

The Sermon

Welcome

Good morning!

My Name is Pastor Jonathan, and I have the joy of serving as The Lead Pastor here at Harvey.

And I am so grateful that each of you are here today.

Everyone is welcome at Harvey!

Opening Illustration

Now when our family goes on vacation, with 2 adults and 4 kids... Oftentimes it feels like we should have taken a U-Haul rather than a minivan.

So when we get to our destination, we have a rule...everybody helps get the stuff out of the car.

And it never fails, as soon as we get there...everyone grabs something...but then there is a line for the bathroom...

So oftentimes the ones that are left for the second round of grabbing things out of the car....are me and my littles...my 6 year old and my 4 year old...

And I love our littles...because they are confident...

They will go for the biggest suitcase...and say ***I got that one!***

- And usually...its one that weighs more than they do...
- So they try to bear-hug it...
- their faces turning red....

And many times, they don't even try to carry it the way it is designed to be carried...

- It's got a handle and wheels...
- But nope, they're just gonna try to bear-hug this immovable weight instead...

So I'll look at them and say...hey...let me get that one.....

But then they say what everyone...who has every been around kids know they say....

- ***"NO...I can do it ALL BY MYSELF"***
- And here's the thing...when I told everyone to grab something...

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- That's not what I meant...
- I am standing right there to carry the heavy ones....
- But they're right there wrestling a weight that was never theirs to carry...
- And they can't even stand up straight while they're doing it....

Transition

And Church, that's EXACTLY the picture...of what Paul is dealing with in our text today...

Because Paul is writing to people who are already in the van.

- Christ has ALREADY set them free.
- The weight has ALREADY been carried.

And there they are bent over...dragging something that was never theirs to drag...

And Paul is about to tell them exactly what I told my kids:

- Put it down.
- And stand up straight...

In fact, our BIG IDEA FOR TODAY IS THIS:

Big Idea

Freedom Isn't Something You Earn; It's Something You STAND In.

Transition

So, if you have your Bibles, take them out and turn to the book of **Galatians**, and we're going to be in **Chapter 5, vs. 1-12** today.

And I'm going to begin by reading vs. 1...

I. Stand Firm (5:1)

Christ Has Set Us Free

1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

A. Christ Has Set You Free (5:1a)

Last Week, we saw Paul spoke to those who were **desiring** to be under the law.

He used the Old Testament book of Genesis to remind them that they were no longer slaves to the law...but they are children who have been set free...

Galatians 5.1-12 | Freedom To Stand

And when we get to **Chapter 5, Verse 1** is a connecting verse....
Paul connects what he just said with what he is about to say.

And walking through the book of Galatians we have seen that in:

- **Chapters 1 & 2** - he reminded them of who he was...showing them that **HE WAS** a genuine apostle of The One True Gospel...even when people were telling the Galatians he was not.
- Then in **Chapters 3 & 4** - Paul explained the theology of The Gospel that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.
- And now, beginning in **Chapter 5**, Paul is going to show The Galatians how to practically live out their daily lives in the reality of The Gospel.

So **vs. 1** is a transition to practical theology...that can be lived out in their daily lives.

And Paul begins by saying **THREE STRONG STATEMENTS** in just **ONE VERSE**.

First Paul Says...FOR FREEDOM, CHRIST HAS SET YOU FREE!

Or in other words: **CHRIST HAS FREED YOU TO BE FREE...SO BE FREE!**

Paul has just explained that they were no longer slaves...but had been born again by the free promise of God...so what they needed to do...
was to live free in Christ by the Power of The Holy Spirit...

So Paul is saying:

- Freedom is not just a side effect of the cross...
- **Freedom is THE POINT OF THE CROSS**
- **HE SET YOU FREE SO YOU WOULD BE FREE!**

And notice...Paul DOESN'T SAY...Christ is GOING to set you free...

Paul says Christ HAS SET YOU FREE!

THIS IS A FINISHED FREEDOM....

And when I say that word “freedom”....

We all have different definitions of what that means....

But what does freedom mean in this verse...????

Well **John Stott** referred to this freedom as: **freedom from “our silly little self”...**

Martin Luther said that our freedom is lived out:

- not in our circumstances
- Not in our feelings
- BUT RATHER IN OUR CONSCIENCE....

Now, What does that mean?

That means that our conscience is **FREE** in a settled assurance that God **IS NOT ANGRY WITH US** and **WILL NOT BE ANGRY WITH US...**

Hey Christian:

I know I can't be the only one...

