

Grace Didn't Die
Motives
Galatians 6:11-18

There are a bunch of eye-opening stories in the Book of Acts, but perhaps none is more eye-opening than the story of Ananias and Saphira. But before I tell you that story, let me quickly set the stage for you because it sheds a lot of light on why it likely happened.

The Church had just got started with a roar -- literally. Seven weeks after the Passover, the Jews had an annual celebration to praise God for the first fruits of the harvest called the Day of Pentecost. Tens of thousands of Jews from all over the world came to Jerusalem to participate in the festivities. Meanwhile, the disciples of Jesus were gathered together, sitting in a house, likely somewhat close to the Temple, doing what Jesus had told them to do with His last words before ascending into heaven. He had instructed them to wait on the Holy Spirit to empower them to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. He implied this empowerment would be very obvious, and as such, they just needed to go wait in Jerusalem.

As they sat there on the day of Pentecost, suddenly, out of nowhere, the house was filled with a sound that they could only describe as the sound of a mighty rushing wind. With no other explanation possible than the coming of the Holy Spirit, they began miraculously proclaiming the works of God in the native languages of those who had come to Jerusalem from all over the world! Unsurprisingly, a huge crowd gathered around the house to see what was going on, Peter preached the Gospel to them, and 3,000 people repented and believed in Jesus.

This was the explosive moment when the Church of Jesus Christ was officially launched, and it created a huge stir in the city of Jerusalem! Look at what the writer of Acts says happened next,

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

The excitement about all God was doing in and through His Church was spreading throughout the city. Jerusalem was electric, so much so that the religious council that arrested Peter and John had to let them go, even though Peter and John told them there was no way in the world they would follow their instructions to stop preaching the Gospel! The council was so afraid of how the city would respond that they let two totally defiant people go free! Now why is this important to know? Well, because at that moment in church

history, the happening thing in Jerusalem was by far Christ's Church! Religious leaders hated it, but the people loved it so much that some were even selling every possession they had to help it! In Acts 4, we read,

32 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold 35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. 36 Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, 37 sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. (Acts 4:32-37)

Now understand this, if 2,000 years later, we know that people were selling land and houses and giving money to the Church; we even know the specific name of somebody that did it, then you can be confident it was being talked about all over Jerusalem, and especially all over the Church. Not everybody owned houses and land, so those that decided to sell theirs certainly became part of the storyline of what was going on in and through the Church – thus, we read about it in Acts! Therefore, it's safe to suggest that as people gathered at the Temple and the marketplaces around Jerusalem, they were undoubtedly talking about those who sold their land and houses and donated the money to this rapidly growing group of people who believed in the resurrected Jesus. For some, the conversation may have been to mock those who did it, but for most, it was likely energetic and positive and, as such, caused people to admire and think highly of those making these kinds of sacrifices. At this point in church history, a person who sold their land and houses to help the cause of Christ would have been instantly appreciated and admired by those in the Church who had their needs taken care of, and those outside the Church that heard about it. Doing something like this would have made you an instant celebrity of sorts.

This is what set the stage for what happened to Ananias and Sapphira.

1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2 and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." 5 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. 6 The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. 7 After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." 9 But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have

buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." 10 Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

11 And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things (Acts 5:1-11)

Now understand this, the sin was not that they didn't give all the money to the Church, but rather that they lied about it! They told everybody that the amount of money they publicly laid before the Apostle's feet to take care of the needy in the Church and move the Gospel forward was the total amount of money they received for the sale of their land, and as such, put them into the public conversation and admiration with the others, like Joseph, who had done the same thing. However, the fact of the matter was that they sold the land for more than what they laid at the Apostle's feet and pocketed the difference.

There was no requirement at all to sell your land or houses and donate the proceeds to the Church, so why would they do that? Why would they not just give the money to support the Church without lying about the fact that they didn't give all they made off the sale. Nobody would have faulted them for not giving everything! So, why would they lie about how much they were giving? The Bible doesn't specifically tell us, but it is safe to say their motive was the fame, affirmation, and notoriety they would gain by doing such a thing. From the outside looking in, it appeared Ananias and Saphira were being driven by their love for Jesus and His Church, but once the truth came out, it was clear they were being driven by a passion to be affirmed by the Church!

