

Our State of Theology – 9i(2)

The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:1-26): The Hope of Righteousness

- Many scholars and commentators have pointed out that Galatians 5 seems to begin a new section in Paul's letter. He has written *autobiographically* (chapters 1–2), then *theologically* (chapters 3–4), and now *ethically*. To put it in different words, chapters 5 and 6 of Galatians move toward more **practical and moral instructions** about how the Galatian Christians should live out their faith, relying on God's grace in every situation and detail of their spiritual lives.¹

Galatians 5:1–5 (NIV84)

¹It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

²Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.

³Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.

⁴You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

⁵But **by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.**

- It is the Spirit of God and not the law that gives us hope.
- What is it in which we hope?

“The *righteousness* for which we hope.”

We are not waiting for just any kind of hope; we eagerly await through the Spirit the hope of righteousness.

- This righteousness is not obtained through some religious ritual or the lack of a ritual.

It is not some kind of work or effort by natural means on the part of a person that brings this righteousness.

Romans 9:30–10:4 (NIV84)

³⁰What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith;

- *Obtained* = καταλαμβάνω *katalambanō* = to acquire, with the implication of significant effort.²

¹ Jon Nielson, *Galatians: The Gospel of Free Grace, A 13-Lesson Study*, Reformed Expository Bible Studies (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2019), 87.

² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (NY: United Bible Societies, 1996), 563.

to make something one's own, *win, attain*.³

³¹but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it.

- *Attained* = φθάνω *phthanō* = to come to or arrive at a particular state, *attain; come up to, reach, attain something*.⁴
- The Gentiles were not even looking for righteousness, yet they acquire it as if they had pursued it through their significant effort to perhaps win righteousness as their own. (Look at definition of *obtained*.)
- The Jews pursued not righteousness, but a *law* of righteousness and they did not *attain* it. They did not *reach, come up to* the level of righteousness that God demanded.

The Jews knew no other way to be righteous before God, but through a strict obedience to the law.

- They thought that this strict adherence to the law and its demands would lead to their attaining righteousness or to being justified.

They pursued a system of works (law) that displayed performance: something they could brag about. They were not seeking a relationship with God. It was still *all about them*.

▪ Ephesians 2:9 (NIV84)

⁹not by works, so that no one can boast (to take pride in something, *boast, glory, pride oneself, brag*).⁵

The Jews were *not gifted* this righteousness even though they *exerted a strenuous effort* to obtain it.

The Jews pursued a system of works with strenuous effort, thinking that these works had earned them God's approval and right-standing with Him, or, in other words, righteousness.

- The Gentiles were *gifted* righteousness; the Jews could never *earn* righteousness. In fact, no one could ever earn righteousness.

³²Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the

³ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press, 2000), 519.

⁴ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press, 2000), 1053.

⁵ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press, 2000), 536.

“stumbling stone.”

- *Stumbled* = προσκόπτω *proskoptō* = take offense at, feel repugnance for, reject.⁶
- The Jews did not accidentally trip over a stone that they did not notice, (most common way to define stumble. They intentionally took offense and rejected the Stone, the Rock of Ages, that they could plainly see.

³³As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

- The only thing that any person, Jew or Gentile, can do to be saved is to believe that he can do nothing to merit salvation and to cast himself at God’s feet for His mercy for the sake of Christ. Jews were incensed at the gospel of grace made effective by **faith** because it nullified all the good **works** by which they thought they could please God.⁷

Romans 10:1⁷ Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

²For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their **zeal is not based on knowledge**.

- **Proverbs 19:2 (NIV84)**

²It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way.

³Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and **sought to establish their own**, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.

- *Establish* = ἵστημι *histēmi* = Stand, stand firm, place firmly, establish, set, confirm.⁸

‘seeking to establish their own way of being put right with God’⁹

- *Robert Anderson, 1833*: The expression of *establishing their own righteousness*, or *making it to stand*, seems to refer to the case of a person who **allows that his house is out of repair, and in some danger of falling, but who will not be convinced that it requires a new foundation**.

He endeavours, therefore, by props and buttresses, and various repairs, to *make the house stand*, but all his expense and labour are thrown away; and, if he persists in his vain endeavours, it will be likely to fall down, and bury him in its ruins.

- Thus, **it is with multitudes of professed Christians in**

When convinced of defects in their moral righteousness, they endeavour to repair those defects by some superstitious observances of their own, entertaining, at the same time, some indistinct notion of Christ’s making up the rest.

