

Galatians #13 - Grace Never Ends...

- Hi, what Book of the Bible are we in?

- Galatians.

- Galatians. Last week, you can say that have a little heart funeral. How many of you have loved Galatians? It has been a great summer series, a great book of the Bible. And it's interesting because we're just gonna be three years old next week. But today in Galatians six, so if you've got a Bible go to Galatians, chapter six, we're going to have the 13th sermon, lucky number 13 final week in Galatians. But this is actually the eighth book of the Bible that we will have completed together in three short years, four in the Old Testament, four in the New Testament, super, super, super excited to share the closing grand finale of Paul's letter to the church in Galatia. Before we get into specific texts, let me deal with the context of the whole Bible. And so if you're new, we love you, we're glad to have you. This is a Bible, you can grab a copy on the way out. We'd love for you to have one. And I grew up in a home that had a Bible that I never opened. We go to church occasionally, it was no one's fault, but my own. We had a huge Bible is the same size as the coffee table. It was one of those gigantic Bibles with hippy Jesus on the front wearing Birkenstocks. And I thought, yeah, probably not much in there that's helpful. So I never really opened it. And then I remember in high school thinking, I would like to just learn a little bit about the Bible. So what better way to learn the Bible than to take a Bible's lit class at a public high school. And so I signed up for the Bible's lit class. And one of the first things that the teacher said was that the New Testament was written way, way, way, way, way later than the events. And there was so much time, such a massive gap between the writing of the New Testament and the occurring of the events there in that it was time for myth and legend and fable and folklore. So you can't really take anything in the Bible. Literally, you just need to look at it all spiritually and figuratively. And I thought, well, I didn't know that. And if you're knew, that's not true, but that's what they said. And so then I went to a state university and I signed up for another Bible's lit class, still not a Christian. And the professor basically said the same thing. And then I started studying and reading the Bible for myself. And I want to share with you some things about God's word in general, before we get into a particular section of God's word. That this is actually a library of 66 books. 39 in the Old Testament that comprise about three quarters of the Bible, 27 in the New Testament, which comprises about a quarter of the Bible. The Bible was written over the course of about 1,500 years by roughly 40 authors. It's a multi continental and a multicultural book. It is written from multiple continents and in multiple languages. The Old Testament's largely in Hebrew, New Testament, largely in Greek, there are also sections in the ancient language of Aramaic. As you read the Bible, it really is a library, is truly what it is. And so scripture means writing, Bible means book, so Holy Bible means Holy book. As you read it, you'll see history, sermons, letters, songs, architecture, travel, diaries, family, trees, legal document. All of this is basically like your life and mine. All the practical mundane, regular stuff of life is recorded in the Word of God is the people of God live in relationship with God. Well, as you open the Bible there's chapters. So if you've got a Bible go to Galatians, chapter six. Those

chapters were added in the 1,200s and we'll start around verse 11 and the verses were added in the 1,500s. They weren't part of the original, they were added later by God's people for the same reason that your home has an address, so that we can find things. And so those are addresses for us to find sections of God's word. Well, as I studied the Bible, and as I read the Bible in college, and I've had the honor of teaching the Bible for more than two decades, the Bible makes a claim that is unprecedented and unparalleled. And that is that behind the human authors, God is the divine author. Between the lowercase, behind rather than lowercased a author is the capital a author who is God. I'll give you one scripture on this. 2 Timothy 3:16, how much scripture? Oh, what tends to happen is people come to it. And they're like, I like this part, I don't like that part. I believe in that part. I don't believe in that part. I believe in the don't judge, but all this stuff about pants I reject. And just so you know most people's problem with the Bible are pants related. Can I take my pants off? Do I keep my pants on? Can they keep their pants off? Can they keep their pants off? Hey, this is the Bible it says to wear pants. So what I'm saying is that all scripture is breathed out by God. You can't just pick and choose the parts that you like. That the Bible is kind of an all or nothing book. You either receive it or you reject it. God wants you to receive it without editing it. All scripture is breathed out by God. What that means is, as God speaks through human servants, they are the deliverers of the mail, but they are not the authors of the mail. Then ultimately what is said in the Word of God comes from the very mind of God. Hundreds of times, the Old Testament prophets, said, thus sayeth the Lord. Over 3,800 times various other statements are made throughout the scriptures. The Word of the Lord came to me. God said, God revealed, God commanded. The Bible continually from beginning to end, says that God speaks through this book in an authoritative way. This is not speculation from man. This is revelation from God. This is the that God wrote. It's the only perfect thing on the earth. And if you wanna hear a word from God, open up the Word of God. All right, this is unbelievably amazing. It's a supernatural book written by a supernatural God. And He writes through human authors. He writes through human authors. This includes David, Moses, Joshua, Solomon, Nehemiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Habakkuk, Paul, who you will meet today, Peter and Luke. They're all mentioned. Many of the books of the Bible, we know the author. Some we do not, but we know that all are penned by God, ultimately the divine author. And just so you know 'cause I want you to love the Bible. I want you to get excited about the Bible. I want you to like the Bible, read the Bible, memorize the Bible, study the Bible. Amen, that's kinda my thing. That's what I'm into. And the Word of God has changed my life. And if I didn't have the Word of God, everything in my life would be different and nothing in my life would be better. Okay and because I love you and I love the Word of God, I want you to be excited about the Word of God. Well, how did we get the Word of God? Well, ultimately, next slide, please, there are many human authors, some had direct authorship, some had dictated authorship. Ezekiel 24:1-2, "In the ninth year, in the 10th month, on the 10th day of the month." The Bible is very specific. It tells us places, dates, times, Kings, cultures and archeologists and historians, as they do their research, continually confirm that the Bible is accurate and true. Tells us exactly when this happened. The Word of the Lord came to me. So God wrote the mail and he's telling Ezekiel you don't need to write the mail, I'll write the mail, you need to deliver the mail that I write. "The Word of the Lord came to me, son of man write down." So God shows up to Ezekiel. Hey, Ezekiel, so Lord here find a pen, sit down, son. We got some stuff we need to

