

All-Ages Adult Life Group Expositional Study

Galatians Ch. 6:11-13

Paul's Final Warning to the Galatians

Glorifying in the Flesh & The Motives of False Teachers

Class Reference: [Knowing the Bible Serie \(click here\)](#)

Week 11: Defined by the Cross (Gal. 6:11–18)

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Version 1

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So where are we?

Date	Lesson Number	Lesson Text	KTB Chapter	KTB Text	JM	JM Text
12-Jan	1	1:1-10	1	Overview	1	1:1-5
					2	1:6-9
19-Jan	2	1:11-24	2	1:1-2:10	3	1:10-24
26-Jan	3	2:1-10			4	2:1-10
2-Feb	4	2:11-21	3	2:11-21	5	2:11-21
9-Feb	5	3:1-9	4	3:1-14	6	3:1-5
16-Feb	6	3:10-14			7	3:6-14
23-Feb	7	3:15-22	5	3:15-29	8	3:15-22
2-Mar	8	3:23-29			9	3:23-29
9-Mar	9	4:1-11	6	4:1-11	10	4:1-11
16-Mar	10	4:12-20	7	4:12-5:1	11	4:12-20
23-Mar	11	4:21-31			12	4:21-5:1
30-Mar	12	5:1-12	8	5:2-12	13	5:2-12
6-Apr	13	5:13-18	9	5:13-24	14	5:13-15
					15	5:16-18
13-Apr	14	5:19-26			16	5:19-25
20-Apr	EASTER - No Class		10	5:25-6:10	EASTER - No Class	
27-Apr	15	6:1-5			17	5:26-6:6
4-May	16	6:6-10			18	6:7-10
11-May	17	6:11-13	11	6:11-18	19	6:11-13
18-May	18	6:14-18	12	Summary	20	6:14-18

KTB = Knowing the Bible book

JM = John MacArthur

ESV Commentary Outline (This Week)

III. Paul Defends the Gospel in Galatia ([2:15–6:10](#))

- A. The Essence of the Gospel ([2:15–21](#))
- B. Paul Reminds the Galatian Believers of Their Conversion ([3:1–5](#))
- C. Paul Shows That the Gospel Is Consistent with the Scriptures ([3:6–5:1](#))
 - 1. Faith Rather Than Law Defines Abraham's Offspring ([3:6–29](#))
 - 2. Believers Are God's Adopted Sons ([4:1–11](#))
 - 3. A Personal Appeal to the Galatian Believers ([4:12–20](#))
 - 4. An Allegory from Scripture ([4:21–5:1](#))
- D. The Ethical Results of the Gospel ([5:2–6:10](#))
 - 1. The Results of Submitting to the Law ([5:2–15](#))
 - 2. The Fruit of the True Gospel ([5:16–6:10](#))

IV. Paul Summarizes His Concern: The Letter's Closing ([6:11–18](#))

- A. The Importance of the Letter's Central Concern ([6:11](#))
- B. The False Teachers' Motives ([6:12–13](#))
- C. Paul's Contrasting Motives ([6:14–17](#))
- D. A Prayer for the Galatians to Experience God's Grace ([6:18](#))

JM Outline (This week 6:11-13)

Glorying in the Flesh (6:11-13)

LARGE LETTERS (6:11)

¹¹ See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

RELIGIOUS PRIDE (6:12a)

^{12a} It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised,

COWARDICE (6:12b)

^{12b} and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

HYPOCRISY (6:13)

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.

Today's Verses Galatians 6:11-13

Final Warning and Benediction

READER #1:
Galatians 6:11

¹¹ See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

READER #2:
Galatians 6:12a

¹² It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised,

READER #3:
Galatians 6:12b

and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

READER #4:
Galatians 6:13

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.

Initial Questions and Discussion

1. Have you ever felt pressure to impress others with your faith or spirituality? What did that look like?
2. Can you think of a time when you did something just to avoid criticism or rejection?
3. Why do you think people are often drawn to outward signs of religion or spirituality?
4. What are some examples today of people "boasting in the flesh"—trying to look spiritual without really living it out?
5. Why do you think it's sometimes easier to follow religious rules than to fully trust in what Jesus did on the cross?

