadership) would willingly put themselves in the company of an uncircumcised person since they considered them to be unclean.

The reason the Jewish nation held circumcision in such high regard was because God had made a covenant with Abraham and his offspring saying: -

- Every male among you shall be circumcised and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised it shall be an everlasting covenant and any male who is not circumcised shall be cut off from Israel because he has broken my covenant" (Gen. 17:10-14) (Gen. 17:23-27).

NOTICE: circumcision was a sign they were God's people and not a guarantee of salvation. We know this because Paul tells the Roman church that: -

- Faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness before he had been circumcised. Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he already had by faith while he was still uncircumcised so that God could make Abraham the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to the uncircumcised as well, to the circumcised who also walk in the footsteps of the faith Abraham had before he was circumcised (Rom. 4:9-12).

Nevertheless though circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with Israel many in the Jewish faith had turned it into the means of salvation i.e., as long as they were circumcised they were right with God, thus the reason for the lack of the fruits of the Spirit amongst many of the religious rulers of Jesus and Paul's generations.

One of Paul's Greatest Battles.

Throughout Paul's ministry circumcision was a re-occurring problem amongst the Jewish brothers who believed the word of the Lord. When Paul visited the Galatian church he saw that some Jewish brothers amongst them were causing them trouble because they were distorting the Gospel of Christ and of grace and leading brothers and sisters in the Galatian church astray so much so that Paul in stunned amazement said: -

- I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel (Gal 1:6-7).

The Jewish brothers were distorting the Gospel by teaching those in the Galatian church that they could not be saved simply by believing in Christ, but must also keep the ceremonial laws, the customs of Moses and the religious laws and traditions of Judaism especially circumcision.

Titus, was Not Forced to be Circumcised.

The words, "Titus, was not forced to be circumcised even though he was a Greek" (v3) shows that many Jews had accepted the Good News of the Gospel of grace, since if they hadn't they would not have allowed Titus a Gentile into their company. Though Paul was no-doubt excited and overwhelming thrilled when he found that the Gospel had taken hold amongst many Jews in Jerusalem the following verses show that certain Jewish men pretending to be brothers had deceptively joined the Galatian congregation with the intention of enticing them back under the bondage of the law.

False Brothers Secretly Brought In.

Galatians 2:4-5 ----- ⁴Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— ⁵to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

Freedom: in this context refers to the grace of God in Christ, it is freedom from striving by self-effort to attain to righteousness and instead resting in God's righteousness that comes by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul and Titus did not Yield in Submission even for a Moment.

Even though Jewish brothers had secretly slipped in to Paul and Titus's meetings to spy out the freedom they had in Christ Jesus because they hoped to entice them back under the slavery of Moses laws, religious customs and the act of circumcision etc., to be saved neither Paul nor Titus would yield for a moment in submission to the laws of Judaism so that the truth and grace of the Gospel might be preserved for all who believe the word of the Lord (v5).

NOTE.

The words, "The truth of the Gospel" (v5) in this context does not refer to every doctrine of the Bible nor is it about being a Bible encyclopaedia, "The truth of the Gospel" in this context refers to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal salvation.

The truth of the Gospel Paul has in focus here begins with the, law of Sin and Death which states, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23). The truth of the Gospel states, all who trust in Christ are granted the free gift of God which is, "Eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 6:23), because, "The law of the Spirit of life has set them free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2) thus the law of Sin and Death has no power over those who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him they like Christ will be raised to eternal glory.

The truth of the Gospel refers to eternal salvation it, is about believing in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, recognising that one falls short of God's Glory and absolute Holiness. It is about repentance, baptism and abiding in the faith. Throughout the entire history of mankind there has only been one man who has ever been able to attain to God's perfect standard.

The truth of the Gospel that Paul has in focus is about recognising this reality, repenting before God and accepting His foreordained plan of salvation. The truth of the Gospel is about trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, looking forward to his return and being raised to eternal glory.

The majestic truth of the Gospel states that whoever comes to God through repentance and faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ is not only approved of and accepted by God the Father but all their sins are forgiven, not because they are deserving of it, by any self-effort or religious good works, but because through faith in Christ righteousness is imputed from God to them as a pure and free gift.

But this is not the end of the truth of the Gospel since God's promises also state that the faithful in Christ will be resurrected to eternal glory and everlasting life. This truth of the Gospel is also called the Good News of the Gospel. Can there be any better news than this truth of the Gospel? Thus the reason it is called the Good News.

In chapter five Paul says to Galatian congregation: -

- If they accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to them because everyone who accepts circumcision that they might be saved is obligated to keep the whole law (Gal. 5:2-3).

And when addressing the Colossians Paul states: -

- In Christ there is neither Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all (Col. 3:11).

And to the Romans church Paul writes: -

- Since God is one. He will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith (Rom. 3:30).

Influential Jews had no Power over Paul.

Galatians 2:6-9 ----- ⁶And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me. ⁷On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised ⁸(for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), ⁹and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

The circumcised: refers to the Jews.

The uncircumcised: refers to the Gentiles (i.e., anyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew).

The words, "Those who seemed to be influential" (v6) refers to high ranking Jewish religious leaders and those who held noble positions of religious authority, power,

dominance and widespread influence (who no-doubt exalted themselves as religious men of importance). The reason Paul could not be intimidated by any man no matter what high ranking religious or secular position they held was not because of the extraordinary gifts and revelations God had blessed him with, but because the only man Paul exalted was Christ, to Paul all men below the Lord Jesus Christ were equal despite their high or lowly station both in religion and the secular world.

Paul's attitude toward humanity was: -

- To honour those deserving of honour, but exalt no-one.
- Accept the faithful in Christ as brothers and sisters.
- Treat those outside of God and who do not know the Lord not as enemies but as being lost and in need of grace, mercy and salvation.
- Rebuke legalistic religious leaders who deny salvation is by grace and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The only people Paul spoke harshly against were the same type of people Jesus spoke harshly against which were the self-serving legalistic religious leaders who were in the ministry not to serve the Lord, but their own selfish ambition.

God shows no Partiality.

The words, "God shows no partiality" (v6) in this context means that no matter how important a person maybe in the religious or secular world it makes no difference to God, no-matter their noble station in life or their lowliness of it God counts it as nothing. This is because we all live in a corrupted human body controlled at some level by self, ego, pride, lustful thoughts and greed etc., and therefore all of us have within us some degree of sinful dysfunctions and aberrations

Influential Jews Added Nothing to Paul.

Paul's words, "Those who seemed influential added nothing to me" (v6) means that even the greatest religious leaders of the nation of Israel could add nothing to Paul's faith. Paul could make this statement because he did not learn the Gospel from any man, but received it by revelation. This teaches us an enormously valuable spiritual truth, i.e., at some stage in our spiritual growth we should stop trusting in what our ministers are teaching and prove the Gospel and the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to ourselves from our own reading and our own study so that what we believe becomes our own.

Certainly we never need to stop listening to teachers since faithful Christian teachers are a gift from God for the edification of us all, but we should arrive at a place where they are never so exalted in our own minds that we accept every word they speak without question.

Paul was Sent to the Gentiles and Peter Sent to the Jews.

The, *(He)* in the following words of Paul, "He who worked through Peter worked also through me" (v8) refers to the Lord Jesus Christ; it was Christ who sent, "Paul with the Gospel to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews" (v8). When Paul had his extraordinary encounter with Christ in Damascus the Lord said to him, "Go, for you are a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

This in itself is stunning since Paul was brilliantly educated in Moses Law, God's promises, Israel's history and God's dealings with the Hebrew and Jewish people throughout the Old Testament, yet God calls him to minister to the Gentiles who knew nothing of Israel's God, the prophets or their history since they had mostly worshipped idols and pagan Gods. Whereas Peter who was a fisherman was sent to the Jews who no-doubt were far more educated in Jewish religious law than he would have been (especially the Priests and religious leaders). (Paul did minister to many Jews, but the bulk of his ministry was to the Gentile nations)

The practical lesson for us today: Paul had studied all his life to be a Pharisee and chief religious leader of the Jewish nation this was his ambition and his goal, yet God totally reversed his life. So what can we learn? Simply this, the path that we may have set for our lives, may not be the path that God has set.

Pillars of the Church.

What a fantastic honour and testimony for James (the Lord's brother), Peter and John to be called, "Pillars of the church" (v9) meaning they were considered as great supports and mainstays of it, they were like rocks that could not be moved, and a tower of strength to every brother and sister in Christ they ministered to.