The point I'm making here is that motives matter, big time, and as such, Paul closes out his letter to the churches in Galatia by thrashing any concept of making room for religious practice and thinking in our lives. He does this by distinguishing the motives of those who preach Christian religion from those who are genuinely living and preaching God's grace through faith in Jesus. The Apostle Paul writes,

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. 12 It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.13 For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. 14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. 16 And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. 17 From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen. (Galatians 6:11-18)

THERE ARE TWO DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT MOTIVES FOR FOLLOWING AND PREACHING JESUS IN GALATIANS 6:11-18.

(1) THE MOTIVE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH IS TO EARN THE AFFIRMATION OF GOD AND OTHERS. (6:11-13)

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. (6:11)

Scholars are split on whether Paul physically wrote the entire letter himself or, like he did with most of his other letters, dictated them and simply wrote part of the benediction with his own hand. I'm of the opinion that Paul wrote the entire letter with his own hand and, because he struggled to see, he would have had to write it with large letters. Therefore, Paul stating this at the end of his letter could have been a way of highlighting his sincerity; that is, of saying he was so concerned for them that he wrote this letter himself, and the large letters prove that he wrote it himself. Calvin noted,

“To convince the Galatians more fully of his anxiety about them, and at the same time to ensure their careful perusal, he mentions that this long Epistle had been written with his own hand. The greater the toil to which he had submitted on their account, the stronger were their inducements to read it, not in a superficial manner, but with the closest attention.” (Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians* (p. 181). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software)

However, I believe Paul was doing more than just asserting he wrote this letter with his own hand. I believe he's drawing attention to the size of his handwriting to express the emotion of what he was writing. Note:

“the apostle sought in this way to give a final emphatic thrust to his message.” (Campbell, D. K. (1985). *Galatians*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 610). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books)

“*The boldness of the handwriting answers to the force of the Apostle's convictions. The size of the characters will arrest the attention of his readers in spite of themselves*’ (Lightfoot).” (Silva, M. (1994). *Galatians*. In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., pp. 1220–1221). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press)

The point is Paul is drawing attention not only to the sincerity of his motives in writing this letter but also to the passion and urgency that it's being written. He wants them to understand how important it is that they understand the difference is not just between what the Judaizers are teaching and what he's teaching, but also WHY the Judaizers are teaching what they are teaching, and how much it totally contrasts with why he's teaching what he's teaching.

It should also be noted that Martin Luther believed Paul wrote the entire epistle with his own hand as well (Luther, M. (1997). *Commentary on Galatians* (pp. 554–555). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc).

For more on why I'm of the opinion that Paul wrote the entire letter with his own hand read the following from K.S. Wuest.

"Scholars are in disagreement regarding the question as to whether Paul wrote the entire epistle with his own hand in inch high letters, or only the conclusion. The writer is frank to say that he has rejected the opinion of six of the seven authorities which he has studied throughout this epistle, and has accepted that of Alford to the effect that Paul wrote the entire letter in uncial Greek letters rather than only the conclusion. Alford's opinion is based upon solid ground, Greek grammar. The aorist tense in the indicative mode in Greek refers to a past action. It was a courtesy extended by the writer to the reader in closing his letter, to look upon it as the reader would, as a past event. and he used the epistolary aorist for this purpose. The writing of the letter was a present fact to the writer before he closed the letter. Nevertheless he looked upon it while using this aorist verb in the closing portion of the letter as a past event, thus placing himself at the perspective of the reader when the latter would receive it. Zahn in his Introduction to the New Testament also holds the view of Alford that Paul wrote the entire letter with his own hand. Zahn makes the point that the epistolary aorist is never used, at least in the New Testament, to refer to something which the writer is about to write. He says that Paul is looking back upon the letter which is just being closed. Alford makes a sharp point when he calls attention to II Thessalonians 3:17 where Paul writes, "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle, so I write." The words "I write," are in the present tense. They refer here clearly to the concluding words of the letter only. Alford asks the question to the effect that if Paul had written only the concluding portion of Galatians, would he not have used the present tense as in the Thessalonian letter? He says that he does not see how it is possible to avoid the inference that these words in Galatians 6:11 apply to the whole epistle. The next question is regarding the reason why Paul wrote in large inch-high letters. The writer again desires the reader to know that in this question he has rejected the opinion of six of the authorities he has consulted and has followed Expositor's Greek Testament. Paul had contracted an oriental eye disease called ophthalmia, which not only gave him a repulsive appearance, but rendered him almost totally blind. It was therefore necessary for him to write in letters large enough so that with his darkened vision he could see what he was doing. But why did Paul write the entire letter himself? He could have dictated it to a secretary. The answer is found in the fact that he wanted to have as personal a touch with the Galatians as possible under the circumstances. In 4:20 he had expressed the wish that he were personally present with them. The character of the letter and the circumstances in the Galatian churches made it inadvisable to send a dictated letter. Paul wished to give his letter the highest possible personal character. We cannot know with what pain and difficulty, with his own hand, and in the large letters his impaired vision compelled him to use, Paul wrote this letter. And now he appeals to the tender hearts of the Galatians." (Wuest, K. S. (1997). Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader (Vol. 3, pp. 174–177). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans)