record. So Ezekiel sits down and writes it out with his own hand. That's direct. There is also dictated authorship, Jeremiah 36:4. Then Jeremiah called Baruch another guy, the son of Neriah and Baruch wrote on a scroll at the dictation of Jeremiah, all the words of the Lord that he had spoken to him. So God reveals it to Jeremiah. Jeremiah speaks it and Baruch sits down and records it. He is like a court stenographer, like a reporter. He's writing it down. That being said, all of this brings us to Galatians chapter six. We've spent 12 weeks, this will be our 13th week in the Book of Galatians. And the question is who wrote this book? Ultimately, God wrote this book through the apostle Paul. So he told us in Galatians one who he was, he starts off, Paul. He just tells us. Now again, some of you have been told, oh, there was so much time between the events and the writing of the New Testament. No, no, no, no, Paul was alive at that time. He tells us that he's the one who's writing Galatians. Paul is one of the most towering, significant minds in the history of the world. There are very few who would be comparable in the category of Paul. Paul, an apostle, not from men nor through men, but through Jesus Christ and God, the father raised him from the dead and all the brothers who were with me. So in chapter one, he said, hey, it's me, Paul. This is a word from God through me. And here's where we pick it up today, Galatians 6:11. "See with what large letters I'm writing to you with my own hand." Some of you are very important, you have a lot of responsibilities. So you delegate those responsibilities and you retain for yourself only those things that are the most important. Paul's a very busy man. He delegates a lot of things, but one thing that he does not delegate is the writing of the letter to the church in Galatia. He loved them so much, their need was so great. And he knew that even thousands of years later, you and I would be eavesdropping in on their conversation that Paul sat down to write it with his own hand. This is really stunning. And this is God's deep love and affection for you and for me. And as we hear this, he says, I'm writing with large letters. Here's what I think he's referring to. How many of you have tried to write something and by the end, your letters were bigger and your penmanship was not as great, amen. We had this event a couple of years ago, I sat down, I thought. "I'm gonna write Christmas cards for the ministry I'm a part of." So it was like a thousand Christmas cards. And I'm gonna write everybody a note by the end, I just put an x and pray for them. I can't do it, I'm out. This is all I got. He sits down, I think he is so concern, there's a sense of urgency that he's writing with his own hand. And he says, and guys, you'll notice as you read the letter, the letters get bigger, the writing gets sloppier because I won't waste a second. I need to get this message to you. So it's important, it's significant. And it's ultimately from God through Paul. And what was happening is this. Paul taught them, he was their shepherd, they are the sheep. After he leaves wolves come in, he calls them false brothers and they are undermining all of his teaching. Why do I tell you this? Because every day and in certain seasons, under particular pressures, you will have to decide whether you will believe the Word of God or you will not believe the Word of God. That's ultimately the bottom line. You either will say, this is the book that God wrote and I will believe all that God has said. Or you will say, I do not believe this is the book that God wrote. And I have found another authority or author or teacher, and I'm going to hold them in high regard. And if they disagree with the scriptures, then I will disregard the scriptures. I am begging you. If anyone or anything, doesn't agree with the Word of God, love them, pray for them, but don't believe them or follow them. That's what's at stake. And he's going to compare and contrast some things for us. Religion versus the cross, what God cares about versus what we care

