11,5,26 Galatians Introduction, The Veil Removed Through Grace

This will be part 1 of a 2-part introduction to Galatians. So, if tonight's study isn't as clear as you'd like it to be, wait till you can put it together with the second part. I can't over-exaggerate the importance of being able to distinguish between Law and Grace in our personal walk with the Lord.

Now, before we get into the details of a verse-by-verse examination, the first thing we have to do is establish the context. The single biggest danger in interpretation is determining the meaning of a word or verse *without* keeping it in its context. Personally, I can't think of anything more consistent and more damaging to Christian's understanding of the Bible than what happens when the context is either misidentified or ignored.

With that in mind; Paul is addressing a Church that knew the truth about grace and faith being the foundation of the dispensation we are living in, rather than the Mosaic Law, but for whatever reason, they had been pulled back into a legalistic view of this life and in their case, that meant trying to somehow *combine* Grace and Law rather than keep them separate.

So, one thing Galatians does for us is that it allows us to clearly contrast two opposing systems of the ways God determined to govern His people in two different dispensations – the Mosaic and the Christian. Law vs. Grace.

It's also fascinating to see how 21st. century Churches have done the same thing the Galatians did, but instead of mixing the *Mosaic* covenant with the New Covenant, they simply mix the principles of Law with Grace, combining them into something that is neither fully Law or fully Grace, and then they wonder why the Church is so confused and divided.

Each covenant was singular, mixture was never meant to be allowed, and each covenant serves a very specific purpose for a segment of human history. A successful covenant between God and His people is based on the people's reception of a vision of what God is after; and when that vision and understanding is clear and universal among God's people, there is no division or confusion.

The New Testament (especially books like Galatians and Hebrews) were written to clarify each covenant and ensure a full separation between them, both in terms of their timelines as well as their purpose.

The Mosaic covenant ran from Mt. Sinai and the giving of the Law, to the Cross. The New Covenant runs from Pentecost to the Rapture. What I won't take time to do, because like Paul's assumption in his letter to the Galatians, I'm assuming you know the basics of the Old Covenant in terms of the tabernacle and temple, the symbolism of the furniture and the sacrifices, and the inheritance of the land of Canaan, etc.

What's important now, in our generation, is to be clear on the purpose of that covenant and to realize the fact that it ended when Christ fulfilled all its demands and took it into the grave with Him when He died. His resurrection began both a new covenant, but also a new timeline and a new way in which God would govern His people.

The purpose of the Law was to reveal the meaning and inherent nature in Man of what God identifies as sin.

> (Rom. 3:20) . . . by the law is the knowledge of sin.
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> (Gal. 3:24-25) The law was our instructor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are *no longer under a tutor*.

In 2 Cor. 3 Paul calls the Old Covenant, the Law, "a ministry of death" and "a ministry of condemnation". He calls the New Covenant a ministry of freedom and life (both of which we'll see in detail in Galatians).

A lot of people don't see the full relevance of that because the essence of Law and Grace can become a mixture of *both* governing our lives in this Age, and that is what Paul found himself up against with the Galatians. It's called "legalism" and it's rampant, which is painful to both God and His people because the suffering and sacrifice our Lord made to free us from legalism and place us in the heavenly citizenship of Grace was more intense than we'll ever fully understand, and to attempt to bring legalism into Grace is to trample the blood of Christ underfoot.

> (Heb. 10:29-31) Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The reason I mention this is because in Gal. 1:6-10 we see this;

> I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to distort or undermine the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

There is no quicker way for a child of God to lose his *spiritual* status as one of the Lord's servants than to attempt to mix Law and Grace.

Keep in mind that the word "Gospel" simply means "good news". If you limit it's meaning to, say, the four spiritual laws that show us the way of salvation, then why would Paul be so severe toward God's own children in his warnings to them?

> (Heb. 10:30-31) The Lord will judge *His* people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. . .

