

Galatians 5:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Analysis

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. The great equalizer and true requirement. "For in Jesus Christ" (en gar Christō Iēsou, ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ)—in the sphere of union with Christ. "Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision" (oute peritomē ti ischyei oute akrobystia)—neither circumcision has power/value, nor uncircumcision. Both are spiritually neutral, indifferent. External religious rituals don't matter for relationship with God.

"But faith which worketh by love" (alla pistis di' agapēs energoumenē, ἀλλὰ πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη)—but faith working/operating through love. Energeō means to work, be effective, be operative. True, saving faith isn't dead orthodoxy but living reality that expresses itself through love (James 2:14-26). This isn't faith plus works as grounds for justification but faith that inevitably produces works as evidence of justification. Love is faith's fruit, not its root. Faith alone justifies, but justifying faith is never alone—it works through love empowered by the Spirit.

Historical Context

This verse summarizes Paul's entire argument: external religious markers (circumcision) are irrelevant; internal spiritual reality (faith expressing itself in love) is everything. The Reformation formula "faith alone" must be understood correctly: faith is the sole instrument of justification, but true faith produces love and obedience. Paul isn't contradicting sola fide but clarifying: genuine faith works

through love. Dead, fruitless "faith" isn't saving faith. The Holy Spirit produces both faith and the love that flows from it.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Is your faith merely intellectual assent, or does it actively work through love toward God and others?
2. How do you balance the truth that faith alone justifies with the reality that true faith produces loving works?
3. What evidence of faith working through love is visible in your daily life and relationships?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | | | |
|---------|----------------|--------|--------|---------|--------------|---------------|----------|
| ἐν | γὰρ | Χριστῷ | Ἰησοῦ | οὐτε | περιτομή | τι | ἰσχύει |
| in | For | Christ | Jesus | neither | circumcision | any thing | availeth |
| G1722 | G1063 | G5547 | G2424 | G3777 | G4061 | G5100 | G2480 |
| οὐτε | ἀκροβυστία | ἀλλὰ | πίστις | δι' | ἀγάπης | ἐνεργουμένη | |
| neither | uncircumcision | but | faith | by | love | which worketh | |
| G3777 | G203 | G235 | G4102 | G1223 | G26 | | G1754 |

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 6:15 (References Jesus): For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

1 Corinthians 7:19 (Parallel theme): Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

1 Thessalonians 1:3 (Faith): Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

2 Corinthians 5:14 (Love): For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

Galatians 3:28 (References Jesus): There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 1:8 (Faith): Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: