

Scripture Reference: Galatians 5:1-6

Date: May 5, 2013

Title: "A Celebration of Freedom"

Focus: How is One Right Before God?

Intro:

1. Cinco de Mayo is a celebration of the Hispanic community for the Mexican army's unlikely victory over the French in 1862. It is not their Fourth of July. But it is an important event commemorating freedom.

2. Freedom is an important issue, both temporarily and eternally. However, few consider the issue of the bondage to sin and the liberty offered by God.

Body:

vv. 1-3; One's standing before God is an issue every person must be conscious of

Someone was trying to tell the Galatian believers that to be right with God the commandments of the Old Covenant were to be kept.

They were attempting to enslave them to human effort.

This is why Paul discusses circumcision in verses 2-3

If a person has responsibility to keep some aspect of the Old Covenant, such as circumcision, offerings, holy days, etc, that person is accountable for all the Old Covenant.

People can't pick and choose which part they must answer for and which they don't. (Col 2:16)

v. 4; One seeking to be right with God by his or her actions no longer relies upon God's acceptance based on the merit of Jesus

If a person is going to attempt his or her own justification, then grace has no role.

They are "*severed from Christ.*" They have "*fallen from grace.*"

This is not a reference to loss of salvation, but that a person is choosing a path that is not compatible with "*the way*" of Jesus.

v. 5; How is Justification before God Realized?

"*For we...*" - Paul included himself in this statement because any seeking to be right before God is in the same position.

"*...are waiting for the hope of righteousness.*" - The righteousness Jesus makes possible can only be received.

Being right with God is not something any can secure for themselves.

Why, because all are sinners and apart from Him whatever advances are made are soon given back (Romans 3:23).

i.e. "One step forward, two steps back."

The state of rightness provided by God will to be fully realized one day in the future.

"...through the Spirit..." - The Holy Spirit is the means by which we wait for the promised righteousness.

Until that time a person knows he or she is in right standing with God because of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13b-14; *"You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."*

His presence is a *"pledge of our inheritance."* His transformation of a person's life is testimony to the as yet unrealized complete redemption before God.

"...by faith..." - Trust has a part.

The Galatians had doubts that the false teachers played to. They wanted proof that what Jesus promised was real.

Faith, personal trust in Jesus, is the staying power for those who *"wait for the hope of righteousness."*

v. 6; Human Effort Means *"nothing"* Regarding Justification

Justification is made possible because of the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus. Until this is fully realized, the Spirit works to affirm that reality. While we wait, we trust.

What we do not do is panic and try to make ourselves feel better by doing something or attempting to help Him along.

Human effort means nothing. What matters is trusting and loving Him.

Closing:

1. God's desire is that people walk in a loving and edifying relationship with Him. Not that they struggle and toil under the impossible burden of personal effort.

2. Peace with Him can never be earned, only received.