This is the Lord's warning and approach to those among His people who are legalists. They are promoting "another gospel" that is *not* "good news"; and it doesn't just have to be adding baptism or something else to salvation by faith alone – the context of Galatians, Romans and Hebrews shows that it includes any teaching to God's people that doesn't clearly distinguish between Law and Grace and forcefully remove Law from the equation.

The reason you don't hear much about this on Sundays, is because of Paul's last statement in vs. 10; "Do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ." For the seeker-sensitive churches and pastors, pleasing men is a much higher priority than pleasing God. But when the Lord judges them and they (quote) "fall into the hands of the living God" they will discover that this is definitely a "fearful thing" that they have brought themselves into.

I just want to make sure, as we go along, that we realize how serious legalism is to God; even though to most Christians it's no more than a theological debate among friends. You can see in the passages we looked at that Paul saw the danger, the enemy's face, and the devastation that can come to believers who are not living in Grace. And this doesn't' even include the dishonor legalism brings to the Lord Who paid the ultimate price to free us from it.

If we care about our brothers and sisters, and if we care about honoring the One Who died for us, we will take Paul's approach to any hint of legalism.

We saw a great deal in Timothy's letters about rebuking and withdrawing from such people, but again, out of fear of either becoming judgmental in spirit or of losing the respect of people we're trying to "please", it's more likely in our generation to let things slide that Paul would have not tolerated for a second.

Ok, that can help set the "context" stage for this letter. It's a letter of extreme love for God's people who were in danger and a letter of extreme passion on Paul's part to not allow the sacrifice of Christ to be minimalized in any way.

Both of those things are what "servants of God" do if they really are "servants of God." So, again, keep vs. 6 in mind as we go through the letter, because it lays the motivational foundation for all that Paul wrote to the Galatians; "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ. . . "

Grace was costly to our Lord and for us it's a place of freedom; to lose that freedom by taking lightly the cost paid for it, was something Paul (and the Holy Spirit) wanted to address, because it's a danger faced by every generation of

believers who can be easily influenced by ignorance of God's Word coupled with our desire to be liked overruling our desire to be faithful.

> (Gal. 5:1) Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

If you want to know in a personal way whether some degree of legalism is tugging on you, listen to this next verse in the light of what we've been looking at; put it in the context of the Lord addressing people burdened by being entangled with the bondage of the Law;

> (Matt. 11:28-29) Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

If Grace is kept pure in our understanding and our walk, and legalism is blocked, the result is "rest"; legalism in any form results in being "heaven laden", unsure, burdened and *not* at rest.

The number of reasons that we, as God's children, need to be clear on the distinction between Law and Grace is infinite. Those reasons range all the way from understanding God's plan of the Ages to the deepest inward condition of our hearts and souls. This is why Paul was so seemingly obsessed with what most see as important, but not worth obsessing over. Paul understood the implications; most don't.

What I'll do now, for a few minutes, is give some illustrations of this "mixture" I've been talking about. What does it look like to mix Law and Grace? I'll start with using the word "gospel" as most people understand that word – as the means of how we're saved. Then we can look at some of the implications of what happens when those who are saved mix Law and Grace in their walk with the Lord.

So, first, here's some examples of legalistic mixture in our appeal to the lost to come to Christ.

In John 3:16 our Lord gives His explanation of the pure gospel. Works are neither "frontloaded" (in other words, included in the "how" of salvation), nor are they "backloaded" (given as evidence of saving faith).

> God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Paul and his companions confirmed the completeness of this gospel when asked how one is saved in Acts 16:30-31: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved . . ."

Here's some examples of churches that either frontload or backload works into what is meant to be a "faith alone, not by works" gospel. First, here's a backloaded example:

> We believe salvation is found in Christ alone, by grace, through faith, offered freely to all people. Faith is demonstrated through repentance, confession, baptism by immersion, and a life of discipleship.

So, apparently, if your faith is "saving" faith, all of these things will be evident in your life. If they aren't there, you aren't saved.

Now, here's a frontloaded example:

> All people are sinners by nature and choice and therefore are under condemnation; that God regenerates by the Holy Spirit those who repent of their sins and confess Jesus Christ as Lord."

In their view, regeneration only happens for those who repent of their sins and publicly confess Jesus Christ as Lord.