The Right Hand of Fellowship.

The words, "James, Peter and John gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and Paul" (v9) are enormously powerful, remember James was the Lord's brother and Peter and John had not only lived with Jesus during his three years of ministry but had also seen the Lord crucified and resurrected. So for them to say they accepted Barnabas and Paul in every way and gave them full authority to proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ was the greatest referral anyone in the Lord could possibly be credited with.

The calling of James, Peter, John and Paul.

One of the reasons Paul was sent to the Gentiles and James (Jesus brother), Peter and John were sent to the Jews may have been because James, Peter and John had literally lived with Jesus (Israel's promised Messiah) and not only seen the awesome miracles and wonders he did, but had also witnessed his death and spoken and eaten with him after his resurrection, whereas everything Paul knew of Christ was by an extraordinary encounter with the Lord in Damascus and through revelations and visions (howbeit spectacular and life changing).

Peter and those with Him Acted hypocritically.

Galatians 2:10-14 ---- ¹⁰Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do. ¹¹But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹²For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. ¹³And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

NOTICE: James, Peter, John, Paul and Barnabas all pillars of the church considered helping the poor and less fortunate one of the highest priorities of their calling and their ministry.

Paul opposes Peter to his Face.

Though Peter was Jewish (the circumcised) he did not feel it was wrong to fellowship and eat with the Gentiles (the uncircumcised), but when he saw the Jewish men that James had sent he withdrew from the company of the Gentiles. Paul when he saw Peter's behaviour was horrified, especially since the other Jews with Peter copied Peter's behaviour and also withdrew.

This is absolutely wicked behaviour, it would be like us enjoying a B-B-Que with our unsaved friends and suddenly seeing our brothers and sisters in Christ watching so we leave the B-B-Que, or having a social beer with a friend on a hot day and out of nowhere a brother or sister joins us so we try to hide our glass of beer. It is an offence not only to our friends, but also to Christ since we are being absolutely hypocritical and living a life of pretence and falsehood.

This kind of behaviour reveals two things: -

1. That we are controlled by what others are going to think of us rather than being our own true authentic self before the Lord.

2. That we are prepared to live a double life to appear to others to be more righteous than we really are (especially our religious friends).

When Peter saw Jewish men (the circumcised) sent by James approaching he withdrew from the Gentiles he was with fearing that the Jews sent by James would identify him with the Gentiles and judge him as a sinner as the Jews did Gentiles, but what made Peter's behaviour even worse was that other Jews looked up to him to set the example and therefore the Jews with Peter and even Barnabas copied Peter's shocking behaviour. This is living a life of hypocrisy and pretence it is living to earn man's favour and not the Lord's, it is living in the fear of what others will think of us rather than being our true and authentic self not only before God but also before man, by living this life of pretence and hypocrisy we are living totally contrary to: -

- The truth of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (v14).

This is why Paul said, Peter stood condemned, he was condemned by his own wrong hypocritical action and so brought Paul's rebuke upon himself, especially since Peter's insincere action had such an influence upon all the other Jews with him that they followed his wrong hypocritical behaviour. It was in this manner Peter by his own phoney behaviour brought Paul's Judgment and rebuke upon himself.

Paul's words to Peter: -

- If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?" (v14).

Is a form of rebuke, Paul is saying, "Peter if you are comfortable fellowshiping with the Gentiles but reject them when fellow Jews are present, how, do you expect the Gentiles to fellowship with Jews when they are with their Gentile friends." It would be like us fellowshiping with an unsaved friend and rejecting them when brothers and sister in Christ appear, yet still expecting our unsaved friend (who we have rejected) to join in Christian fellowship it's ridiculous why would they when we have clearly shown by our behaviour that we are ashamed of being with them before our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Ponder for a moment: the shock Paul would have got when he saw Peter acting in this manner, but there is something even more precious we can all learn from Peter's behaviour that should encourage every brother and sister in Christ. What you might wonder can possibly be encouraging to us from Peter's shocking behaviour?

Consider the following: Peter had literally known Christ, yet he still feared being considered less by his Jewish kindred, if Peter who had known the Lord on such an intimate level can feel this way no brother or sister should condemn themselves when they act in such a human manner as Peter did, but rather have the following fabulous overcoming and heavenly mindset that Paul had: -

- Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus and let all who are mature think this way and hold true to what you have attained (Philip. 3:12-16).

