**Live Free – Galatians 5:1-15 / In Your Face!**

**I’m missing the Bigsuf camp and beach time. Volleyball. Church & life is like volleyball – sides – opinions – fights - the spikes!**

**Some of you have been apart of churches that didn’t make it- fractions, divisions, & deteriorations - 3500 churches will die this year because of issues similar to Galatians 5 (Covid closings)**

**The Goal of every true church is to lift up the grace and hope of Jesus to a world that needs it - like the Gal. some churches promote rules and regulations – like dead weight and chains they suffocate.**

**Catch up – Paul to churches in Galatia – turning from the truth to a lie - personal, passionate emergency response for the gospel**

**People inserted themselves: you need us, our movement, our rules, our books, our formula (He says, beware of the false gospel. Invasion of the B.S. - Body snatchers)**

**Paul was frustrated - This was a battle for their heart and the gospel.**

**Ch 1-2: Personal (Salvation and the Gospel - his story)**

**Ch 3-4: Doctrinal (Justification - our position)**

**Ch 5-6: Practical (Sanctification - our change)**

* **Paul sets, spikes and scores – In your face!**

**He set the case for grace and now starts to talk about how to walk in it**

**First few verses are like a lawyer’s closing statement before a jury - Galatians 5:1 - It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. (Not you, Allah, Krishna, Mohammad, Confucius, your ancestors- Jesus the liberator) Stand firm, then, (Military term: don’t be shaken - you’re a son, daughter, an heir - stand on it) and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Farming: Oxen carry a yoke & labor. Don’t go back to that labor of thinking – you’re free)**

**What is Freedom? (Sat is the 4th of July – canceled fireworks & events) What does it look like? Is it political, religious, financial, and free from all oppression? Paul experienced chains in those areas- yet was FREE!**

**In the US we are born into freedom -but the Bible says no matter where you are, you born into slavery...**

**The Bible is pretty clear on two things: We are born**

**#1 Slaves to sin - We can try to have perfect thoughts, words, deeds… we can’t do it. We’re slaves to sin, chained, imprisoned – with no furlough or release. (Romans 6) Chained to sin.**

**Counselors, attorneys, support groups, & self-help books try to deal with, manage, and figure out our sin problems. No matter how much money we spend or people we see - unless Jesus steps in we will always be a slave to our sin**

**#2 We are salves to death - We buckle-up, have airbags, eat vitamins, jog, workout, drink purified water, search for the fountain of youth… but we will still die – we are salves to death. Chained to death.**

**Paul reminds us - Jesus was crucified for sin, buried and rose again from the grave – Jesus conquered sin *and* death – by faith we are no longer slaves to sin or death! We might be born into slavery and death, but we can be reborn into freedom! In Jesus we’re Free! Paul asks, why would you want to go back to the chains?**

**Volley ball – we like to think we can somehow spike it spiritually – beat sin and death on our own - this is about me baby – boom – in your face! Paul says – you can’t, but Jesus did. Paul has been volleying some good points – then he steps up to the net…**

**The SET - Paul Brings Clarity to the Uncertainty**

**Ga 5:2 Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. (If you think that will save you – you have missed the point – and walking away from Jesus – belittling the cross.)**

**\*\* Christianity is not about improving you, it is about pointing to Jesus**

**It is not about what I do, it’s about what he does in me for His glory. His grace gets the focus off us and onto Jesus.**

**5:3 Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. (Circum. is not a sin – he was making the point that if you think that will save you then good luck on all 600+ rules – we will fail.)**

**You can spend your whole life trying and will still fall short.**

**Works is about- US / Grace is about- JESUS (look what I can do- Stuart)**

**Works says look how good I am / Grace says look how good He is**

**\*\* Christianity is not about me being good, It’s about Jesus being good**

**It is not about the morality of Jesus, this is about following Jesus!**

**Focus is not on being moral, religious, spiritual, good people… Our focus is to be on Jesus. And the closer you draw to Jesus the further you wander from sin and reflect Jesus. Jesus and sin cannot co-exist.**