For these next illustrations, I'll skip my personal comments at the end of each example and leave it to you to see if you can notice what's happening. Either front or back loading are happening, and in the cases I just read (and those I'll read now), all of these are in the online doctrinal statements of local, evangelical churches in our area.

> Man is saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning death, evidenced by personal repentance from sin.
>
> Salvation is a free gift from God offered to all. Through God's grace, salvation is given to all who turn from their sin and put their faith in Jesus and receive His gift of forgiveness. It is only through Jesus' sacrifice that this gift can be offered to anyone, and only through faith and trust in Him can it be received. Good works are evidence of (genuine) faith.

Ok, you see the problem. It seems impossible for most churches to resist adding something to faith for salvation; they have to either add something to faith as part of some kind of transaction between the sinner and God, or they have to make sure to define faith in a way that includes works of some kind.

A person is either trusting the Lord to save them, or they aren't. It's not rocket science and no one but God can read minds to know whether their faith is allegedly genuine or not. There are a lot of genuinely saved people who have exhibited some very "unsaved" behavior (like the Corinthians).

Now, let's move to Christians who have to battle the accusations of the enemy regarding their walk with the Lord – is it grace-based, or Law-based – or a mixture of both? Tackling this can be tricky because we all have unique personalities and bents based on everything from the specific tactics the enemy is using on us to the way we were raised and how that affected our self-image.

I knew I would have to somehow approach this in a way that doesn't get us tangled up in the details to the point where we can't see the principle governing all of this, and where we miss what matters most because we're overly focused on trying to figure out how we personally fit into what Paul is warning about.

If we were to start at the very top of the list of what distinguishes a legalist from a grace-oriented person, it would have to be pride vs. humility. Because pride blinds and God resists the proud. So, the proud man can't see what God sees and he can't receive from God what he *needs* to see.

The humble person is teachable, so the Lord can show him whatever he needs to see if any kind of course-correction is needed. His danger centers around

obsessing over his faults and failures. The way in which Grace frees him is (if he believes it), all his faults and failures were erased from God's historical records the second he confessed them. Which means that if they keep coming up, its either the enemy or the flesh using the past to sabotage the present. He worries instead of resting. God *never* brings up something He has forgiven. He's well aware of the unnecessary pain that causes us, which is why He chose Grace as our covering.

I'm not going to spend time on the pride issue for two reasons. I doubt someone who knows everything would bother to listen to these studies, and second, warning a proud person about their pride is about as effective as planting seeds on concrete (there's no soil for the warning to take root.)

Instead, let's look at the person who is likely worrying about things they don't need to worry about. Attacks of legalism and subsequent worrying are practically synonyms. It's not just a lack of faith, it can also be a lack of a very personal understanding, and application, of Grace in our lives. Grace is more freeing than we sometimes realize, especially people who feel they are always falling short of other people's (and God's) expectations. God's expectations are based on trusting Him instead of us. Those who have gotten a good look at themselves have given up on self-expectation a long time ago. And other people's expectations are irrelevant because for many, we will never meet their expectations no matter what we do, and for others, we've already met them, we just don't realize it.

What seems to be the most helpful in this is making sure we know the tie-in between grace and humility. Grace can make us humble people if we let it. And the more humble we become the more likely we are to be grateful and restful than worried and guilt-ridden.

The reason I said that Grace can make this happen is because *we can't* make it happen. That takes us back to trusting someone else to do for us what we realize we can't do for ourselves. There are few things more obnoxious and obvious than a person who is trying with all their might to be humble.

This whole life as a believer, walking with the Lord, is to learn of Him in a way that makes us like Him – or as He put it; "Learn of Me because I am meek and lowly of heart".

So, if we want to get practical about all this; we have to settle something at the very beginning. Grace means that what we can't do (conform ourselves to the image of Christ) the Lord is more than willing to do for us. Proud people either see themselves as "meek and lowly" already, or they want to help the Lord make that happen. Humble, or we could say, teachable people know that their only hope of glory in this sense is Christ and they know He doesn't need or want any help.