It is with this attention to his fire and passion Paul writes,

"12 It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of

Christ. 13 For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.” (6:12-13)

Many scholars believe the Judaizers had already convinced many of the churches in Galatia to practice the Jewish festivals, sabbath laws, and dietary laws, but now they were going for the ultimate prize of convincing the male followers of Christ to be circumcised and become full-fledged Jewish converts. Paul has thoroughly trashed that idea throughout the letter, but now he's trashing the actual motive that's driving the Judaizers to do it. He writes that it's to make a "good showing" of themselves to others. This can also be translated as "*present a good-looking face.*" (Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 3, pp. 177–178). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans)

Not long after the excitement around the start of the Church in Jerusalem, Jewish leadership turned the tide against the Church. From then on, the Jews typically responded to Jews who became Christians with massive rage and even violence. Excommunication from the Jewish community was a common and expected occurrence for those who repented and believed in the Gospel. However, those who seemed to wholeheartedly adhere to all the Jewish laws and customs were not viewed with the same level of hatred and, in many cases, could even coexist with other Jews. The reason was that the biggest threat the Jews perceived from the preaching of the Gospel was that Christ's death and resurrection fulfilled and replaced the Mosaic Law (Acts 6:14). Thus, if the Judaizers could convince their Jewish brothers that they were leading Gentiles to submit to the Jewish laws and customs, then, they would be affirmed as loyalist rather than rebels. Calvin noted,

“They wish to triumph over you, and to gratify their own desire of applause, by offering up your mutilated flesh to the false zealots of the law, as a token of peace and harmony.” (Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians* (pp. 181–183). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software)

This is not to suggest the Judaizers were in no part motivated by their sincere loyalty to the Jewish traditions and laws. Still, Paul clearly states in verse twelve that these evangelists of the Jewish religion were making their way through the churches in Galatia primarily because of their desire to be affirmed by their fellow Jews!

The irony in all this, however, is that the Jews didn't rightly obey the law they were insisting Gentile believers in Jesus follow. I noticed various paths commentators went down with verse 13. Still, I don't think there is any need to go anywhere other than what we know to be doctrinally true in Scripture, and that is that nobody was truly capable of obeying the Mosaic Law.

Note: “22 You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. 24 For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”” (Romans 2:22-24)

Therefore, what we have here, is a strong and clear statement to the believers in Galatia of the motive inherent to religious faith. It's all about affirmation, whether that be feeling you have earned and thus deserve the affirmation of God or man.

Sadly, there is no sense of permanent value or assurance of love in this motive, and as such, there is no sense of confidence or hope about tomorrow because the expectations of religion are like walking on a treadmill—even if you feel you met the expectations today by completing a cycle of the conveyer belt, you're still in the same place you were when it started, and as such the expectations start all over again with equal consequences for failure as the conveyer belt continues to go round and round with you going nowhere!

