**LIVE FREE – wk 7 Galatians 4:8-20 / Confessions of a Pastor**

**Have you ever tried to stop someone you loved from doing something really stupid? A foolish choice, bad business decision, a relationship, an affair, drug abuse – Maybe you could see it but they couldn’t.**

**What do you do when they don’t listen? Friendships are strained - passions rise – that is what is happening in Galatians.**

**Galatians 3:1 – Paul called them - foolish idiots - J.B. Phillips**

**The Recap – Written by Paul to churches in Galatia – they are turning from the truth to a lie - The must be “Jewish to be Christian” group;**

**This emergency letter is a personal, passionate response for the gospel. They were following a lie.**

**This letter is about freedom! Freedom from self, sin, shame, & religion**

**Galatians 5:1 - It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.**

**Last wk - Paul explained our position in Jesus has changed us from orphan to child of God – from a slave to a son. Adopted into His family. He is not our employer but our dad!**

**Today’s a little diff. a very stressed out pastor shares his heart (not me) Paul (a personal glimpse into his frustration and fear of failure) He takes a break from teaching to vent a little – I might just too ;)**

**Confessions of a Pastor and what we can learn from it**

**Galatians 4:8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. (The Galatians he is writing to worshiped many false God’s before Paul got there) 9 But now that you know God…**

**Thoughts, Confessions, and Frustrations**

* **There’s got to be a “Formerly and a but now” (a before an after)**

**“Formerly, when you did not know God… But now that you know God…”**

**That - “I once was lost, but now I’m found.” Moment.**

**Well, I’ve always been a Christian. We all must personally meet Jesus.**

**Maybe you just hang around church / show up / look the part**

**Hanging out in McDonalds doesn’t make you a Big Mac.**

**Do you know Jesus or do you know about JEsus?**

**Have you crossed the line – “Because you’re mine, I crossed the line”**

**Let me tell you - Church is not an information dump**

**I have a great responsibility to help you go from formerly to a but now – and to help you grow and mature in knowing God.**

**Galatians 4:9 But now that you know God (the One true God) - or rather are known by God (Do you know about God or Does God know you? God chose you – you see this again and again with Paul) - how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? (Backsliding to your old thinking)**

**Every religion (& Christian cults) around the world requires work. Hindus – some role across the country and torture themselves**

**Mormons are told to spend at least a year knocking on doors**

**Muslims by law must pray 5X facing Mecca and go to Mecca**

**Christians who fear that they will go to Hell from a single thought.**

**This is bondage… chains…**

**Some false faiths enslave us to sin some enslave us to methods.**

**Sin and religion are bondage. I’ve seen both. It is no wonder people stay away from churches – religion with bondage, guilt, shame.**

**Jesus the ONE - sets us free! - John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.**

**Ga 4:9b How is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? (Enslaved to religion, never measuring up, always working to please God) 10 You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! 11 I fear for you, that somehow, I have wasted my efforts on you. (Ouch! Was my time with you all in vain?)**

**I have felt the same. Is this a waste of time? Do they get it? Am I just giving you a power nap and a gold star for showing up?**

**12 I plead with you, brothers and sisters, become like me, for I became like you. You did me no wrong. (I came to you and lived among you. I didn’t try to change your culture, I became like you - in food, dress, customs)**

**1 Cor 9:22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.**

**Now be like me - and follow Christ**

**1 Cor 11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. (I’m not perfect – read Rom 8 – but I am His and I am free – walk with me!)**

* **My goal is not to make you me – but to make you like Jesus**

**Jesus uses pastors & church leaders to accomplish his purpose, but we are not to be put on a pedestal, or idolized – problem is many pastors are and some seek it. Exegesis - Eisegesis - “Narci-gesis”**

**I will not be perfect, but I follow Jesus. Walk w/ me, but look to Jesus**

**Accidental Pharisees - Pharisees say – do what I do.**

**Disciples says, do what Jesus does**

**13 As you know, it was because of an illness (Through a physical illness) that I first preached the gospel to you, (when I was first with you – I was very sick – he stayed with them some speculate it was malaria)**

* **God often uses us the greatest when we are at our weakest**

**Well, I’m sick, can’t walk, tired, balding… ☺ I found that when I had cancer, God used me in way I never thought possible. Don’t let your health / trial / circumstance / pain - count you out.**

**14 and even though my illness was a trial to you, (they cared of him) you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. (I didn’t gross you out) Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. (That’s some serious care – let me try that one out - You’ll usually get a day or two out of me)**

**He brought the gospel that set them free from the prison of pagan superstition - they loved him, were grateful & showed it**

