

Conclusion & Summary Section

1. Section can be seen as the hermeneutical (interpretive) key to the whole book
 - a. Themes of Judaizers, Paul's credentials & authority, law and grace, Paul's persecution
 - b. Circumcision an addition to the gospel is a false gospel; you know the true gospel
 - c. Paul writes in large letters with his own hand – v. 11, why significant?

Two Themes Enlarged & Benediction

1. V. 14 – “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”
 - a. Paul contrasts his ministry to the Judaizers' behavior
 - b. The importance of the cross – the true gospel, the atoning work of Christ, resurrection
 - i. How distasteful and humbling
 - c. Crucified – conveys a completed action in the past still having effects today; a passive action – Paul is the recipient
 - d. World – what does Paul mean?
 - i. Sense of separation and break from the world
 - ii. Link to circumcision and law

Discussion Questions:

- Think back through your conversion story, whether you can recall a specific date or a movement over time, what were some of the ways you were separated from the world – whether in thinking or behavior?
 - Paul made a clean break from the law as a means for justification when the world was crucified to him and him to the world. What was your “clean break”?
 - What does it look like to “boast in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” today? What reactions do you get from others when you do?
2. V. 15 – “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, what counts is the new creation.”
 - a. Layers of meaning to the phrase – “new creation”
 - i. Renders everything else irrelevant
 - b. Present time and eschatological (end of history); individual and communal; inaugurated and “not yet”
 - i. Church – new people/creation/humanity
 - ii. Transformation of all things
 - c. Becomes rule to follow – v. 16

Discussion questions

- Agitators/Judaizers/circumcision party advocate viewing the cross as a “modest newness” to add to what's in place; Paul is contrasting that to the “sweeping changes as the outcome of Christ's death & resurrection.” Where have you settled for less than total change and transformation? Transformation is ultimately in God's hands, but sometimes we resist it. When and where has that been true for you?
 - Paul's identity comes from his identification with the cross of Christ and the new creation that results, where does your identity come from? How could you more fully appropriate Paul's source as your source?
3. V. 18 – Closing Benediction
 - a. Grace – opens and ends book