We ourselves are Jews by Birth and not Gentile Sinners.

Galatians 2:15-16 ---- ¹⁵We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners ¹⁶yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so 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 works of the law no one will be justified.

The words "We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners" (v15) does not mean the Jews were without sin (only Christ attained to that), but that they view the nation of Israel as God's people and His holy and righteous race and viewed the Gentile nations as unclean sinners without God.

The Jews saw themselves as the holy race without sin because the Old Testament Scriptures state: -

- God gave birth to Israel.
- The Lord carried Israel from the womb even to their old age.
- God called Israel out of Egypt and called Israel His Son.
- Israel had Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David and the prophets.
- God declared His word, statutes and His rules to Israel (the LORD has not done this with any other nation).
- Israel was God's treasured possession and the apple of His eye.
- The people of Israel are children of Abraham the father of faith.
- Israel was entrusted with the oracles of God.
- To Israel belong the adoption, the patriarchs, the glory and the covenants.
- Israel was God's allotted heritage and a people holy to Him.
- The LORD loved Israel when they were a child.
- Israel was given the law, the worship and the promises.
- The Ten Commandments, covenants and the promises were given to Israel.
- Israel had the ceremonial law, the Sabbath and the synagogues.

Thus the many reasons the Jews considered themselves to be the holy and righteous race without sin.

(Exod. 19:5) (Deut. 7:6) (Deut. 14:2) (Deut. 26:18) (Deut. 32:9) (Isa. 46:3-4) (Hosea 11:1).

No-One is Justified by Works of the Law, but through Faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul tells the Galatian brothers and sisters he and the Jews with him are fully persuaded that neither a Jew nor Gentile is justified by self-effort i.e., by keeping religious laws, ceremonial practises and Jewish customs and traditions and therefore they have believed in the Lord to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law.

This is the Good News of the Gospel no matter whether a person is born a Hebrew or a Jew, whether they are rich or poor, noble or lowly everyone is saved in the same manner, by grace and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ it is the free gift of God since not one of us can stand before the Lord free from sin.

Is Christ a Servant of Sin?

Galatians 2:17-19 ----- ¹⁷But if, in our endeavour to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸For if I rebuild what I tore down I prove myself to be a transgressor. ¹⁹For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ.

Paul's words, "In our endeavour to be justified in Christ we too were found to be sinners," (v17) does not mean that Paul and those ministering with him had to strive and struggle by their own self-effort to earn righteousness and be justified, but rather that they had completely forsaken all Jewish religious laws, (i.e., the covenant of circumcision, the law of purification and Jewish religious customs and traditions etc.), as a means of earning righteousness. But in doing this the Jews who still held fast to Moses law and Jewish religious customs now considered them to be unrighteous sinners no different to the Gentiles thus the words, "We too were

found to be sinners" (v17) refers the Jews now considering Paul and those with him in the same manner that they viewed the Gentile nations (i.e., as being unclean sinners).

NOTE: when Paul is writing a letter he has no audience before him to ask questions so he often adopts a style of writing that enables him to raise a topic by asking a question himself. This type of writing has three benefits: -

1. Questions always grab the attention of the reader as they set the mind to seek an answer.
2. It gives the author the opportunity to answer questions that they perceive they might be asked if in front of a live audience.
3. It raises a topic the writer wants to highlight and discuss.

Paul having an understanding of the Jewish mindset perceives that those who held fast to Moses law would be thinking Jesus was a servant of sin because he saves to eternal life those who forsake keeping the Old Testament laws of purification and Jewish ceremonial rites as a means of earning righteousness and justification and to a Jew no-one could be righteous or justified without practising these, thus it is on behalf of the Jews who might be thinking in this manner that Paul asks the question: -

- Is Christ then a servant of sin? (v17).

And then immediately answers his own question with the words: -

- Of course not (v17).

Paul and the Jews ministering with him are considered to be sinners by Jews who deny righteousness is by grace and faith in Christ because they have forsaken all Jewish laws of purification and religious ceremony etc., and it is in this same sense that Christ appears to the Jews holding fast to Moses laws to be a servant of sin, since Jesus did not demand anyone to keep the Jewish laws to be justified and counted righteous by God and the Jews believed anyone who did not practice Moses laws of purification etc., were unclean sinners separated from God.