That's why it has to be "Grace" – the Law (self-effort) never worked; it never got people to a place of full conformity to Christ. It showed them the goal but never helped them get there. Grace both shows us the goal (which is Christ) and offers to get us there, not because we are going to help the Lord make that happen, but because we are willing first to acknowledge our inability in this, and second, we are willing to cooperate with Him as He goes to work on us.

That's what Heb. 12 is all about – God calls it "child training" or "chastening".

> My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." If you endure chastening, (if you cooperate); God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Vs. 6 gives us the plan ("whoever the Lord loves, He trains")

Vs. 11a describes the process, what to expect ("no chastening (no child-training) seems to be joyful for the present, but painful"). It will involve suffering to break down our pride, our flesh

Vs. 10 & 11b gives us the outcome ("that we may be partakers of His holiness . . . afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.")

Now, to hopefully make all of this clearer, God gave us real-life examples of exactly what this process looks like. And remember, all of this is Grace; its' God's gracious work on our behalf. He didn't have to do this, we don't deserve it, but since God is gracious by nature, this had to flow from Him and He chose *us* to be the recipients.

If we were to break this down into one word that best describes both the process as well as the outcome on a personal level, that word would be "brokenness". Ever since the fall, orchestrated by the creature in whom (quote) "pride was found", and *his* nature became *our* nature (". . . that which is born of flesh is flesh"). The only way God's image could be restored and instead of arrogance, "meek and lowly" would characterize us, is if we were first broken in the flesh and then reconstituted in the spirit.

And like I said, we could start in Genesis and go all the way to Revelation and whenever the Lord wants us to see what He's doing to recover what was lost in the fall and to establish His original thought for us in those throughout history who we're willing to cooperate with Him in this recovery, we see people who were broken and rebuilt.

God told us in Isaiah 55 that His ways are not our ways, so we should expect that most of what He does to accomplish this in us will involve experiences and circumstances that are both painful (as we saw in Hebrews) but also extremely confusing to the natural mind.

We will be tempted a million times to question why something is happening; the word "why" will begin a majority of our heart-felt appeals to God, at least at first. We will be tempted to give up cooperating if this is what it means; that's why we see this in Heb. 12:12;

> Strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated. . .

The Cross hurts and can discourage us; we feel abandoned, forsaken and ultimately 'broken'. Paul gets very descriptive about all these things in his life, as we saw in 1st and 2nd Corinthians. But no matter who we look at throughout the Bible, those going on with the Lord have this training, this brokenness, characteristic of their lives as God shapes and prepares them for eternity.

Let me show you some of the people the Lord presented to us as living examples of His working. What happened to them? How did they respond? What was the outcome? In every case, what we'll see is genuine brokenness followed by spiritual reconstruction and ultimate glory as they eventually "partook of the peaceful fruit of righteousness", just as Heb. 12 told us would happen

Moses's heart was in the right place when he murdered the Egyptian; the enemies of God's people were Moses' enemies. But the timing was off, and Moses himself was never going to be the one who judged Egypt – he was only going to be the *vessel* or *instrument God* used for this.

So, Moses had to spend the next 40 years as nothing more than a lonely sheep-herder, no glory, no status, no honor, no public recognition. He was no longer the "prince of Egypt", he was nothing – he was broken and it took 40 years to get him there.

By the way, I should mention this verse before we go on;

> (1 Cor. 10:11) All these things (the Old Testament history of God's people) happened to them as examples, and they were written for *our* admonition and instruction upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

No matter what Age we live in, God's method of shaping vessels fit for the Master's use is always the same – break the pride in order to establish genuine humility in the soul. Pride is the essential character of Satan (Ezek. 28:15); meekness is the character of the Lamb of God.

Ok, next illustration;

> (Jer. 1:4-9) Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born, I sanctified you (lit. "set you apart for a purpose"); I ordained you a prophet to the nations." Then said I: "Ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child." But the Lord said to me: "Do not say, 'I am a child, for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord. Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: "Behold, *I have put My words in your mouth*."

