

I Marvel.

by Martin Luther

Martin Luther explores Paul's compassionate yet firm approach to correcting the Galatians while condemning false teachings.

Scripture: Galatians 5:10

Topics: "Restoring The Fallen", "Condemning False Teachers"

Description

Martin Luther preaches on Paul's patient and loving approach towards the seduced Galatians, excusing their error like a father and reproofing them with motherly affection. He expresses his anger towards the seducers who led the Galatians astray, condemning them with strong words and curses. Despite his disappointment, Paul's gentle words aim to bring the Galatians back to the Gospel, following the principle of restoring the fallen with meekness. Luther contrasts the compassionate approach towards the misled with the need for strict condemnation of false teachers, emphasizing the importance of seeking salvation over destruction.

Transcript

How patiently Paul deals with his seduced Galatians! He does not pounce on them but, like a father, he fairly excuses their error. With motherly affection he talks to them yet he does it in a way that at the same time he also reproofs them. On the other hand, he is highly indignant at the seducers whom he blames for the apostasy of the Galatians. His anger bursts forth in elemental fury at the beginning of his epistle. "If any man," he cries, "preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Later on, in the fifth chapter, he threatens the false apostles with damnation. "He that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be." He pronounces a curse upon them. "I would they were even cut off which trouble you."

He might have addressed the Galatians after this fashion: "I am ashamed of you. Your ingratitude grieves me. 23I am angry with you." But his purpose was to call them back to the Gospel. With this purpose in his mind he speaks very gently to them. He could not have chosen a milder expression than this, "I marvel." It indicates his sorrow and his displeasure.

Paul minds the rule which he himself lays down in a later chapter where he says: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Toward those who have been misled we are to show ourselves parentally affectionate, so that they may perceive that we seek not their destruction but their salvation.

Over against the devil and his missionaries, the authors of false doctrines and sects, we ought to be like the Apostle, impatient, and rigorously condemnatory, as parents are with the dog that bites their little one, but the weeping child itself they soothe.

The right spirit in Paul supplies him with an extraordinary facility in handling the afflicted consciences of the fallen. The Pope and his bishops, inspired by the desire to lord it over men's souls, crack out thunders and curses upon miserable consciences. They have no care for the saving of men's souls. They are interested only in maintaining their position.

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