about, and human work versus divine work. And the reason that the book continually has these comparisons and contrast is that God creates and Satan counterfeits. That God, gives us the truth and Satan counterfeits with false teaching. And the first thing he's going to instruct us in is the difference or the distinction or the differentiation between religion and the cross. By religion, I mean, man created, human traditions. This is how people try to be spiritual without the spirit. He says it this way, Galatians 6:12-14. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh, who would force you. Christianity is not a faith of imposition. It's a faith of invitation. There are certain religions. If you don't conform, if you don't convert, then you will be condemned, you'll be rejected, you'll be shunned, you'll be incarcerated, you'll be persecuted. Because Christianity is about a loving relationship, you can't make somebody love somebody else. They got to decide that for themselves and you can't apply forceful pressure to make their heart open towards someone else. The Holy Spirit ask up to open our heart toward God. And what Paul is saying is that part of the problem with a religious spirit, a religious disposition is that it is pushy. It is demanding. It's domineering, it's overbearing. It's always shoving. You're always getting a little poke in the back and being told what to do and criticized. He says, they're forcing you. Let me just say this. God leads by love, God leads by love. We wanna walk with God, we wanna know God, we wanna be like God. There is no need to shove, my heart's open, the Holy Spirit is in me. That's where gravity is going to take me and pushing me will not assist me. I just tell you this 'cause part of Galatians, there's a whole book to be written on parenting from Galatians. And sometimes parents think, well, I know what the kid needs, I'll just give them a little, you know and what you get is a kid that is defiant and rebellious 'cause they don't like being forced. How many of you were that kid? How many of you are still that kid? Are you like, I don't like being shoved and forced and pushed. Love me, invite me and maybe then I'll do it. He says they would force you to be what, circumcised. They will talk about that and if you're new, they'll say that's weird. Yes, it is. Okay, yes, it is. What does it mean in the Greek? What you fear it means, that's what it means in the Greek. And only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. What's the issue? The cross. They have developed a religious system that does not require the cross of Jesus so that they will not be persecuted and punished as Jesus was. For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law. What he's saying here is rule-based people, legalistic people. The people who are like, you need to do this and you need to do that. And I'm going to judge you and I'm going to condemn and I am going to render a verdict regarding you. What he says is that that religious spirit and disposition, it always leads to hypocrisy. And I've hit a nerve in Galatians that I didn't see coming. But some of you have realized I was raised in a religious home. It was all force and fear and punishment and criticism and expectation and demands, and you get what you deserve, which is the opposite of grace. And some of you you've come to this conclusion. The parents were hypocrites. They told everybody what to do, but they didn't do what they were supposed to do. This can lead to a bitterness, you need to forgive. This can lead to a disillusionment, you need to look beyond them to Christ because he is the source of your hope despite their hypocrisy. Religious people are always telling everyone else what to do, not telling themselves what to do, judging others, not judging themselves. And as a result, they don't even live up to the demands that they force on other people. But they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh. It's all about them getting more points. How many people did you get circumcised today? How

many people did you get saved today? How many people did you pray for today? I got 17, I got 15. Okay, you're the winner, you get the gold star in your chart. But far be it for me to boast except in the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I did. I'm dead to it, it's dead to me, I live for God. Let me talk about the difference between religion and the cross. And this is where when people say, well, Christianity is a religion. I understand what they're saying. But truly all religion is about what we do for God. The cross is about what God did for us. This is the difference. Religion is God, I'm going to do some things for you. The cross is no, no, no. I'm going to do some things for you. You're the needy one, not me. You're the problem, not the solution. You're the one being rescued, you're not the superhero. And ultimately the cross focuses on what Jesus has done. So if you're here, you understand what I'm talking about. Let me explain this. There is a God who loves you. There is a God who made you. This God is a relational God. This God made this planet as a gift for you to live in and enjoy. You rebelled against this God, you sinned against this God. You rejected this God. And he loved you so much that he got off his throne and he came into human history and his name is Jesus Christ. And he lived a perfect life. There's no hypocrisy in Christ. There is varying levels of hypocrisy in Christians, but there is no hypocrisy in Christ. And he went to the cross, the most shameful, brutal way to die. He substituted himself in your place and he died so that you could live. He is willing to forgive you. He is willing to love you. He is willing to walk with you. He is willing to embrace you. He's not just willing, he's longing. He rose from death, conquering Satan, sin, death, hell and the wrath of God. Right now, he's gone to his heavenly kingdom to prepare a place for you, it's gonna be awesome. And one day he's coming back to take you home to be with him forever. All of this is because of the cross of Christ. When Jesus says on the cross, it is finished. What he doesn't mean is now it's your turn to do some things as well. What he means is it's all been done. Trust the one who has finished the work. Number two, religion, because it's about what I do, the boasting is in who? Me. I'm smarter than you, I'm better than you, I go on more mission trips than you. I speak in tongues more than you. I give more than you. I serve more than you. I was in church Sunday, where were you? What the crossbow sin is? Jesus. Let me just say this. We live in a real braggy world. Social media exists in large part for shenanigans and bragging. How many of you have noticed that on social media. Social media is bragging. Some of you like Pastor Mark I've seen you in social media. Right, that's why I'm illustrating this point. We all tend to brag. Meaning we only show them things in our life that paint us in a good portrait. It's not like I have constipation and I'm wearing sweatpants 'cause my regular pants don't fit anymore. And you're like no, no, no, no, no, what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna take a photo of me pretending that I'm awesome. It's a braggy world. Here's what I'm eating. Here's what I'm driving. Here's how beautiful I am. Here's how awesome my kids are. Here's how wonderful my life is. Be jealous of me. Braggy, braggy, braggy, braggy, braggy, braggy, world. People get together, all they talk about is what they have and what they do and how awesome they are. I'm sitting, getting a haircut yesterday. And it was a whole bunch of guys in the barber shop. And every conversation was a guy bragging. 'Cause that's what guys do. You guys like, "Man, I'm crushing at work. I'm making so much money." Other guys like my kid can hit a curve ball or your kid can't hit my kid's curve ball. My kid's curve ball is an unhittable curve. I'm like braggy, braggy, braggy, braggy, braggy, braggy, braggy. We're a bunch of strangers getting our hair cut, none of us have bangs, we're all middle-aged dads. There's