Jeremiah knew that he had nothing to offer except his mouth. He could be an instrument in God's hands, but this would be God's work. Humility isn't self-deprecation; it's simply the acknowledgment of personal inability for the task at hand.

And of course, there's Paul. We have an abundance of passages that show the ways in which God broke this Pharisee and made him what he became under God's hand.

> (1 Cor. 2:1-5) When I came to you, I did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Paul understood that the only way anything of spiritual and eternal value would be given to the Corinthians would be if they were able to recognize both Paul's inability *and* God's presence and willingness to reveal *His* power to them. Public presentations are never meant to be an opportunity for the speaker to impress anyone. Since Paul knew he had the capability to mess everything up if left to his own resources, he was characterized by "weakness, fear and much trembling"; not as an *imitation* of humility, but as a genuine expression of the what brokenness does to a man willingly submitted to the training of God.

As I've mentioned in the past, for most of God's greatest servants we are clearly shown that it's a combination of extended suffering and personal failure that produces genuine brokenness.

We have to know we're nothing, not just believe it academically. These truths can't just be accepted as poetic theology; they have to be engrafted into us through personal experience. Many of the people I've heard talk about brokenness and humility come across as being proud of their meekness; which seems like it would be impossible to do, but I'm sure we've all sensed that in different public speakers.

So, in Law vs. Grace – Law is defined according to *our* achievement; grace is based on *God's* achievement and it assumes our complete inability and failure when it comes to righteousness. Law is doing our best; grace is responding with gratitude for God doing *His* best.

I'm hoping by now that you are seeing how legalism, the Law, destroys all of the beauty of humility and grace, and why it's so important that we resist *another* gospel*, another* doctrine, *another* way of living this life and embrace the grace of God and His incredible plan for us to be fully formed to the image of the Lamb of God.

Legalism creates a race of self-directed, self-made imitators; Grace under God's hand takes us to the place where (quote) "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." Our weakness opens the way to participation in the Life of Christ; Brokenness frees us from us, just as legalism makes *us* the primary focus of pretty much everything; when that focus should be on the Lord.

Jesus said that to see Him is to see the Father; it was to see the invisible God's expressed image in flesh and blood; so, Jesus in His humanity is God's recovery of original intent. That's why all who are in Christ are going to be conformed to His image – it is a corporate recovery with Christ as Head of a spiritual body in whom Christ is fully formed. That is our single purpose – which is why Paul will tell us in Gal. 4:19, "I travail in birth until Christ be formed in you. . . ". Paul compares his ministry to a mother going through labor pains. Just as a mother suffers to bring a child to life, Paul suffers deeply to see God's people come to Christlikeness. And

grace makes this possible because legalism appeals to *our* strength to accomplish the goal of being image bearers, but that entire dispensation of the Mosaic Law proved that that would never work. Only God, as the Potter, can shape the clay into the exact image He has in mind.

Even the best of men, with tables of stone to show them exactly what true righteousness looks like, could never do anything but fall short; but Grace allows Christ to indwell us by His Spirit and accomplish what *we* could never do.

Law and Grace are the comparison of our ability vs. God's ability, our work vs. His work. Under the Law the responsibility rests on us; under Grace our responsibility is faith in Someone other than ourselves.

This is what Paul means by "living epistles known and read of all men". We are the living letters or communication of God to men and angels – they are to see Him in us, not us trying really hard to be like Him.

So, our focus has to be on whatever the Bible tells us about what moves us from not being in His image to bearing His image. Regardless of whatever vocational calling He may have for us in terms of service or evangelism, our *spiritual* purpose is growth from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity – from a limited and fragmented image of God to Christ fully formed in us.

When Paul describes the word of God as milk, it's his way of illustrating spiritual infancy; just as solid food is spiritual maturity in terms of knowing and seeing God for Who He is and in being conformed to His image.

Since Heb. 5:12-14 tells us that only the mature can distinguish the true from the false in this area of infancy and maturity in the spiritual realm, Satan has no problem with milk-based ministries because he knows they will never be more than a veiled representation of God's glory, His true nature and character. They will be examples of Judaized Christianity without any ability or understanding of what spiritual maturity really is.