But they will not be persuaded that they are **building on a false foundation**; nay, they are offended at the humbling doctrines of free grace, and **they actually make that precious foundation** for our hope, which God himself has *laid*, and on which whosoever trusts shall never be *ashamed*, **a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence**.¹⁰

Romans 10:4⁴ Christ is the **end** of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

- *End* = τέλος *telos* = the goal toward which a move-ment is being directed, *end, goal, outcome*; Christ is the goal and the termination of the law at the same time.¹¹

A point of time marking the end of a duration.¹²

Galatians 3:24-25 (NIV84)

²⁴So the law was put in charge **to lead us to Christ** that we might be justified by faith.

²⁵Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

- The Law as a demanded obligation has come to an end because Jesus has fulfilled its demands and imparted His righteousness to those who believe. Christ has freed believers from its tyranny. The standards of righteousness come to us now not from without by imposition (as something earned \approx *wages*), but from within by the Spirit who writes the Law upon our hearts.¹³

Galatians 6:12–16 (NIV84)

¹²Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.

¹³Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh.

⁶ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press, 2000), 882.

⁷ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Romans*, vol. 2, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 50–51.

⁸ Thoralf Gilbrant, “ἵστημι.” *The New Testament Greek-English Dictionary*, The Complete Biblical Library (WORDsearch, 1991).

⁹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (NY: United Bible Societies, 1996), 681.

¹⁰ Robert Anderson, *A Practical Exposition of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (London: J. Hatchard and Son, 1833), 286–287.

¹¹ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press, 2000), 998.

¹² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (NY: United Bible Societies, 1996), 637.

¹³ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

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people and the Lord. Jesus made it clear that without His working in our lives, we can do nothing.¹⁷

John 15:5 (NIV84)

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

- The eternal effects of whatever you do, whatever gift you have or don't have "depends on the presence or absence of love."¹⁸

The exercise of gifts through actions and speech for self-gratification and self-exaltation excludes love. The result: nothing.

Hebrews 6:9–12 (NIV84)

⁹Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case—things that accompany salvation.

¹⁰God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

¹¹We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.

¹²We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

- We must strive to do everything in the light of eternity in regards to salvation. Our speech and actions reflecting the *better things that accompany salvation*.
- *Things that accompany* = ἔχω *echo* = to be closely associated, *hold fast, be next to, be next*¹⁹; Belonging to or associated with (salvation and righteousness)

To be near to, adjacent, contiguous; conjoined with (salvation and righteousness).²⁰ Wherever there is salvation, there is righteousness. Righteousness goes hand in hand with salvation.

Conjoined = being, coming, or brought together so as to meet, touch, overlap, or unite.²¹

- Whether we believe it or not, our actions and speech have an eternal significance and they should be *conjoined* with salvation.

¹⁷ Rod Mattoon, *Treasures from First Corinthians*, vol. 2, Treasures from Scripture Series (Springfield, IL: Rod Mattoon, 2012), 203.

¹⁸ Roy E. Ciampa & Brian S. Rosner, "1 Corinthians," in *Comm on the NT Use of the OT* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 738.

¹⁹ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press, 2000), 422.

²⁰ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

²¹ Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

¹⁴May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

¹⁵Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.

¹⁶Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

Galatians 5:6 (AMP)

⁶For [if we are] in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith activated and energized and expressed and working through love.

- The Galatians could fall prey to pride in what they did (circumcision) or in what they did not do (uncircumcision). In both instances the focus remains on human accomplishments or perception.¹⁴
 - Both a circumcised Galatian and an uncircumcised Galatian could boast that they were more righteous based on the decision they had made.
- Neither decision mattered in God's eyes. **What really mattered was faith that expressed itself through love,** not arrogance or pride.
- This verse was not supporting circumcision or uncircumcision. The verse "was simply saying that how we mark our bodies has absolutely no bearing on our relationship with God."¹⁵
- The Galatian Christians' salvation, regardless of ethnic origins, came about because of **true faith which "became effective" (energoumenē) by love.**¹⁶

1 Corinthians 13:1–3 (NIV84)

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and **if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.**

³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

- Faith without love = Nothing
- If a person has the gift of prophecy, if he understood all of the secrets and mysteries of God, if he understood all knowledge or had a wall of college degrees, if he had the kind of faith that could move mountains, without love to go with it, he is nothing.

All of these abilities are nothing without love for

¹⁴ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 317.

¹⁵ Brian L. Harbour, *Verse by Verse Bible Studies on Galatians*, Notable Harbour Verse Studies (WORDsearch, 2013), Ga 5:6.

¹⁶ Ralph W. Harris, ed., *Galatians–Philemon*, The Complete Biblical Library: New Testament Study Bible (WORDsearch, 2009), 75.

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⁵Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

⁶Let your conversation be always full of grace, **seasoned with salt**, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Job 6:6 (NIV84)

⁶Is tasteless food eaten without salt, or is there flavor in the white of an egg?