Therefore, people who live their life in Christ through a religious faith are always trying to convince themselves and others through their traditions and self-perceived righteous actions that they have outperformed their failures in sin and earned affirmation and favor from God, and as such, deserve affirmation and favor of others as well. Just as I'm sure these Judaizers felt, those who are successful at religion carry a sense of self-righteous pride, indignation, and judgment towards those who fail. On the other hand, those who feel like failures in their religion live their lives with fear, anxiety, bitterness, and even depression. The motive of religious faith is affirmation, so when you fail at the religion, you also believe you are no longer affirmed by God or man, something that people motivated by religion gladly reinforce as they punish you or even cast you out for it!

(2) THE MOTIVE OF GOSPEL DRIVEN FAITH IS JOYFUL SUBMISSION BECAUSE OF GOD'S INDESCRIBABLE GRACE AND LOVE! (6:14-18)

14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. (6:14-15)

In Philippians 3 Paul shared his religious resume. If there was anybody who deserved to be affirmed it was him! However, when Paul came face to face with the risen Christ, He realized none of those things mattered anymore. When Jesus died on the cross all of the accolades the world could give Paul, including the religious people of the world, didn't remotely compare to the unearnable gifts Christ gave him. No religion of any kind can give a person eternal life. Not even the religion given to Moses by God could ever give a person peace and confidence about tomorrow, because lingering in the room was the ever-present reality of your inability to meet the uncompromising standard of God for obeying the Law. However, when he met the risen Christ, he realized the standard of God had been met and thus he later wrote this to the believers in Phillipi,

1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. 2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh-- 4 though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the

eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith. (Philippians 3:1-9)

Its why he previously wrote in Galatians,

20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

In Galatians 2:20 and 6:14, Paul says who I was is dead because who I was has been crucified with Christ! He placed me on this cross with Him; therefore, when He died, my sinful incapable self died with Him! Therefore, because I was crucified with Christ, the reasons I had for allegiances to this world, including needing the world to affirm me, died with Him. In addition, when He rose from the grave, I also rose with Him. My old self, and all that self was bound to in this world, died so that a new self, bound to God as His adopted child, could rise up in its place! It is why Paul wrote this to the Church in Rome,

4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

I've been affirmed by God, not because of my works, but entirely because of His love and work for me. Therefore, the only thing I can do is boast about JESUS! Paul is saying, I can't run to my Jewish brothers to get their affirmation because of some religious performance because I know none of those matter. But he can and does run to everybody boasting about what Jesus did, because what He did is eternally more significant than anything anybody else could ever even dream of doing!

Paul testified that Jesus was the one who actually changed him, something religion could never do! Religion dressed him up, but it couldn't change him. For Paul, he was really good at getting dressed up in religion, but it still didn't change Him, nor did it bring him into fellowship with God, fill him with the Spirit, or give Him any hope of salvation. But everything changed when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus in Acts 9!

Paul then writes of his wishes for those who live the same way he does. He writes,

16 And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

It's more than just believing the Gospel to be true that he's emphasizing, but rather to literally live defined by it and thus walking in step with the Leadership of the Holy Spirit in your life instead of the desires of the flesh or the mandates and traditions of religion.

"The verb translated follow ["walk"] is the same translated 'keep in step' in 5:25. Clearly, Paul wants us to understand that the rule we should follow is the Spirit-led conduct described earlier. And that is hardly surprising, since the Spirit is the clearest manifestation of the new creation." (Silva, M. (1994). Galatians. In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), New Bible commentary: 21st century edition (4th ed., pp. 1220–1221). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press)

"From the Greek word "rule" (kanoni) the English word "canon" is derived. This was a construction term used for a measuring reed. It is used here to refer to the gospel (Jesus' yoke, cf. 6:2). Notice believers are to walk in it, not just affirm it." (Utley, R. J. (1997). Paul's First Letters: Galatians and I & II Thessalonians (Vol. Volume 11, p. 67). Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International)

Elsewhere Paul wrote,

4 Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code. (Romans 7:4-6)

Paul prays that those walking in step with the Spirit will fully experience and realize God's peace and mercy in their lives because it's only people who walk in step with the Spirit who can! But as such, he is also saying to those who refuse to live this way, you have no hope of peace and mercy, and frankly, I don't even wish it for you until you repent because all your doing is bringing misery and sin to those who believe in your false Gospel!