nothing impressive that any of us is talking about. Some of you drove here in a minivan, like there is nothing to braggy braggy brag about. For the Christian we brag in Jesus. Like your life has gone okay. Why? Jesus. Hey, your wife seems to like you. I know, thank you Jesus. That's one of his miracles, He's done a miracle. Your kids don't hate you, right? Well, yeah, that's Jesus. And so we recognize the good things in our life, but we give credit to the God who gave them graciously, not that we earned them through our performance. Do you want to brag? Brag on Jesus, Amen. You wanna boast boast about Jesus. If somebody comes see, and they say, "Hey, what are you into?" Jesus, I love Jesus, He loves me, He's awesome, He's changed my life, you need him, He's the best. Number three, religion looks at the outward and God through the cross of Jesus Christ deals with the inward. You're two parts, you've got a physical body that we see. You have a spiritual soul that God sees. In their context, what's the big issue they're fighting over? Circumcision, which is outward not inward. God cares about circumcision of the heart, not just the body. And what happens is religion wants to quantify performance and holiness based upon externals, not internals. I'll read a scripture to you, it's from Isaiah 29:13. God says, people draw near me with their mouth. They honor me with their lips while their hearts are far from me. You can have lip service that's not loving lifestyle. Religious people are about the show. Religious people are about the approval ratings. Religious people are about impressing others. And their hearts are oftentimes the problem. This is why in one of the gospels, Jesus quotes this scripture from Isaiah and He applies it to religious leaders. He says, these people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me because here's the key. The Bible says it repeatedly. Man looks at the outward, God looks at the heart, the inward, the inward. So religion is the outward circumcision, the cross is inward. God doing a work for you and in you and through you. And let me just say this, in the day of the selfie, we need to continually remind ourselves that who we are inwardly is at least as important as who we are outwardly. Grace and I were gone this week, we were in Germany. We were on the romantic rhine. It's this beautiful stretch of the Rhine River, it's amazing. Even if you don't like your spouse, you go there, you're feeling warm toward them, it's that awesome. Now I do like grace and she adores me, so we started in the red zone. We had a good time together, but it's beautiful this lower part of the Rhine River, huge green fields, massive ancient castles, church spires and cathedrals, cobblestone streets, little outdoor cafes, unbelievable. And so we went there and the way you'd go from town to town is you jump on this open top boat. And you'd just sit out on the deck and the sun is out and you're looking at this magnificent scenery and castles and it's mesmerizing. And in front of us, there was a woman. So if you're watching this ma'am thank you for the illustration. There was this woman sitting in front of us, an older woman with a selfie stick. You know what that is? That's vain people who'd stopped pretending. That's what a selfie stick is. And so she turned herself around and just kept taking her photo. Nothing changed, I don't know why she had to take photos of herself for an hour and a half. It's not like she was grown a goiter and was showing the progress. No horns, nothing changed, same woman, same head. She's not looking at the Rhine River. She's not looking at the castle. She's not looking at the churches. She's looking at herself for an hour and a half. She didn't speak to anyone, didn't look at anything. Finally, our boat reaches the dock and the guy sitting next to her looks through says, "Hey mom, this is our stop." "Oh, I didn't know you had a son," and you didn't either. He's been here the whole time. You ignored him for an hour and a half. You've

