

DAY 2: THE MESSAGE OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH

Key Text: Galatians 5:1

Introduction

Paul's letter to the Galatians was written with urgency and passion. The Galatians had initially received the gospel of grace through faith in Christ, but false teachers known as Judaizers were persuading them to adopt Jewish customs like circumcision in order to be saved. These teachings undermined the gospel by suggesting that faith in Christ alone wasn't enough for salvation. Paul defends the purity of the gospel, emphasizing that salvation comes solely through Christ's finished work. This message is not just for the Galatians—it speaks to us today, as we too face distractions and teachings that may pull us away from the true gospel.



Faith in Christ is the true path to righteousness. The law points to our need for grace, but only faith in Jesus Christ leads to salvation and a transformed heart

1. Faith Over Ritual

Why Faith Matters

Paul reminds us that we are justified before God not by our works, but by faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:16). Salvation is a gift from God, and no human effort can add to Christ's work on the cross. Faith connects us to God's promises, just as Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6). Through faith, we access God's promises and become heirs of His blessings.

The Limits of the Law

The law serves a purpose: it reveals our sin, but it cannot save us. As Paul writes in Romans 3:20, "No one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law." The law is

like a mirror—it shows us the dirt on our face but cannot cleanse it. Only Christ can purify us from our sin.

2. True Freedom in Christ

Freedom from the Law

The Judaizers insisted on circumcision and adherence to the law, but Paul emphasizes that Christ has set us free from these burdens. Through His sacrifice, we are liberated from the long list of laws that cannot save us (Galatians 5:1). Christ has fulfilled the law, bringing us true freedom from sin and the futility of trying to earn our salvation.

Freedom to Serve

Faith in Christ brings true freedom—not the freedom to sin, but the freedom to serve. As John 8:32 says, "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." This freedom is not for self-indulgence, but for serving others in love. Paul calls us to use our freedom not as an opportunity for the flesh, but to serve one another humbly in love (Galatians 5:13).

3. The Role of the Holy Spirit

A Mark of the Christian Life

When we place our faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us. The Holy Spirit is a mark of our new identity in Christ, empowering us to live according to God's will. The Spirit convicts us of sin and helps us live a life pleasing to God. As Paul writes in Galatians 5:16, we are called to "walk by the Spirit," allowing the Spirit to guide and empower us to live out our faith.

Living by the Spirit

Obedying the Holy Spirit is key to living a victorious Christian life. The Spirit helps us to avoid the traps of legalism and selfishness and empowers us to follow Christ's example of sacrificial love. As we yield to the Holy Spirit, He transforms us, helping us live out the freedom Christ has given us.

4. The Power of Love

Love as the Fulfillment of the Law

In Galatians 5:13-14, Paul reminds us that the entire law is summed up in the command to "love your neighbor as yourself." Love is not merely a feeling; it is an active choice to serve and care for others, especially within the body of Christ. When we love, we fulfill the law because love seeks the good of others, just as Christ's love for us was sacrificial and unconditional.

Overcoming Obstacles with Love

We may face criticism or challenges from others, even from within the church. However, Paul teaches that love enables us to overcome these obstacles. Jesus Himself said, "You are my friends if you do what I command" (John 15:14), and His command was to love one another. Even when facing difficulties, we are called to love, serve, and forgive one another, just as Jesus did.

Conclusion

Paul's message to the Galatians is clear: we are saved by faith alone, not by works or rituals. Faith brings us true freedom—freedom from sin and from the futile attempt to earn God's favor through the law. This freedom enables us to serve others in love, and the Holy Spirit empowers us to live for Christ. As believers, we are called to live out the freedom we have in Christ by loving one another and serving God with our whole hearts.

Let us hold fast to the true gospel, living in the freedom Christ provides, and demonstrating His love to a world in need. May we continue to walk in the Spirit, serving and loving others, just as Christ has called us to do.