**Jesus, God with us cares for you and died for your sins – that’s it. Why do we still look for an indicator? What you really need is\_\_. No, you just need to know & love Jesus and follow him.**

**It’s about pointing to Jesus and lifting up what he has done.**

**4 You who are trying to be justified (made right) by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. (Interesting, Paul is saying even good moral people can be lost) 5 For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. (Even our ability to have faith is God’s doing. Called, convicted, confess, and continue in faith = thru the Spirit = God)**

**\*\* Christianity is not about becoming righteous, you are righteous in Jesus**

**When Jesus said it’s finished - Done. Paid. Fulfilled. Complete. Satisfied. If you think there is more to it, you missed it.**

**Our sin was literally placed on him - 2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be (bear) sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. - Jesus took our sin on the cross and we, by faith, are righteous in Him**

**If you are a Christian - Are you righteous? You are, in Him**

**Paul says in Phil 3:16 – “Live up to what you have already attained.”**

**Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. (They’re arguing over rules & traditions. Churches argue over so much… Paul says, lift up Jesus ((God in the flesh who died for our sins)) and you’ll be okay.) The only thing that counts is faith (faith in Jesus) expressing itself through love. (We are made free for the purpose to Love others) 7 You were running a good race. (You were doing so good) Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? (Ever known someone who started off really well with God… then got sidetracked? Persuaded, guilt-ed, distracted, or mis-lead) 8 That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you.**

* **Illus Running- Like a runner following Jesus, someone cut in. At a fork in the road Jesus says over here, they say over here – and you part w/ Jesus. (Maybe it’s a book, a person, a church – the fork in the road) You still try to be good, go to church sometimes, be moral, but Jesus is not near. Regardless of who did it to you, you’re responsible for the choice.**

**The SPIKE – Some in your face moments from Paul**

**5:9 “A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.” (doesn’t take much)**

**Just a little false teaching. I see it all the time – they build relationships, gain an audience – and casualties drop like flies.**

**\*\* One little nut-job can mess this up - a church (ouch spikes sting)**

**This is why he wrote this letter - False teaching – It was an infection –**

**- Movie: Contagion – Outbreak – borderline OSD – Covid-19**

**Maybe you see it, but don’t like conflict so avoid it - they’re friends, at our wedding, in small group, you like them- but they lead people astray**

**Paul is stating the obvious. Even a small compromise in this area can produce disastrous results.**

**In Acts & Ephesians Paul explains 3 types of people: \* Shepherds (leaders called to protect & feed you) \* Sheep (faithful followers of Jesus and the gospel) \* Wolves (false teachers and false followers)**

**5:10 I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. (Paul is hopeful) The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. (Wolves will get their silver bullet) 11 Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? (Some claimed Paul wanted them CR – Wolves will use false testimonies, authority and lies to lead and persuade) In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. (The offensive message of the cross (one way) becomes just a sad story)**

**Then the most disturbing verse in Gal. possibly whole bible – one to memorize - all scripture is God breathed & useful – 5:12 As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves! (Set – Spike!! In the face!)**

**\*\* Our efforts to be good for GOD to earn favor are pointless.**

**They were told there was Varsity & Jr. Varsity Christians…**

**If you want to be varsity you need to\_\_\_\_. Paul is like - Okay, if cutting a little skin off will make you holy, then go Pro-bowl & cut the whole thing off! Can you imagine when that was read in church? For those who had been CR… Dude? I knew I shouldn’t done that.**

**13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. (Unchained & unbound, but Christians often look tightly wound. Christian life is about freedom!) But (This is a big but…☺) do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh;**

**“We can’t tell people they’re free. That it’s knowing Jesus, not rules.” You can’t tell them Jesus forgives everything. Adultery, perversion, drunkenness… people will do it. We need rules for their own good, lots of them. So, we make them and we break them… and feel miserable.**

