

Being More Exceedingly Zealous of the Traditions of My Fathers.

by Martin Luther

Martin Luther shares his personal testimony of being zealous for the law before his conversion, highlighting the dangers of self-righteousness and the transformative power of the Gospel.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:31, Galatians 1:13, Galatians 5:1, Philippians 3:5, Colossians 2:20

Topics: "Legalism", "Galatians"

Description

Martin Luther speaks about his past life as a zealous follower of the Mosaic Law and the papistical laws and traditions of the fathers, striving to uphold them with great fervor and dedication. He emphasizes his strict adherence to these laws, even surpassing those who now oppose him, and his deep commitment to honoring God through his actions. Luther warns the Galatians against deceivers who overly exalt the Law, using his own experience as an example of how such legalism can be misleading and dangerous.

Transcript

Speaking now of the Mosaic Law, Paul declares that he was wrapped up in it. To the Philippians he wrote: "As touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." He means to say, "I can compare myself with the best and holiest of all those who are of the circumcision. Let them show me if they can, a more earnest defender of the Mosaic Law than I was at one time. This fact, O Galatians, should have put you on your guard against these deceivers who make so much of the Law. If anybody ever had reason to glory in the righteousness of the Law, it was I."

I too may say that before I was enlightened by the Gospel, I was as zealous for the papistical laws and traditions of the fathers as ever a man was.

I tried hard to live up to every law as best I could. I punished myself with fasting, watching, praying, and other exercises more than all those who today hate and persecute me. I was so much in earnest that I imposed upon my body more than it could stand. I honored the pope as a matter of conscience. Whatever I did, I did with a single heart to the glory of God. But our opponents, well-fed idlers that they are, will not believe what I and many others have endured.

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