

BUILDING WHAT WE HAVE DESTROYED

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Daily devotions written by Pastor Thomas Smith

“For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.”

Galatians 2:18

Paul’s letter to the churches of Galatia included both a defense of the true Gospel of grace and a condemnation of those who were perverting that Gospel. There were Jews who were confusing the Galatians and corrupting the Gospel by insisting that Jewish traditions and ceremonies be included in the salvation message. In particular, they were teaching that circumcision be observed as a requirement for salvation.

Paul strongly defended the position that God’s forgiveness and promise of eternal life is only by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. We are justified by the faith of Christ, not by the works of the law. This was the message the Galatians had received and believed, but the Judaizers were now influencing them contrary to this. To this matter, Paul said, “For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.”

In speaking of himself in the first person, he is illustrating what the Galatian churches were being led to consider. The requirement of circumcision and the other rites of the Mosaic law were abolished by the coming of the Savior and by the doctrine of justification by faith. Jesus came to fulfill the law. These Galatians were now being influenced to establish or rebuild these Old Testament requirements as being necessary for salvation. Paul is emphatically telling them that to rebuild those things which had been destroyed is wrong.

Not only is this teaching a valid and convincing argument for retaining the truth of the Gospel, it also presents a worthy principle for other areas of our lives. How many people do we know that have rightly destroyed things from their past only to rebuild them again? Perhaps in a similar fashion as the Galatians, the Bible convinced them that their religious upbringing was not consistent with the Scripture, and therefore laid it aside for the true Gospel.

Or maybe they destroyed relics of their past life of sin and put away evidence of their former lifestyle and habits. Then, as they continued down the road of Christianity, someone came along and began to convince them that the things they had destroyed were not really all that evil. This kind of rebuilding is all too common. Paul's advice to the Galatians is good medicine for us all. Don't rebuild the things God led you to destroy.