I've been a believer for **35 years now**...and I am still tripped up by the thought

- That God is somehow mad at me in my sin...
- That God is disappointed in me...
- That God is somehow “going to make me pay” for the wrong I have done....

But what Paul is saying here is....Christ has set you free!

- He has set you free **from that thought that God is somehow angry with you**
- He has set you free **from that thought that God is going to “make you pay” for all the wrong that you have done....**

NOW that **DOES NOT** mean that we are **FREE** to do whatever we want...when we want...how we want....

It **DOES NOT** that we are **FREE TO BE LEFT ALONE...**

In the next chapter, in **Galatians 6:9**, Paul says

Don't grow weary of doing good...

BUT Dear Christian:

FOR FREEDOM...CHRIST HAS SET YOU FREE...

- to be **free in your conscience...**
- from **any thought that you are not fully forgiven in Jesus Christ.**

B. So Stand Firm (5:1b)

Then the second statement in this verse...Paul says...

Christian...**THEREFORE...STAND FIRM!**

This is the hinge for the rest of the letter of Galatians.

And this is a present imperative...

- It's something that we must do...
- AND ALSO something we've gotta keep doing...

In other words...Paul is saying **"KEEP ON STANDING FIRM"...**

Paul has just said...**your freedom is settled...you can have a clear conscience that you are forgiven....**

THEREFORE...

KEEP STANDING ON FIRM IN YOUR FORGIVENESS!

In other words...don't fall for the lie that you have to win your acceptance with God...**by some level obedience...**

- Yes...walk in obedience...
- You've been created **FOR GOOD WORKS...**

BUT...your obedience and your good works **ARE NOT WHAT IS SAVING YOU...**

SO KEEP ON STANDING FIRM IN THE REALITY THAT YOU ARE ALREADY SAVED!

And I know when many of us hear this...you're like...great...here's the Preacher telling me to just try harder...

- Well first of all...I'm not telling you anything...God's Word is...
- And second...that's not what this is saying....

This is saying...**STAND YOUR GROUND...**

- **REFUSE TO MOVE OFF...SOMETHING THAT IS YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN GIVEN**

See, standing firm is not **“TRY HARDER”**...
Standing firm is...“CONTINUE TO TRUST”.

Charles Spurgeon said it this way:

Don't live as if you are working for wages and earning your own salvation...understand you are already free...and stand firm in it!

**See, you don't stand firm in order to get freedom...
YOU STAND FIRM BECAUSE YOU ALREADY HAVE FREEDOM!**

C. Don't Put The Yoke Back On (5:1c)

Finally, in vs. 1, Paul says:

“Do not submit again to a yoke of slavery”

Now when we think of that word yoke...

- **Maybe** if you've been around animals, you think of a heavy wooden beam that is laid across the neck and shoulders of an ox...so they can be hooked up to a plow or a cart and so they can pull it...

And here's the thing about an ox in a yoke:

- They can't stand up straight...
- They are weighed down...
- And they are not free...

Paul has just said **STAND FIRM...**

And now he says...**DON'T YOU GO PUTTING THAT YOKE BACK ON!**

But this goes even further...The Jews referred to the law as a yoke...

Peter used this terminology in **Acts 15:10** when he was speaking to The Jerusalem Council.

Peter said *this was a yoke that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear...*

So what Paul is saying...is the yoke of the law...

- was something that humans were never able to bear...
- **But Christ bore that yoke...fully and completely!**

In fact, Jesus Himself said in **Matthew 11:30**

"My yoke is easy, and My burden is light"...

So Paul is saying...don't put on the yoke of slavery...

RATHER put on the yoke of Christ...

BE HITCHED TO HIS WAGON!

Christian:

Are you weary and heavy burdened?

- Then take off a yoke you were never meant to bear...
- Remember **FOR FREEDOM** Christ has set you free...
- AND **STAND FIRM** in **THE FREEDOM OF CHRIST ALONE!**
- **REST IN THE FREEDOM OF YOUR SALVATION!**

Let's keep reading in vs. 2-6 to see what Paul says next...

II. What It Costs To Go Back (5:2-6)

2 Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.

3 I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.

4 You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.

5 For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

A. Christ Becomes No Advantage (5:2)

Paul has just told The Galatians, that they have been freed by Christ Alone, to walk in freedom, and not to put back on the yoke of slavery to the law again...

Paul then says...

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LOOK...almost like if he's grabbing them by the shoulders and getting right in their face...

LOOK If you do what these Judaizers are telling you to do to be right with Christ...