If I rebuild what I Tore Down I Prove Myself to be a Transgressor.

Paul's statement, "If I rebuild what I tore down I prove myself to be a transgressor (v18) means that if Paul goes back under the law to be counted as righteous he will still be found a sinner. This is because of the law of Sin and Death which states, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) meaning whoever's sins must mortally and eternally die and since not one of us is free from sin we are all held captive to the condemnation of eternal and mortal death (2 Cor. 3:9). But there is Good News: all who trust in Christ have been granted the free gift of God which is, "Eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:23), because, "The law of the Spirit of life has set them free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2) thus, the law of Sin and Death has no power over those who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him. This promise is guaranteed because it is not dependent on our self-effort, but on our faith this is why the Scriptures state: -

- Faith is counted to whoever believe in God who raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead who was delivered up to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Rom 4:22-25)

And why Paul wrote: -

- The promise to Abraham depends on faith in order that it may rest on grace and in this way be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring (Jews and Gentiles) (Rom 4:16).

God in his foreknowledge and knowing human nature knew if He had made eternal salvation dependant on our self-effort there is no-way He could guarantee or promise it to any of us, thus the reason God in His great wisdom made eternal salvation dependant on faith.

NOTE: it is not the Ten Commandments that are at fault, since they are not only perfect, but express God's perfect will, it is our corrupt fallen nature with its sinful dysfunctions and aberrations (self, ego, pride, greed, lust etc.,) that are the problem since they prevent us all from attaining to the perfection the Law demands.

Through the law I died to the law: (v19) means that there is absolutely nothing in the Ten Commandments and Jewish laws of purification and ceremonial rites, customs and traditions that Paul considers has any power to make him righteousness enough to be counted worthy by God for justification or that can maintain his salvation to eternal life

That I might live unto God: (v19) means that Paul will not put even the tiniest amount of faith or trust in any part of the Law to save him, but rather totally surrender his mind, his will and his life to the righteousness that God is pleased to input to those who fully trust in Christ for their justification.

I have been crucified with Christ: (v19) means that everything that Moses law and the Covenant that Paul believed had power to make him righteous and acceptable to God he now counts as being not only totally worthless, but has also totally forsaken them all to live entirely in God's grace and by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. For Paul nothing except the Lord Jesus Christ would ever again be trusted for his righteousness and justification to eternal life.

I do Not Nullify the Grace of God.

Galatians 2:21 ----- ²¹I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

These words of Paul's are both tragic and yet so eternally majestic that they should be engraved on the forehead of every brother and sister in Christ. Tragic because we all have the potential to nullify the grace of God, meaning we by our own actions have the power to make Christ's horrific and brutal suffering count for nothing.

This is because the moment we trust in anything other than faith and grace for our righteousness and justification we nullify everything the Lord achieved for us on the cross meaning that the grace of God is cancelled out and therefore Jesus died for no purpose thus the tragedy.

On the glorious and heavenly side Paul's words are eternally majestic because not one of us no matter how good we maybe or how much good we do to others can stand before God's holy standard of perfection without sin and therefore are all condemned by the law to eternal and mortal death. Thus the reason these words of Paul's are so glorious, without grace not one of us would have any hope of eternal life.

The Practical Application for us Today.

It is very easy for us to fall back under some degree or level of self-effort and works since human pride and ego prefers self-effort to grace because self-effort produces self-righteousness and this allows pride to rise up and exalt itself above others which in turn produces a heightened sense of spiritual superiority (howbeit a false one) thus the reason we have to forsake any thought of attaining to our own righteousness by self-effort.

Self-effort can take the form of trusting in any of the following: -

- Regular attendance of church and Bible reading.
- Singing in a choir and faithfully attending all practice meetings.
- Teaching the Lord's word or preaching sermons.
- Faithfully keeping religious rites and ceremonial practices.
- Praying, fellowshiping and worshipping the Lord etc.

Obviously all these things are good in themselves and spiritually healthy to practice, but the moment we think they have any power to make us righteous before God is the moment we nullify the grace Christ achieved for us on the cross.

End.