It's solid food that Satan hates, and whenever possible he will prevent Christians from moving into maturity because only the mature believer is able to stand against the enemy's deceptions in this life and they are the only ones within the

Body of Christ that are to be God's instruments of judging Satan in the life to come. For Satan, keeping Christianity in a place of consistent, enthusiastic, faithful spiritual infancy is a matter of life and death. Spiritual maturity is the one thing above all others that Satan is most afraid of.

So, again, for us, there is no more important goal in our lives that moving from infancy to maturity through the solid-food based instruction of those who can help take us there.

One of the most subtle and universal deceptions the enemy has used to entrap believers in spiritual infancy is convincing the pastors that what they are teaching *is* both milk and solid-food, thereby fulfilling their stewardship of moving their people to maturity. Even if you convince the Church that they need to move from milk to solid food in order to fulfill the Lord's desire for them, if they already believe that that is what's happening when it's not, this becomes a victory for the enemy. There is no one more deceived than someone who believes strongly that deception is possible and that they have avoided it.

All the debating and theological arguments in the world won't break through that; only a personal spiritual revelation from the Lord of our true condition can free us- and He will do that, but only for those who have the foundational and most important characteristic of a genuine disciple of Christ – teachability (an ear willing to hear).

God has to see, in that person's heart, a genuine desire to know the Truth regardless of what that knowledge does to their preconceptions of what the Truth is. A spiritual revelation of the Truth can be a humbling and shattering experience, and we have to be open to that to receive it.

This brings us full circle – pride blinds us to spiritual reality and to our personal spiritual condition. Suffering produces humility and openness. And if the leadership in our churches could see and address the true condition of their people, the humility and teachability which suffering has given birth to would open their eyes and give them a clear path forward. That's why seeing things as they

really are; having that kind of discernment; is the most needed leadership ministry in the end time Church.

> (Rev. 3:17ff) Because you say, 'I have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire . . . and anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see . . . If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. *He who has an ear, let him hear* what the Spirit says to the churches."

Finally, there is a direct tie-in between living by Law versus living in Grace and having, or not having, spiritual sight. There's a passage in 2 Cor. 3:14 that says,

> Their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.

If person is reading the Bible through the lens of legalism, their spiritual understanding is "blinded" – like the Laodicean's, they simply won't see what's really there.

I'll close with some comments by Sparks on how this works;

> It is no small thing to have true spiritual sight. It represents a mighty victory. It is not going to come to you by just sitting passively and waiting for it to arrive. There has to be exercise about this matter. You are right up against the full force of the god of this age when you are really out for spiritual understanding. It is a supernatural battle. So, every bit of ministry that is going to be a ministry of true revelation will be surrounded by conflict. Conflict will go before, conflict will go on at the time, and conflict may follow after. It is like that. Herein, then, is the need for you to be exercised about light, that, while you hear the thing, you shall not take it for granted that, having heard it, you have got it; that you should afterward have very definite dealings with the Lord, that what He is seeking to break through to you shall indeed be entered into, and that you are not going to delude yourself by

> assuming that you know something now merely because you have heard it in its terms. You may not know it. It may not yet be delivering light; there may be a battle necessary in this matter.
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> If we did but know it, a very great deal of the conflict which arises in our lives is because God is seeking to bring us further on the road, to open our eyes to Himself, to bring us into the light of His Son. God is seeking to broaden our spiritual horizon, and the enemy is out against that, so conflict arises. We may not understand it, but very often, more often than not, it is just that, namely, that the Lord is after something, and Satan says, "They shall not see that if I can help it!" So there arises a mighty warfare. This blindness is supernatural, just as enlightenment is supernatural.

So, as we'll see more next time, for the Lord to be able to fill our lives with Grace instead of religion, there is a spiritual seeing of what Grace means and implies that we can only fully understand by spiritual revelation; which God joyfully gives to those who realize it's necessity and through prayerful study, they seek Him for this.