looked at nothing because it's just like, here's me, here's me, here's me, here's me. I have a Trinity, me, myself and I here we are. And so but let me just say this, I think God feels like her son a lot. Like I'm here and you're not paying any attention and we could have a great adventure, but you're just addicted to you. You're into you. I'm gonna say things I shouldn't and that's my spiritual gift. Here's one, it just comes to mind, I'll never forget. I went to a pastor's office one time, a guy, no one love and I won't name drop. I went into his office, every photo in the office, his office was of him. Like, you love you some you. I literally asked, I said, do you have a wife? He's like, well, yeah. Where is she? Do you have children? Y'all got kids and grandkids. Any photos? No, there's just a little shrine to me. And I sit in here and like, whew, that guy's handsome. That guy's awesome. That guy's amazing. That guy's funny. That guy's humble. No, he's not. That ultimately what happens is that God is trying to work in us and we're so consumed with the external that we neglect the internal. Let me tell you this, the internal proceeds of the external. The internal out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. It's out of the Holy Spirit in you that a fruitful life can be lived. And so the problem with religion, it's fighting over the outer life and the cross is to deal with our selfishness in the inner life. It's convicting, amen, but it's helpful. Now just take a selfie, post it, and then we'll go on to our next point. All right, Galatians 6:15. There's a difference in a distinction or differentiation about what we care about versus what God cares about. So let me just say this. You've all got a cause you've all got an issue, we've all got a thing, right? We've all got, some of you it's a political cost, moral cost, social cost. Some of you are saved of wolves and some of you are recycle and some of you are getting rid of the designated hitter and some of you are homeschoolers. Everybody's got their thing. Everybody's got their thing. And this is our cause and this is our moral goodness. And I'm going to declare it publicly and put it out on social media and shame those who are not part of my cause, and I care a lot about my cause. I had somebody come on seriously. They're like Pastor Mark, as a Bible teacher, I need to ask you, what's your position on vaccinations? And I was like, well, I was reading first and second vaccinations, and it seemed clear to me like, what are we talking about? But that was there. I don't know if I can go to this church or not. Where are you guys out on vaccinations? I'll stab you if you want, but I don't know what we're doing. Let me read this. What was their issue? Circumcision. How many of you you're like, yeah, I wouldn't have picked that. Wouldn't have been my thing. So if you go to this church, you're walking in the door, here's the greeter. Hey welcome, are you circumcised? Woo, this is a little personal, right? And we're not checking, are we? Like how? Shouldn't have said that, but you know what I'm saying? Circumcision. Now the thing is we think about that we think that's pretty stupid. You know what? So is your thing. Something like, oh, okay. Okay, Pastor Mark, I can't welcome. No, my thing is very important. Their thing was so important. They had split the church into two groups, circumcised, uncircumcised. Here's what he says, "For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision." I'm sure the guys who were circumcised were like I wish I would have known that previously. Was Paul circumcised? That's just a weird conversation. Yes, and what he says is I don't care, whatever, whatever. Because circumcision or uncircumcision, when you die and stand before God and you're gonna die and stand before God, he's not gonna be like, all right, you're in. It's not gonna go like that. Wow. It's true, thank you, ma'am. Thank you ma'am, I appreciate that. Obviously I'm drowning and I need a life guard up here. So I appreciate that. Now this being said their thing is circumcision, but at the end of

the day, either it's Jesus or it's not. And what they were saying is you need Jesus plus circumcision to go to heaven. There was a group that was saying this, I'll give you a quote. It's from Acts chapter 15, I think in my notes, it's around verse one. And it says in Acts 15 that they were teaching unless you are circumcised, you cannot be saved. What they were saying was, you need Jesus and what he's done plus you and what you do. And you're helping God to save you. That's not how it works. It's all Jesus. It's only Jesus. It's totally Jesus. And some of you say, well, what do I do? You killed him, that was your contribution. You killed him and he died for you. So what we contribute is the death, we do not participate in the life. Now, couple of things on causes. In their day with circumcision, they were single issue voters. But in our day it can be a political cause, it can be a moral cause, it can be a social cause, it can even be a good thing that has been made more important to you than the cross of Christ. But in the church it could be things like, do you speak in tongues? What Bible translation does your pastor use? Does he use the right one or the wrong one? Like there's a wrong book. Here's one, how do you educate your children? I had a family recently come to the church and they're like we have little kids, we're not sure we're gonna homeschool. Is that okay? I've never been to your home, I don't know, I don't know. Like I said, well, you are gonna educate your kids, right? They're like, oh yeah. Well, good. That's all I care about. Public school, private school, homeschool, charter school, you know what? Pick one, pick one. How about this one? Do you drink alcohol or do you think it's a sin? How many of you grew up Lutheran? I was just in Germany, I found out that breakfast beer is a thing. That's what I just found out. I sit down for breakfast, this guy got a pine. I'm like really? This is where we start. Okay, and I'm welcome to Lutheranism. But how many of you grew up in more Pentecostal, charismatic, apitist, apitist. We weren't Baptist, we were fundamental. No fun mental. But in some groups it's like, I'm a varsity Christian 'cause I drink. I'm a varsity Christian, 'cause I don't drink. Just whatever it is, what he's saying is whatever. Tools, not rules, relationship with the Holy Spirit live according to your conscience. We have other things, which theological system do you think is best? What kind of church do you attend? Ah, these things. These may not be bad things, but they're not saving things. And we need to have two categories, saving things and then everything else. Sometimes God doesn't even care about the things that we've devoted our whole life to. Sometimes what motivates us is a de-motivator to God. They were gonna split a whole church. They were gonna circumcise a bunch of dudes. They had declared war. And Paul says, who cares? Let me just say that sometimes our relationships, our conflicts, our problems are over nothing, but we make them into a thing. That's the difference between what God cares about and what we care about. And then he's gonna juxtapose human work versus divine work. And he keeps using these categories 'cause God creates and Satan counterfeits. Galatians six, second half of verse 15 through 18. Here's what he says. Circumcision, uncircumcision counts for nothing, it doesn't matter. It registers on God's Richter scale. Doesn't even register. But here's what does matter. A new creation. I have really good news for you. Religion wants to make a better you, Jesus wants to make a new you. All religion can do is try to make a better you. We live in a world of self help, self esteem, self-actualization, we need God. I don't know about you. I woke up this morning, I looked in the mirror. I was like, that guy needs God and he needs God every day. A new creation means that if you belong to Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit does a supernatural work in your life, starting in your inner being that affects all of your outer decisions and behaviors. And