**Our problem is internal – Born with sin, bent towards sin - we have rebellion stamped on us – rules can’t fix us, only Jesus can. Then Jesus changes the “want to”. If you love Jesus, you will want to wait till married, avoid drugs, not lie, steal, getting drunk – internal changes**

**What makes us holy? Jesus alone - and if you love Jesus - you live diff.**

**John 14:15 - Jesus said if you love me, the result is you will obey my commands**

**Relationship with Jesus comes first - It’s not I love Jesus, so I need to obey his commands – it’s I love Jesus, and I want to obey his commands – I want to honor him with my life.**

**We have been given liberty, but Christians tend to fall into:**

**Legalism (let’s just give them some rules just in case)**

**License (cool I’m free, now I get to do whatever I want.)**

**\*\* SPIKE - The cross kills both License and legalism in order to produce liberty and Love**

**But when we truly connect with Jesus – our desires go from, what do I need - to what does God need of me?**

**Like tea in hot water – the longer that tea bag hangs around the more that water changes into tea. Jesus will transform you into his image – the closer to Jesus the farther from sin. That pride, gossip, lust, anger, addiction… vise versa when you hang around others…**

**Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.**

**The SCORE**

**\*\* We are to use our freedom to love and serve one another**

**It is not about being good - or doing what we want and get to do**

**We are not free for our self – that is a new set of chains**

**It is about being free to finally and truly love others (Jesus had more liberty than anyone, yet he used his liberty to love and serve others)**

**I can do that, but it is not helpful, profitable for others. I lay it down.**

**Some of you might battle with giving love and knowing love – here’s how:**

**1 John 4:8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them… 18 There is no fear in love. (Fear in loving others) But perfect love (Jesus’ love) drives out fear… 19 We love (others) because he first loved us.**

**Notice - Love is not God. God is love. Our view of love does not define God – God defines what Love looks like.**

**Galatians 5:6 - The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. (This is what it’s all is about – this is the ultimate score!)**

**Galatians 5:14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Do you make sure you eat? Have a place to sleep? Put on band-aids? Like nice things? As you care for yourself, do that for others)**

**He’s quoting Jesus – “Love God and your neighbor as yourself”**

**I can’t remember the 600 rules, but I got this one – Love Jesus and love for others follows – If we do that – we’ll fulfill them all.**

**Jesus love transforms - He turns rebels into sons – the dirty into clean – the selfish into self-less – unloving and unlovable into great lovers**

**We are to be conduits and streams of that Love – that kind of love changes people - You want to see the world change? Love people!**

**Likewise, Paul says in reverse unloving people destroys lives – 5:15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. (Like cannibals feasting on each other. Without love lead by Jesus - we end up ruining friendships, splitting families, and marriages, and destroy churches)**

**News a while back - Taser fight between pastor & worship pastor. Sadly, churches are full of unloving people. No wonder 3500 churches close a year.**

**\*\* Think about it - Love is the one thing You can’t fake (You can try…)**

**We can fake morality, rituals, tradition - we can look good and be nice… but you can’t fake Spirit empowered love.**

**I have a Q for you: How’s your love? How’s your Jesus? How’s your serve? Are we strong in our love, are we strong in serving each other?**

**We live in a world that is resists love - people isolate themselves / headphones / park in the back / don’t know neighbors / no more front porches / living rooms turned into dark media rooms / gated communities to keep people out / Single people who go days without a touch or hug. What will it take to get us to love others?**

**It must be intentional – The set, the spike, the score**

**After service today talk about it – go to lunch, join a small group – talk to your family how you can know and serve your neighbor.**

**Faith results in Freedom that is characterized by Love**

**Jesus came to walk with man face to face - He sets – he spikes – he scores - IN YOUR FACE – Satan. Jesus wins!**