

PREFACE

*"I give thanks to God for the labour of the man of God to minister to us so deeply and richly from this epistle to the Galatians. Pastor highlighted that we should consider this book in the context of the books that came before it; he summarized the books from the Gospels to 2 Corinthians. I marvel at the anointing upon the man of God as he showed us not just what each book was about but why they were placed there according to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit such that in reading them in this sequence there is a beautiful flow to bring us to a clearer appreciation particularly of the doctrine of Justification by Faith. I was struck by pastor's development of the message today. Of course, that was mainly because pastor specified that he wouldn't want to emphasize the theme of the message to us. Therefore, we were directed to exercise our minds lest we miss it out. That being said, I felt that it was so difficult to truly appreciate the depth and richness that the man of God was bringing out to us. I could appreciate pastor's anger at me for not growing spiritually and not truly seeking to engage my spiritual faculties. I thank God that pastor started very much in the same tone and vehemence that Paul wrote this epistle. Pastor highlighted that the Galatians' failure to appreciate fully Paul's special calling had affected the manner in which they received and the premium they put on the Gospel he preached. It is also so today when we fail to appreciate pastor's special calling and mandate. Furthermore, it opens the floodgates for us to be influenced adversely by all our past cultures. I was very chided when pastor showed me what happens if I do not espouse the same Gospel and doctrines as the man of God. I would end up walking contrary to him. I was indicted that practically this is because I have continued to embrace the cultures of this world; trust in them, and order my life around the cultures of this world. I proffer lots of excuses and rationale for my actions. How do I dress? How is my behavior outside the place of worship? How is my interests and hobbies of any relation to my appreciation of the Gospel, particularly the doctrine of Justification by Faith? Isn't it enough that I come on the sabbath day for worship? What is wrong with wanting to embrace my family or to focus on working hard? Does the man of God really have to control every aspect of life? But I think I was chided today and brought to see that ultimately such thoughts and doubts come because I do not espouse the same Gospel that has been preached to me by the man of God. Ultimately, it is because for all my claims that I understand the doctrine of Justification by Faith, I merely have some intellectual appreciation of it and the spirit thereof is experimentally very far from me. That is why I am still so deceitful. At the end of the day, I was brought to see that I am only deceiving myself and am actually presumptuous, trusting in my works, trusting in the wisdom of the world and in a technical understanding. I was very chided when pastor showed me that not only am I destroying myself, I am also destroying those around me and those whom I have influence over. I thank God that the first half or so of pastor's message was brought out in this manner because I needed it to sanctify and solemnize me. I also needed it because it gave me an experimental understanding of the doctrinal aspect that pastor intended to bring out. Though pastor said he would not tell us the theme of his message, he still did highlight to us that from Galatians, the Holy Spirit was using Paul to bring across this intricate relationship between the Law and the Gospel. The law in itself condemns all. It shows us that we all are guilty before God and that we cannot be saved by the law. Therefore, there is no room for presumption. There is no room for rituals or institutionalization because ultimately, man is utterly depraved and incapable of keeping the law. Yet I thank God that pastor showed us of this more beautiful and precious Covenant: the decree between God the Father and God the Son, even the Covenant of grace. The law is given to show men that they are unable to keep the law. The law cannot save any man. Since no man can keep the law, therefore the Covenant of works is a Covenant without hope. But thank God the law leads us to the Covenant of grace. Christ has made this Covenant with the Father for the elect. The giving of the law at Mount Sinai is one that conceals the Covenant of grace. Thank God for the love of Christ to subject Himself to the law. It shows me there is this important place for the law in my life. Thank pastor for hitting out at us in an attempt to show us that we have to be directed to Christ. Pastor brought to us the concept of the bond woman and free woman. From the two sons of Abraham, we were shown the difference between the Covenant of works and the Covenant of grace. I was warned that if I am not under the Covenant of grace, then I will be left under the Covenant of works, left in my damnation. Pastor strongly chided us and showed me that the way I live my life and the cultures that I embrace and lifestyle that I lead clearly shows that I am still a child of the bond woman, because if I were the child of the free woman, then I would desire to identify with the cross of Christ. My disdain at the association with the house of God reflects where I stand before God and reflects that **I am not justified**. Unless I repent and turn to cry to God and Christ, I will remain in my bondage. Thank pastor for highlighting to us that though we may find it hard to keep sowing yet there is this encouragement for us that in our waiting, there is the enablement and help from the Spirit of God. Thank God for this encouragement to keep sowing in the Spirit peradventure I may have an experimental understanding of Justification by Faith. Though the man of God told us that we should leave if we fail to have the same persuasion that he does, at the very end he still prayed for us that the promise that Jerusalem above is the Mother of us all, that this indeed may be true. Pray God have*

mercy on me that I may truly be urgent and diligent for my soul's sake and that I may not disregard this truth and that I may be integral to acknowledge who the man of God is because who has such in-depth understanding and rich personal understanding of what this Gospel is! If I do not acknowledge and be convicted of it, then it is to my damnation. Pray God have mercy on me. Response of Philologus Eio to pastor's exposition of the book of Galatians, John Bunyan House, Johor Baru, Malaysia; 3 December 2017 AD