Mark 9:42–50 (NIV84)

⁴²“And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck.

⁴³If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out.

Some manuscripts *out*, ⁴⁴where / “*their worm does not die, / and the fire is not quenched.*”

⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell.

⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,

⁴⁸where “*‘their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.*”

- Hell is a place where “**Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched**” (vv. 44, 46, 48). This is symbolic language that paints a picture of ceaseless torment, but it has an interesting and instructive connection to Jewish history.
- In ancient Israel, during the reigns of Kings Ahaz and Manasseh in the southern kingdom of Judah, the people became involved in one of the worst of all pagan practices—the sacrifice of children to the pagan deity Molech. These sacrifices occurred in a deep ravine south of Jerusalem. That ravine came to be called Gehenna, an English transliteration of the Greek form of an Aramaic word.

This practice of sacrificing children was roundly condemned by the prophet Jeremiah and was finally halted by King Josiah. To make sure it did not begin again, Josiah sought to desecrate the ravine where these sacrifices were made by turning it into the city garbage dump.

- The refuse from the city, including the carcasses of animals and even the corpses of criminals, was carted out on a regular basis and tossed into this massive garbage dump.

Matthew 12:33–37 (NIV84)

³³“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.

³⁴You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

³⁵The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.

³⁶But I tell you that **men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.**

³⁷**For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”**

- The inner disposition determines the kind of fruit that comes from one’s life. One can attempt an external veneer of goodness, but the truth will become known through one’s words and deeds.
- The tongue—the things we say—reveals what is in our heart. One’s words are the most direct communication of the inward being.
- We must resist the temptation of regarding our good words as “typically me” and our many bad words as “not really being me at all.”²²

Ephesians 4:25–32 (NIV84)

²⁵Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

²⁶“In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,

²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold.

²⁸He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Colossians 4:5–6 (NIV84)

²² R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 241–242.

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mean that stars and harps do not exist. With faith you can see His footprints. With an open heart you will hear His voice.—*June Hunt*²⁷

- We will continue digging into Galatians 5:7-26 in the coming weeks (the Lord willing).

To keep the dump from overflowing, the refuse there was burned, with the fires constantly fed by incoming garbage.

Meanwhile, worms stayed busy devouring the carcasses of the animals and criminals that were dumped in Gehenna. Thus, the imagery in Isaiah 66 is a picture of this terrible place. Eventually, Gehenna became a Jewish metaphor for the place of final punishment.

- The Bible teaches not only the resurrection of the bodies of the saints but the resurrection of the bodies of the damned, that they may be fit to receive their everlasting punishment in hell in a physical state. In hell, the worm does not die because the host is never consumed. In hell, the fire is never quenched, meaning the torment is constant. Hell, then, is a place of searing, unceasing pain.²³

⁴⁹**Everyone will be salted with fire.** (Two views:)

- *Expositors says:* “*Everyone* must be salted somehow, either with the unquenchable fire of Gehenna or with the severe fire of self-discipline. **Wise is he who chooses the latter alternative.**”²⁴
- This is a continued description of hell. *Everyone who goes to hell* is salted, or preserved, in the fire. In earthly life, fire consumes, but it appears that in hell fire preserves, like salt.²⁵

⁵⁰**“Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”**

- “If the preserving principle embodied in the Apostles, and which was to emanate from them, should itself prove corrupt [inoperative], then where could help be found? If they, the chosen ones, became selfish, if they wrangled about who should be greatest, then the fire which our Lord had come to send upon earth was clearly not burning in them, and whence could it be kindled afresh?”
- ‘Keep the seasoning power, the preserving sacrificial Fire, within your own hearts, and as a first condition and indication of its presence there, be at peace with your brethren.’ Thus the discourse reverts to the point from which it started.²⁶
- To the skeptic who says, “I’ve never seen or heard God,” I offer these thoughts: Just because the blind never see a star or the deaf never hear a harp doesn’t

²³ R. C. Sproul, *Mark*, First Edition., St. Andrew’s Expository Commentary (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2011), 239-240.

²⁴ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 193.

²⁵ Douglas Mangum, ed., *Lexham Context Commentary: New Testament*, Lexham Context Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), Mk 9:42–50.

²⁶ Henry Barclay Swete, ed., *The Gospel according to St. Mark. The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indices*, Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament (London; New York: MacMillan and co.; The MacMillan Company, 1898), 213.

²⁷ June Hunt, *Biblical Counseling Keys on Atheism & Agnosticism: The Great Debate* (Dallas, TX: Hope For The Heart, 2008), 22.