He then takes a more direct swipe at the pride of the Judaizers with the phrase "the Israel of God." Paul had repeatedly said following the Mosaic Law doesn't make you Jewish. If that were true, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would have truly been Jewish because they existed long before God gave the Law to Moses. Nonetheless, God clearly saved Abraham by faith before the Law and even before circumcision. Therefore Paul wrote,

7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ... 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:7, 29)

This would have infuriated the Judaizers, but Paul didn't care; he wanted to assure the believers in Galatia that they had no need of any Jewish traditions or laws to be in the family of God! God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ is all they need! They didn't need to

follow the Mosaic Law to live the life God wanted them to live, but instead, they needed to know the Gospel of Jesus and obey the Holy Spirit, who directs every believer to love God and love one another as Christ loves them!

Paul then closes out the letter with a bang. He writes,

17 From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen. (6:16-18)

C.S. Keener noted,

“Some slaves, criminals and prisoners of war were tattooed, as were devotees of some religious cults in Egypt and Syria. Greeks and Romans normally associated tattooing with barbarians, and branding was usually reserved for horses. Paul’s term is the one normally used for tattooing rather than branding, but could more commonly apply simply to any mark or puncture wound. In this context, Paul simply means that he was crucified with Christ (6:14)—probably as evidenced by “scars” (TEV) from his past persecutions.” (Keener, C. S. (1993). The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament (Ga 6:16–18). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press)

The believers in Galatia knew what marks Paul was speaking about. On his first missionary journey through Galatia, he was severely persecuted, including a failed attempt to execute him through stoning (Acts 14:19). A person who survived a stoning very likely did so with some permanent severe marks on their head and face! Paul got these marks while preaching in Lystra because Jews from Antioch and Iconium came and stirred up the city's people against him! So, Paul had long since felt the wrath of his Jewish brothers and sisters, a wrath that he gladly embraced because of who it exalted – Jesus! Every scar on his body that came from preaching the Gospel was a scar that testified that Jesus was worthy of it all!

“Paul clearly addresses the emotions of the Galatians when he appeals to the marks of Jesus that he bears on his own body (17). Perhaps alluding once again to charges of insincerity (see 1:10; 5:11), he reminds his readers and opponents that his claims are not vain. The wounds he has suffered because of his faithfulness to Christ are the clearest evidence that the Galatians need not doubt his motives.” (Silva, M. (1994). Galatians. In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), New Bible commentary: 21st century edition (4th ed., pp. 1220–1221). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press)

However, he had no desire to add to his pain and suffering with worry and grief over his brothers and sisters in Christ, his true family, following the teachings of a false gospel! Did you catch what he called the readers of this letter – brothers! A man whose faith is driven by a joyful obligation to follow the God who has already eternally poured out His indescribable grace and love on Him, that has adopted him into His family as fully favored sons and daughters, is a man who can sincerely say to everybody else who has received

that incredible gift, **18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.**

CHALLENGE

Everything about our faithfulness to the Lord is supposed to be motivated by our confidence in His grace and love for us. What's the motivation of your faith and obedience?

What's your motive for helping people overcome sin. Is it the glory of helping others or seeing somebody else know the joy of life in Christ?

What's your motive in carrying one another's burdens? Is it the affirmation you get from others when you do it, or is it because you're so blown away by how God bears your burdens?

What's your motivation for living a humble life? Is it the affirmation and accolades of others concerning your humility (which is, by definition, narcissism!), or is it out of overwhelming awareness that everything you are and have of eternal value is God's gracious gift. As such, everything else is really of no more, or no less, value than what anybody else has accomplished!

What's your motivation in getting baptized? Fitting in the to the church, the honor and attention put on you when you get baptized or because you can't help but obey the one who saved you!

Look at all you do and don't do and ask yourself why? If the answer isn't because God eternally and unconditionally loves you and therefore you can't help but do anything other, then be honest about the cause - your inability to honestly believe God's love for you. Cry out for Him to soften your heart and open your eyes to His love. Cry out to Him to restore the joy of His salvation in your heart (Psalm 51:12), or maybe even create that joy for the very first time!