that you are not who you were. This is your identity. If you belong to Jesus, you are a new you. Are you a perfect you? Nope, your spouse will confirm this fact. So just check with them on the way home. You're not a perfect you, but you're a new you in the process of being perfected. The new you upon the resurrection of the dead and the ushering in of the eternal state, is going to be a perfect you. Your quirks, your personality, your experiences, the law still be you, but it'll be the perfect new you. Some of you need to see yourself as God sees you when he's finished with you, not where he started with you. Satan wants you to just look back and say, okay, this is what I've done, this is where I failed, this is the shame that I carry. You want to know, Jesus says, Paul says, God says, you're new. The Bible uses the language of new heart, new nature, born again, new creation, new man, it's new, it's new, it's new and it's becoming more like Jesus. In addition, he goes on a new creation and as for all, who walk by this rule, will unpack this, peace and mercy be upon them and upon the Israel of God. In the Old Testament God's people were Israel, New Testament, we're also the Israel of God, we're all trusting in the same Jesus, from now on let no one cause me trouble. He's just sort of bottom line it. I planted a church, I laughed, these guys are attacking me. Let's just be done with this because I bear the marks of Jesus on my body. You want me to take my shirt off and show you what a scourging looks like? Let me just say this, if you will keep preaching, teaching, talking, speaking that human beings are sinful and need a savior, someone, somehow, somewhere, sometime is gonna give you a beating. Because the cross is the denunciation, it is the renunciation of human potential. We like to think that we're good. We like to think that we're evolving. We like to think that we're the solution. None of which is true. This haunted me this last week, Grace and I, we went up to Berlin, we went outside of Berlin to a place called Sachin house. And it was the first concentration camp in Nazi, Germany, where they executed largely political prisoners. It became the prototype for all the other concentration camps and the headquarters for all of the concentration camps. And what's amazing is an entire nation was able to build war machinery, amazing engineering inventions. From refrigerator, to the rubber soles on your shoes, to vaccinations, to flight to automotive, to communication. This was the apex. This was the greatest collective human achievement in the history of the world to murder people. I mean, there was a wall you would go through inside all the prisoners and outside were family members of those army military leaders. Outside, there were trees, there was a park, there was a pond, there was an amusement park and their kids just lived absolutely idyllic life. And then dad would leave the family in the morning, pass through the gate, into the concentration camp. There's no trees and the kids are being used for medical experiments and they're being used as forced labor. And they're being put in furnaces. And that is the apex of human potential. The Bible says that we were made in the image and likeness of God, therefore there is greatness within us. But because we have fallen into sin, we are evil and capable of great evil, great evil. I was doing the research while we were at Sachin housing. So they would put kids in a furnace, burn them alive, and then the ashes would float over to the playground where the soldiers kids were playing. Time is not going to fix the human problem. Government will not fix the human problem. War will not fix the human problem. Self-esteem will not fix the human problem. Evolution will not fix the human problem. Enlightenment will not fix the human problem. Religion will not fix the human problem. Spirituality will not fix the human problem. Only Jesus Christ dead in our place for our sins, risen from death as our glorious King, He alone can deal with the human problem. And so

