

Group Bible Study/Discussion:

1. Read Galatians 4:8-9 & 5:1-15. What strikes you in this part of Paul's letter? What questions come to mind?
2. Over the course of all these verses, Paul makes a comparison between the "useless spiritual principles of this world" & the Mosaic Law. (4:9 & 5:1ff) Why are both pagan spiritual practices & the Mosaic Law both "useless" from Paul's perspective in light of the good news of Jesus?
3. According to 5:1, for what purpose do you believe Christ set us free? (read from more than one translation if you can find it) We are to use our freedom **FROM** what to be free **FOR** what? How do you see that happening in your life?
4. What stern warning did Paul issue to the Galatians in v 2? On what basis has he made a similar claim earlier in the letter? Why is trying to prove your faithfulness by following the religious rules of Judaism (or any other faith practice) so dangerous to a follower of Jesus?
5. There is an immediate warning not to return to 'a yoke of slavery'. What would it look like for the Galatians to be burdened again by a yoke of slavery? The immediate context is the urge to be circumcised (i.e. keep the Jewish Law). Why is this warning necessary? What is at stake?
6. The Galatians had false teachers pulling them away from the truth of the Gospel. What in your life do you find pulls you away from believing & knowing God loves you for you & not your performance?
7. According to verse six, what is of no benefit or importance "in Christ Jesus"? What is of significance? Where does your faith express itself in love?
8. Why was Paul hopeful about the Galatians? (5:10) And yet, 2 verses later he wishes those insisting on circumcision would "mutilate" or "emasculate" themselves. Why the sudden shift in tone? What motive would Paul have for saying that?
9. How can you guard yourself from thinking that "God loves you even more" because of your actions? Are there things that we, as a church, need to 'stand firm' against so that we don't become burdened by a yoke of slavery?
10. Reflecting on verses 7-10, how can we guard against being influenced by deceptive ideologies or teachings that contradict the gospel? Discuss the tension between speaking the truth in love, advocated in Ephesians 4:15, & confronting false teachings with boldness, as seen in Paul's words here.

Living Water Fellowship

6th Sunday in Easter – 5th May 2024

COME TO JESUS

GATHERING SONG: Sing of the Lord's Goodness

PRAYER OF THE DAY & WELCOME:

SONG: Be Unto Your Name

GROW IN HIS GRACE

BIBLE READING: Galatians 4:8-9 & 5:1-15

⁸ Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist.

⁹ So now that you know God (or should I say, now that God knows you), why do you want to go back again & become slaves once more to the weak & useless spiritual principles of this world?

^{5:1} So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, & don't get tied up again in slavery to the law. ² Listen! I, Paul, tell you this: If you are counting on circumcision to make you right with God, then Christ will be of no benefit to you. ³ I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favour with God by being circumcised, you must obey every regulation in the whole law of Moses. ⁴ For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace.

⁵ But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us. ⁶ For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, there is no benefit in being circumcised or being uncircumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love.

⁷ You were running the race so well. Who has held you back from following the truth? ⁸ It certainly isn't God, for he is the one who called you to freedom. ⁹ This false teaching is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough! ¹⁰ I am trusting the Lord to keep you from believing false teachings. God will judge that person, whoever he is, who has been confusing you.

¹¹ Dear brothers & sisters, if I were still preaching that you must be circumcised—as some say I do—why am I still being persecuted? If I were no longer preaching salvation through the cross of Christ, no one would be offended. ¹² I just wish that those troublemakers who want to mutilate you by circumcision would mutilate themselves. ¹³ For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers & sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. ¹⁴ For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbour as yourself." ¹⁵ But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.

FAITH CHAT:

1. How do you define freedom? When in your life have you felt most free?
2. How does your trust in or relying on Jesus increase your sense of being free?
If it doesn't why do you think that is?

THE MESSAGE: *LIVING EXCLUSIVELY...IN FREEDOM*

OFFERING SONG: Jesus Strong and Kind

PRAYERS:

OUR CHRISTIAN CONFESSION: *THE APOSTLES' CREED*

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty,
from thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE COMMUNION:

Since we have been raised with Christ Jesus, let us set our minds on heavenly things, not on the things that are on earth. Let's pray together...

Gracious God, sinful & broken we are. We too often neglect fellowship with our loved ones; we neglect our communion with you, & we excuse ourselves from worship & witness. In a world of plenty, we often lack generosity leaving others to. Free us from such bondage, that we may truly reveal the presence of Christ in our lives. Amen.

Christ gave to the church the bread of heaven, his flesh & blood, for our forgiveness, life & salvation. Paul records that gracious gift with these words:

I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread & gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces saying, "This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me." In the same way, he took the cup of wine saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God & his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it." For every time you eat this bread & drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again.

***Where is another God like you, who pardons the guilt of the remnant, overlooking the sins of his special people?
Once again you will have compassion on us.
You trample our sins under your feet
and throw them into the depths of the ocean!*** *(Micah 7:18-19)*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, & the glory are yours now & forever. Amen.

Worship during Communion: Sing to Jesus (Robbie Seay Band)

GO IN HIS POWER

BLESSING: † _____, *child of God,*
Christ has set you free!
Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SONG: May the Lord Bless You Today

SHOW HIS LOVE

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