Review

1. Who were the Judaizers? {click after discussion}
2. In Galatians, the Judaizers were a group of Jewish Christians who insisted that Gentiles convert to Judaism, including circumcision, **before** being accepted as Christian.
3. They argued that following the Mosaic Law was necessary for salvation and that Gentiles needed to become Jewish first.
4. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, strongly refuted their teachings, emphasizing that salvation comes through faith in Christ and that Gentiles do not need to follow the Mosaic Law.

Something I Learned

- Does anyone know what an amanuensis (aman·u·en·sis) is? {click for answer}

amanuensis

noun

aman·u·en·sis

: one employed to write from dictation or to copy manuscript

Side Note

- A question of v.11 will naturally be, why Paul is drawing attention to the “large letters”?
- **From ESV Study Bible:** [Gal. 6:11](#) Paul probably has been dictating the letter to a scribe (see also [Rom. 16:22](#)). Now, however, he adds his “signature” to the letter (see [2 Thess. 3:17](#))—a postscript in his own handwriting, which entailed large letters!
- **ESV Commentary:** Taking up the pen himself and writing in large letters ([Gal. 6:11](#)) emphasizes the depth of his feeling about the false teachers’ success among the Galatians. The heart of the paragraph is the comparison Paul draws between his and the false teachers’ widely differing perspectives on circumcision (vv. [12–16](#)).
- **Richard Longenecker** believes it to be more plausible the large letters are for emphasis (not because of eyesight).
- **MacArthur** leans towards emphasis.
- We should not be dogmatic on this point.

Side Note

- The following slide was added to discuss Paul's concerns of the authenticity of Scripture

The Authentication of Paul's Letters 2 Thessalonians 2:2

PAUL WARNS AGAINST LETTERS THAT CLAIM TO COME FROM HIM BUT DO NOT

² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

- In 2 Thess. 2:2 Paul warns against letters that claim to come from him but do not.
- Thus in 11 places in his letters Paul either identifies himself or gives his signature. See below.
- These features support the conclusion that all the NT letters attributed to Paul are in fact authentic (rather than having been written by someone else “pseudonymously” in Paul’s name).

<u>1 Cor. 16:21</u>	I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand
<u>2 Cor. 10:1</u>	I, Paul, myself entreat you
<u>Col. 4:18</u>	I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand
<u>2 Thess. 3:17</u>	I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write
<u>Philem. 19</u>	I, Paul, write this with my own hand

Glorying in the Flesh ([6:11-13](#))

LARGE LETTERS ([6:11](#))

¹¹ See with what **large letters** I am writing to you **with my own hand**.

- Paul may have written the entire letter to the Galatians by hand due to urgency **or** to personally convey the seriousness of the message (Gal. 6:11).
- Though Paul typically used a scribe and added a final greeting in his own handwriting (**READ:** [1 Cor. 16:21](#); [Col. 4:18](#); [2 Thess. 3:17](#)), in this case he likely penned the whole letter himself.
- Paul draws attention to the “large letters” (Gal. 6:11), though the exact meaning is uncertain—it may refer to the size of the handwriting (uncials), possibly due to physical limitations or to contrast with the Judaizers’ focus on appearances (Gal. 6:12).
- Paul spends most of the letter refuting the Judaizers’ false gospel and now exposes their motives: religious **pride**, **cowardice**, and **hypocrisy** (Gal. 6:12–13).
- By writing in his own hand, Paul emphasizes the authenticity and spiritual urgency of his message, unlike the Judaizers who sought only to “make a good showing in the flesh” (Gal. 6:12).

Glorying in the Flesh (6:11-13)

RELIGIOUS PRIDE (6:12a)

12a It is those who want to **make a good showing in the flesh** who would force you to be circumcised,

- The Judaizers were driven by religious pride, seeking to “**make a good showing in the flesh**”, relying on outward works rather than Spirit-produced righteousness.
- Jesus condemned performing righteousness to impress others, warning against public giving, praying, and fasting for human praise (**READ:** Matt. 6:1–2, 5, 16; Luke 16:14–15).
- The parable of the Pharisee and tax collector shows that true justification comes through humble repentance, not self-righteousness. **Read to yourself Luke 18:9–14, Question:** What would be modern occupations in this story?
- Paul warned against man-made religion based on human tradition, which appears wise but is powerless against the flesh (**READ:** Col. 2:8, 20, 23 in CSB or NASB).
- The Judaizers’ push for circumcision (Gal. 6:12) and reliance on rituals reflect a flesh-driven religion that gratifies the self and spreads spiritual harm, **like the Pharisees making converts “twice as much a son of hell”** (Matt. 23:15).

Glorying in the Flesh ([6:11-13](#))

COWARDICE ([6:12b](#))

12b and only in order that they may **not be persecuted** for the **cross of Christ**.

- The Judaizers promoted legalism to avoid persecution, seeking personal safety and social acceptance rather than true allegiance to Christ (Gal. 6:12).
- The cross has always been the central offense of Christianity, symbolizing Christ's substitutionary atonement and excluding all human merit ([1 Cor. 1:23](#); [Gal. 2:20](#); [5:11](#), [24](#); [6:14](#)).
- They identified with Christ outwardly but rejected His saving work, relying on circumcision and law-keeping to gain favor and avoid opposition ([Phil. 3:18–19](#)).
- Their motives were political and social, hoping that allegiance to Jewish customs would protect them from Roman and Jewish hostility.
- The cross provokes persecution by dismantling works-based religion, and their refusal to suffer for it revealed a lack of true faith ([Matt. 10:38](#); [Matt. 13:20–21](#)).
- **QUESTION:** How should the phrase “cross of Christ” be important to us? {after discussion click}
- “the cross of Christ” stands for the exclusive and sufficient means of salvation—and it exposes and offends all systems that promote salvation by works.

Glorying in the Flesh ([6:11-13](#))

HYPOCRISY ([6:13](#))

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.

- The Judaizers' hypocrisy stemmed from fear: They pretended to follow the law to avoid persecution, though they didn't truly live by it (Gal. 6:13).
- Their religion was outward show, not inward obedience: They emphasized circumcision but ignored the heart of God's law and Spirit-led living.
- Their motive was pride, not salvation: They urged circumcision so they could boast in converts, glorifying in fleshly achievement (Gal. 6:13).
- Jesus exposed similar religious hypocrisy: He rebuked Pharisees for burdening others with laws they didn't follow and for seeking public praise ([Matt. 23:2-3, 25](#)).
- Hypocrisy grows in the last days: Paul warned of people clinging to outward religion while denying its power ([2 Tim. 3:1-5](#)), choosing self-righteousness over Christ's finished work.
- **QUESTION:** What might we emphasize today in our church that might caused us to boast in the flesh? **(SEE NEXT SLIDE ALSO)**

Agree, Disagree, or Comment

Examples of how Christians today might be "boasting in the flesh" when they rely on external signs of religiosity or personal achievement instead of Christ's finished work.

- ❑ Emphasizing church attendance, giving, or ministry roles as proof of spirituality, rather than humble faith in Christ.
- ❑ Promoting denominational or theological superiority, implying spiritual pride over others.
- ❑ Publicizing good works or service in a way that seeks praise rather than glorifying God (cf. Matt. 6:1–2).
- ❑ Judging others by outward appearance, behavior, or rituals rather than heart transformation.
- ❑ Boasting in numbers—conversions, baptisms, building size, or followers—rather than faithfulness to God's truth.
- ❑ Using Christian identity for social or political status, rather than living in humble dependence on Christ.
- ❑ All of these shift the focus from Christ's grace to human effort or recognition, which is exactly what Paul condemns in Galatians 6:13–14.