what the cross is, it's the revelation of our great evil, and it's the revelation of God's great love. And Paul says, because of that, you're gonna take a beating. When you say that people are the problem, not the solution. Let me just tell you this. If you will talk about Jesus, the Holy Spirit will make people new creations. That's amazing. So whatever opposition you endure know that it is worthwhile. Somebody told you about Jesus, let's say you are not a Christian. You probably responded unfavorably. But God used that powerful, good news of the grace of Jesus Christ to unlock a new creation in you. Now, once you become a new creation, he says, the next thing is to walk it out, to walk it out. And this language of walking, it literally is friendship, it's relationship. One of my favorite things to do with Grace is to go for a walk. It's one of my favorite things. Here's what you need to know. Jesus is alive, He has sent the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit dwells in you if you're a new creation. And wherever you go, God goes with you. Do you know that when you go to the grocery store, God wants to go to the grocery store with you? Did you know that, for your students, when you start school this week, God wants to go to school with you. Some of you parents, you're gonna get up tomorrow, you're gonna go to work. Oh, God wants to go to work with you. Wherever you go, God wants to go with you. This is what it means to live in the presence of God. That God has put his presence within you as a new creation. So wherever you go, you're never alone, God is with you. And it's this language of walk. So one of the things we like to say here is the key to walking with God is just figuring out your next step. I don't know what your next step is, I can give you some examples. Do you need a Bible? Do you have a Bible? You need to open it? Do you need to find somebody that you can pray with? Do you need to come forward for prayer after the service? Do you need to get baptized next week? What do you need? What's the next step? And God just wants you to be faithful to that next step. And the key to walking with God is just, okay, here's the next step. Here's the next step. Here's the next step. Next thing you know life has momentum forward progress and energy. God wants to do life with you. This is something, I know that God loves us, but if he hangs out with us, it seems to indicate that he also likes us. I think God likes you. And he loves you and he wants to be in your life. And he wants to spend time with you. And he wants this to be very practical and he wants this to be very relational. And he wants this to be very enjoyable. I like to say we don't walk with God because we have to, but because we get to. I don't know about you, if somebody awesome came and said, "Hey, I'd like to walk with you." Awesome. God comes and says, "I'd like to walk with you." Oh, okay, that's amazing 'cause I've been going it alone. And it's really nice that you would go with me and that you would go before me. New creation that then walks with God in peace and mercy. We'll talk about that. The key to peace is mercy. Our relationship with God has peace because of mercy. Grace is where you get something you didn't deserve. Like Jesus died and gave you his life. Jesus took your sin and gave you his righteousness. That's grace, that's something you totally didn't deserve. I hear this from people all the time. They're like, oh, but God forgive me and love me. I don't deserve it. Right, that's why we call it grace. It's a free, generous, lavish gift to somebody who has no claim to it. Mercy is the withholding punishment. Grace is the giving of blessing. Mercy is the withholding of punishment. So I didn't anticipate this when we got into Galatians, but this is ultimately a book about relationships in large part. Mercy is when I don't say or do or give what I was going to, because it would hurt you. Mercy is you did something and I'm frustrated and I'm not going to respond to you, I'm gonna respond to him. Mercy is I'm very frustrated and I need to tell you

how I feel. I'm gonna go pray and tell God how I feel and not unleash that on you. Mercy is you did something that I don't like, and I wanna punish you, but I'm not going to do that. And sometimes even in our relationships, this is the silent treatment, the cold shoulder, we've all got our ways of punishing. Mercy is restraint. Mercy is part of the fruit of the spirit and it's self-control. Mercy is I'm gonna, some of you mercy, I love you, and this'll be really weird coming from me. Sometimes mercy means we shut up. It's just like, I'm just gonna shut up now, 'cause whatever I say would not be merciful or gracious. So I'm going to shut up. Now what mercy leads to is what? Peace. Peace, peace. If you have turmoil in your relationship, I could promise you this, somebody is missing mercy. I dealt with this with a married couple awhile back. The wife decided that she would tell her husband everything he said and did wrong. And he said, quote, I feel like I'm living with my critic. I said, you are. She said, how will he know what he's doing wrong unless I tell him. Well, ma'am Satan and the Holy Spirit are both at work in his life. And Satan is trying to condemn him and shame him. And the Holy Spirit is trying to convict and help him. And you're yelling so loud, that he can't hear the Holy Spirit. God will convict people, give them mercy. God will change people, give them mercy. God will lead people, give them mercy. And if we give mercy to each other, you know what we have in our relationship? Peace. I want peace in your marriage. I want peace in your family. I want peace in your relationships. For that to happen, there needs to be an ample supply of mercy. He then says two final things to endure whatever you need to physically outwardly. The Bible says that our outward being is wasting away it's in a death and decay cycle. But our inner life is being renewed day by day. Some of you have debilitating illness. Some of you have injury. We have saints in this church that are in the hospital this week. Some of you have chronic pain. Some of you are battling for your lives. You are living your spiritual life in the confines of your physical body. And Paul says, I've got scars on my body from all that I have endured. But what he's saying is that ultimately what is happening externally can be superseded by the work that God is doing internally. And here it is. This is amazing. Think of it this way. You're gonna write a letter to somebody that you love and they're in crisis. What's your last line? What's your final word? You're on your death bed and the people you love are there. You say, this is it, this is my conclusion. What are you gonna say? Paul ends his letter with the grace, with the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Grace comes from Jesus, you can't get at Costco. You can't have a drone fly to your house from Amazon. If you want grace, you got to go to Jesus. God does grace. Satan can't counterfeit grace. The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ be with your spirit. That's your inner being. Your outer, physical is struggling and dying, but your inner spiritual is being renewed. Brothers treat them like family, amen. What's the most important thing? Grace for your soul. God wants you to have a relationship with him where His grace changes your spirit, makes you into a new person, a new you, to walk with Jesus in relationship to receive mercy and grace so that you can give others, mercy and grace. That you can take the relationship that you have with God and use that as the prototype for your other relationships. And if he will do that, there is peace. There's peace in your conscience, you can wake up, look in the mirror and say, I'm not perfect, but I do have a clear conscience. How I've treated them, I believe in the sight of God is right and best, and if not all acknowledge own and apologize, repent. But let me just say this, your soul is crucial. I know we live in a day when we're so worried about our body. What about your soul? And I love that here the Holy Spirit through Paul says, I wanna talk about your spirit or your soul

and the grace of God. Let me tell you a couple of things about your soul. You do not just have a soul, you are a soul. Your soul needs to be your first priority. Who you become is more important than anything you achieve. Can I bug the parents for a moment? We're in Scottsdale, Arizona. How is my kid performing in sports? How is my kid performing in school? What college will my kid get into? What grade point average will my kid have? Will my kid make first chair violin? Will my kid make it on the stage for the Nutcracker ballerina? Will my kid hit the home run? Will my kid get the trophy? We're so worried about what we achieve, that we overlook who we're becoming. As parents, our first job is to cultivate the soul, the spirit of that child, so that who they become is the highest priority. This is why we have a world filled with achievement and absolutely replete of character. Your soul cannot be well without Jesus's grace through the Holy Spirit. And grace is the generous giving of God. Grace is lavish. Grace is generous. Grace includes finances and words and deeds, and it's the giving to the blessing and the benefiting of another. And God wants this grace based relationship with you. Now, let me close with this. In our household my kids attend the church with Grace and I. They give me the honor of being their dad and their Bible teacher. And we get dinner at our house on Sunday nights. And we ask this question. What was your takeaway? You're married have that discussion. You're here with a roommate, you're in a life group with your family, good question. And that is what did the Holy Spirit speak to you either through the sermon or the scripture? Let me just give you my takeaway from Galatians. If I could just bottom line it. Relationship with God and others is based on one of two things, law or grace. Law, here's my expectations. Here's my demands. Here's your performance. Here's your review. Here's your report card. Here is your competence. It's all performance. It's all rule-based, law based. And if you don't meet expectations, there will be consequences. Grace, I love you, I forgive you, I'm here to help you. Our relationship is secure and solid. It's the kindness of God that leads to repentance. What kind of relationship does Jesus offer? Grace. There are three kinds of relationships that we have with each other. When two people are law based, that is an absolutely conflicted, brutal relationship. Here's my demands. Here's my demands. And here's my frustrations. Well, here's my frustrations. Well, here's my expectations. Well, here's my expectations. Well, here's my punishment for you. Well, this goes both ways. Grace and law tends to be an abusive relationship. I demand, you accommodate. I condemn, you apologize. I push, you move. The best relationship, the only relationship that you can walk together, grace and grace, you can hold hands, you walk together. I want grace in your marriage. I want grace with your children. I want grace with your grandchildren. I want grace with your friends. I want grace with your enemies. Because the Holy Spirit can work in a powerful way through grace that simply is stifled by law. That being said, I'm gonna invite the band up and we're going to respond. We're gonna do something that is unusual in many churches, most churches, the guy preaches and then you go home. We like to take time to respond. We like to take time to process. I don't know about you, but for me when I eat, I like to chew and then digest. Well, as we feast on the Word of God, this is where we take a moment to feast and to digest. We'll partake of communion, remembering the cross of Jesus Christ. The one thing we're going to be bragg about. And then we're gonna sing and as we sing, it is the inner man crying out through the outer body because it's out of the overflow of the heart that the mouth speaks. And so I want you to meet with the Lord. I want you to receive grace from the Lord. I want you to enjoy peace with the Lord. For those of you who are not

Christians, say, how does this apply to me? Jesus has grace for you. There's a God who made you. There's a God who loves you. There's a God who died for you. There's a God who rose for you. There's a God who's prepared a place for you. There's a God who's coming again so that you can be with him forever. His name is Jesus. Give him your sin receive his grace. There is grace for you. I don't care what you've done. I don't care how you want it. I don't care what regrets you have. I don't care who you used to be. I know who Jesus wants to make you into and that is new. For those of you that are prodigals, you're wayward, you're rebellious, you've blown it. Like I've not been walking with Jesus. I did for a while and then I ran away. There's grace for you. Jesus loves you, He'll embrace you, He'll forgive you, He'll help you, He'll comfort you, He'll walk with you. There's grace for you. Lastly, I just felt inclined this morning as I prayed for you on my way in, some of you are anxious and fearful. You're looking into the future and you're wondering, how am I gonna make it? And I don't know what the circumstance is, but I know that what is behind it is anxiety and fear. Here's what I need you to know. God has grace for your future. God has grace appointed and planned for the future that is overwhelming to you. God's grace is sufficient and his power is made perfect in weakness. When the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness every morning, they needed to eat and God provided manna every single day. And that manna, I would rot at night because you would need fresh new manna every morning. God's grace is like that. The grace that God had for yesterday is not for today. The grace that God has for tomorrow, won't be there till tomorrow. And faith, faith, trust that God's grace will be there in the future as we needed as He's always been faithful. Lord Jesus, thank you that the final word is about the cross. The final word is about grace. The final word is about peace. The final word is about relationship. The final word is about becoming new in Jesus name, amen.