**15 Where, then, is your blessing of me now? (Where’s the love now? Why are you treating me so badly – why is that you don’t trust me. I am the same person) I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. (They loved him so much, that they would have given to him anything – but now…) 16 Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? (They are now talking badly and calling Paul a false apostle. What happened? A serious rift in a once-close friendship.)**

**CONFESSION: People are fickle (that includes you too)**

**Every pastor and church leader learns this sooner or later. Sheep bite!**

**If you work as a shepherd, you’re going to get poop on your boots**

**People love you one minute / treat you like crap the next**

**Like Paul I’ve experienced it – dealing with people can hurt**

**Paul says even the ones who say they would give their very life – can easily turn on you… Paul agonized over this.**

**Makes you wonder if you can trust anybody. Maybe you’ve felt it? Thru Jesus, Paul says you and I are able to trust again!**

**17 Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. (the false teachers will court you – date you – flatter you – to get you to join us them) What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them.**

**CONFESSION: Some pastors are fake (in ministry for selfish motives)**

**In any church you might find people w/ selfish reasons - looking for position, power, control, like the authority, but have no love for people**

**They find emotionally crippled hurting or immature people, make promises and then they enslave them**

**Not every pastor or church leader is looking out for you – some are building their kingdom not God’s kingdom.**

**FYI - The best ministry always flows out of relationships. Ministry is about people (sharing experiences, aches, pains, joys) Paul knew this – he was counting on their close relationship to speak into their life.**

**Gal 4:18 It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always, not just when I am with you.**

**CONFESSION: Some people are Fake**

**They put on a good show in front of the pastor or at church, but…**

**Just check out their Facebook. Hide the beer the pastors here ☺ - how are you when I am gone - at work – school – with friends.**

**Ga 4:19 My dear children, (shepherd’s heart – Paul was a good Pastor) for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,**

**CONFESSION: Being a pastor can be painful (Paul is a parent in pain)**

**\*\* I get told occasionally - must be nice to only work a few hrs a wk Yeah that would be nice. I work about 65-70hrs**

**Table illustration -**

**\*\* I pray for you, cry out to God for you, and it pains me to see you fall and fail, and slither back to your old ways – or see you hurt**

* + - **Dealing with people is a love and a pain**

**\*\* Guess what? Even pastors get frustrated and stressed out**

**Over life / over money / friendships / and a big one – ministry**

**Gal 4:20 how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you! (Perplexed = you frustrate me – I don’t what your thinking)**

**CONFESSION: Sometimes there is no sugar coating – no soft answer.**

**Sometimes a pastor just has to tell like it is**

**“I wish I could… change my tone”**

**Love tells the truth even when it doesn’t want to be heard**

**In this section we see a pastor passionately loving the church, but frustrated that his ministry is falling apart, and that they are missing it.**

**Through all of this you know what I get out of this…**

**CONFESSION: God is still working on me**

**God was still working on Pastor Paul and still working on me**

**Paul was writing to another church he planted and he confessed something similar to them - Philippians 3:** **10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. (I don’t; understand it all, grasp it all, or have it all figured out) But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Confession: I don’t have it all figured out – but I am pressing on)**

**As I wrap this up today – I want to remind you of that first verse we read today – In your life - there’s got to be a “Formerly and a but now”**

**Galatians 4:8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves… but now that you know God… (Through Jesus)**

**Formerly I was lost, depressed, confused, isolated… but now I know God – I know life, peace, freedom, family, joy… I was in chains – but now I am free - thank you Jesus.**

**Prayer – salvation**

**Table illustration:**

**Thoughts are mental real estate - Book**

**The more thoughts I have the more space they take up – 3 books**

**And before I know my mind is filling up… more books**

**My mind has got a lot of things going on…**

**My marriage – are we in a good place**

**My kids – my kids future – their relationships**

**I have a car and a house – thinking about my house and car – keep I them up**

**I am remodeling parts of our bathroom – got that on my mind**

**Our bills – finances – struggling friendships**

**The church sermon prep- I have to read, study, prayer and prepare for Sunday, Mon, 2pm’s, Life Teams s**

**The future of the church – the finances of the church – bills – church admin**

**Building maintenance and work on site**

**The church online ministry and social media additions since Covid-19**

**The church family – I have you on my mind – are you doing well – what can we do to walk with you – will you come back when we open back up – will you stay faithful while we wait…**

**The Vive coffee shop and venue – will be stay open and growing?**

**The pastor’s network – the pastors I connect with and try to encourage**

**Counseling, caring, and discipleship - meeting with people**

**Walking with people - investing in people - and then to get bit and dropped like an old boyfriend**

**And I am trying to keep my walk with God healthy – so I am trying to stay in the bible**

**So much on my mind – now I’m trying to find space… before you know it, I am out of space… I am squeezing in stuff… there is a lot on a pastors mind.**

**It would be great to work a few hours a week.**