Just know...Christ will be of no advantage to you!

That's a strong statement....

- Paul is saying Christ is an advantage to the believer...
- And you're about to throw that away!

NOW Paul is not condemning circumcision...

Paul is condemning **IF** they **ACCEPT** circumcision as accomplishing some type of work...some type of merit in earning them salvation...

SEE

- The whole picture of this minor surgery...was God cutting away the sin from a man's heart...
- But the picture had gone from being a picture...
- To them believing **IT WAS DOING THE WORK...**

Like we saw earlier in Galatians...

- Abraham **BELIEVED** in God...
- **A WORK HE RECEIVED...**
- **BEFORE CIRCUMCISION**

See, this was never about a minor surgery...

- This was always about **WHERE** someone puts their confidence....

Christ will be no advantage to you...

- If you don't put your full confidence in HIM...
- IF you **TRY** to add something **TO HIS FINISHED WORK....**

Hey, we can do the same thing, can't we?

- Some of us base our standing before God on the work we do...
 - ...I've done this...
 - ...I've done that...
 - ...And I may not be perfect...but I'm not as bad as THAT PERSON...

But God's WORD has just told us...hitch yourself to the yoke of Christ!

- Not based on what we have done...
- But based on what Christ has FINISHED!

See the moment we try to ADD ANYTHING to Jesus...we have replaced Him!

B. You Owe The Whole Law (5:3)

Further, in **vs. 3**, Paul says...I testify **AGAIN**...anyone who accepts circumcision is obligated to keep the whole law...

In other words...if you're trying to earn your righteousness...

- then you gotta keep all of the law
- One slip up...one time...in your entire life...
- Gone...no righteousness...no hope!

But God's Word just told us...**STAND FIRM...IN THE FREEDOM OF CHRIST...**

That you've been freed from trying to carry a weight you can't carry...

- It's that suitcase my kids were trying to bear-hug and carry...
- It weighed more than them...
- We've taken on a debt that we cannot pay!
- That only Christ could pay!

C. You Cut Yourself Off From Grace (5:4)

Therefore, Paul says in **vs. 4**, if you do this... you've been **CUT OFF FROM CHRIST...** because you've said **NO to the grace of God** and **yes to trying to DO IT YOURSELF!**

You looked at the grace of God...when you are bear-hugging that suitcase that weighs more than you and said... **"I GOT IT...I CAN DO IT BY MYSELF..."**

- ***You haven't fallen from grace because God's grace refused you...***
- ***You have fallen away from grace...because YOU refused God's grace....***

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- Either because you said...**I GOT IT...I CAN DO IT BY MYSELF...**
- Or because you've convicted yourself...**YOU DON'T DESERVE IT...**

If that's you...

Can I just remind you of **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

HEY CHRISTIAN:

When we're trying to do it on our own...

Trying to earn God's righteousness...by doing the right things...

Then what God's Word says...is...you've severed yourself from the grace of God....

We're either resting in the grace of God....

Or we've cut off the grace of God...

D. But We Wait, We Don't Work (5:5)

But then look at vs. 5...

Paul says...through The Holy Spirit...by faith...**WE** can eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness!

Paul goes from saying "**you**" to saying "**we**"...

- Paul has been talking to The Galatian Christians and warning them of the danger of falling from grace...
- But now...he includes himself and **describes what the attitude of a TRUE BELIEVER looks like....**

We Wait By FAITH

- We are presently children of God...
- **WHO ARE WAITING**...to be **FULLY** with GOD...
- We have a settled confidence that our future is in Heaven with God our Father and Jesus Christ...
- We have a settled confidence...
 - That one day God is gonna look at sinners such as us and will announce, "**NOT GUILTY**"...
 - Not because we deserve it...

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- But ALL because of Jesus Christ!
- AND HIS AMAZING GRACE...
- **SO we're waiting on it...BY FAITH!**
 - We're not like stressed-out, anxious people, trying to secure heaven... **OUR FUTURE IS SECURE...**
 - We're simply **EAGERLY WAITING ON IT**

E. Faith Works Through Love (5:6)

Further...look at **vs. 6...**

Paul says explicitly...when you're **"IN CHRIST"**...**when Christ has saved you....**

- neither circumcision nor uncircumcision can improve your **standing before a Holy God!**

But Paul says... the only thing that matters is faith working through love!

AND Notice...Paul says that our **FAITH WORKS!**

What does that mean?

Well....

Ephesians 2:10 says

We have been created in Christ...FOR GOOD WORKS...that we should walk in them...

John MacArthur put it this way:

"They do not work for righteousness but out of righteousness, through the motivating power of love"

SEE:

- Faith **IS** what saves you!
- **BUT LOVE** is what faith **DOES THROUGH** you!

Now I know how sinners think...because I am one....

So I want to guard any of us from hearing that we are saved by faith alone and thinking...

"Well, if I'm saved by grace alone through faith alone...then I guess it doesn't matter what I do..."

But Paul clearly says here in vs. 6...*THAT FAITH WORKS*

Hear Me:

- If you say you have faith...but you've never once changed how you treat others...
- If you say you have faith...but it's never caused you to treat others like Jesus has treated you...
- If you say you have faith...but you've never once loved the person that you can't stand...

...I believe this **Galatians 5:6**...looks straight at us and asks...

- **Do you really have faith?**
- **Because the evidence of OUR FAITH is OUR LOVE**

This is exactly what we saw back in **vs. 1**...that we are free “from our silly little selves”....

Why?....

- So we can love God, and we can love others!
- We are saved...created in Christ...**FOR GOOD WORKS!**

THIS MEANS:

- We're not saved and stored
- We're not saved and sitting on a shelf until we get to Heaven
- But we are saved, and we are set **FREE TO GET TO THE WORK OF LOVING OTHERS AS CHRIST HAS LOVED US!**

Let's keep reading in **vs. 7-12 to see how Paul ends this section**

III. Watch Out For What Trips You (5:7-12)

7 You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

8 This persuasion is not from him who calls you.

9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

10 I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is.

11 But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed.

12 I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!

A. You Were Running Well (5:7)

Paul asks a question in vs. 7...you were running well....who hindered you? Who tripped you up?

AND Paul loves a good race imagery...so he says here you were running the race well...

- Like Paul had come...preached the gospel
- He had seen them come to faith in Christ alone...
- And then soon after he left, the Judaizers began to tell them that faith alone in Christ alone was not enough....

So Paul says **Who tripped you up?**

WHO KEPT YOU from **obeying the truth!?**

B. That Persuasion Is Not From Him Who Calls You (5:8-9)

So Paul says in **vs. 8**, what they are persuading you to believe is not from God who has called you.

- God called you in grace...
- God forgave you by grace...
- But these false teachers are telling you you have to **earn your keep...**
- What they're telling you **is not FROM GOD!**

C. They Contaminate (5:9)

Paul says these false teachers...they're like a little leaven, that leavens the whole lump...

Now if you're like me...I have no idea about anything when it comes to baking...

I know we have some sourdough ladies in here...and I am grateful for you...including my wife who makes some amazing bread...

But apparently leaven is yeast...

- And a pinch of it works its way through an entire batch of dough...
- You don't need a whole lot
- Just a little pinch and a little time...
- And it makes a big difference in the dough...causing it to expand greatly...

In scripture...leaven is often used to represent **sin and false teaching...**

Galatians 5.1-12 | Freedom To Stand

- SO when Paul mentions yeast to the Galatians...he is talking specifically about the false teaching of the Judaizers...
- Their “yeast” was to add works to faith for salvation...
 - In particular...they wanted the Galatians to get circumcised...
 - And like we saw in Chapter 4, some of them were already observing days and months and seasons and years...

SO what Paul is saying here is that yeast, or false teaching, has a way of spreading until it works its way through the whole church and brings contamination!

This is why **Martin Luther** said that “*in theology a tiny error overthrows the whole teaching*”...

Philip Ryken put it this way:

FALSE DOCTRINE USUALLY DOES NOT SOUND AT ALL LIKE FALSE DOCTRINE...AT THE BEGINNING...

- Like justified by faith...or...justified by faith **ALONE**
- People will say “who cares”...
- OR “what difference does it make whether Jesus is **THE WAY** or simply **A WAY**...”

Well, when it comes down to you **STANDING FIRM IN THE FREEDOM OF YOUR SALVATION...**

....IT APPEARS IT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD!

So Paul is saying...don't let the false teachers contaminate you!

D. God Will Handle The Troubler (5:10)

Then in **vs. 10**, Paul says I have confidence...**in The LORD**....

- I have confidence that **He who began a good work in you...will perfect it...**

However...Paul says...**I AM ALSO CONFIDENT...**

- That those who are troubling you...
- **They will face the judgment of God!**

And notice...Paul says “whoever he is”...

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- Paul is not here to name names...
- It doesn't matter how big his name may be
- It doesn't matter how impressive he may speak...

NOBODY GETS AN EXEMPTION ON THAT DAY!

THE ONE CAUSING PEOPLE TO NOT TRUST IN GOD...WILL BEAR THE PENALTY....

E. The Offense Of The Cross (5:11)

Then Paul gets personal...

Apparently some were going around and telling the Galatian believers...

- Oh yeah...Paul...he still preaches that you have to be circumcised...
- They were like crooked salesmen...saying whatever they had to say to get the sale....

And Paul says...if this is so...

THEN WHY AM I STILL BEING PERSECUTED?!

- Paul had been beaten...
- he had been stoned and left for dead...
- he had been run out of one town after another...

And Paul says...If I were preaching the SAME THING AS THEM...

- Then nobody would be persecuting me...
- ***But they are!***

But Paul says...the fact that I'm preaching that ***Christ Crucified is the ONLY WAY to be saved***...is the very reason I'm still getting persecuted!

Hey Today:

If you are a believer of Jesus Christ...you know this...

The Gospel is offensive.

People still hate to hear ***John 14:6***

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Even today, people will say...

- How can you be so close-minded?
- How can you say that ***only your way is the right way?***

Galatians 5.1-12 | Freedom To Stand

Well first of all...***I NEVER SAID THAT...WE NEVER SAID THAT...***

- The God who created the universe and everything in it said that in His Holy Word...
- I simply believe it...hold fast to it...and proclaim what HE HAS SAID!

AND People hate to be told that Jesus is the ONLY WAY...

- But if we genuinely want to love others
- If we genuinely want others to walk in encouragement
- If we genuinely want others to experience “belonging”

Then the most loving thing we can do is to share with them that
ANYONE CAN BE ADOPTED INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD...NOT BY OUR WORKS...NOT BY OUR MERIT...

- ***BUT BY GRACE ALONE THROUGH FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE!***

So another characteristic of false teachers is they persecute true teachers....

F. They Should Be Cut Off (5:12)

Finally...Paul ends this section in vs. 12 with a doozy...

He says I wish that those who unsettle you...***WOULD EMASCULATE THEMSELVES...***

Now if you know what that means...I'm not going to explain it...you know that is harsh...

But I do want to give us some cultural context so we can understand fully what Paul is saying here...

In this day and time, there were those who worshipped a pagan nature goddess, ***Cybele***, and many of the male worshippers would castrate themselves and become eunuchs....

So Paul is not here expressing a cruel desire for the Judaizers' punishment...he already said God would take care of that back in ***vs. 10...***

What Paul is saying here is:

If they're going to have one foot in paganism, why don't they just go all the way in...

If, like pagans, they believe that human works can earn them the favor of God... why don't they just go full on pagan like those who worship Cybele!?

AND There's some play on words here...

These men were obsessed with cutting.

- They were telling these men they had to be cut in order to belong to God.
- These men were cutting them off from running the race well
- ***BUT PAUL SAYS...THEY ARE ACTUALLY CUTTING THEMSELVES OUT.***

John Stott asked this question, and it made me think deeply this week...

If we loved God's church and God's Word the way Paul did...

WE WOULD FEEL SOMETHING LIKE THAT TOO.

Parents, Grandparents...uncles...aunts...siblings...

Let me ask it in this way:

- If somebody was teaching something that would put your children back under a yoke...
- Causing them to carry a burden that is not theirs to carry....

How would you respond?

Paul saw this happening to brothers in Christ that He loved...

So He reminded them....

- Christ has Set You Free
- Stand Firm in that freedom..
- Don't Go Back Putting On A Yoke Of Slavery
- And Watch Out For The False Teachers...

Transition

That's what God's Word says and means.

I want us to now walk through a few ways to apply this to our own lives.

Applications

1. Stand Firm In What You Cannot Add To

We saw in God's Word today that Paul told these believers to stand firm in their freedom...

- A freedom that was already theirs...
- full forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

HEY FOR US TODAY:

I wonder...if WE are standing firm IN OUR FREEDOM?

When we have a "good week"...

- We read our bible every day
- We don't lose our tempers with our kids or spouse...
- We didn't give in to that one sin....

Like do we feel closer to God on those weeks?

What about when you have a "bad week"...

- You blow it... you lose your temper
- You gave in to that one sin...
- You're fighting with everyone in your house
- You look different at home than you do at church...

Do you then feel like you gotta keep your distance from God for a while...until you clean yourself up?

I want to be honest with you...that is the YOKE in many of our lives...

- ***AND THAT IS NOT THE GOSPEL...***
- That is us being weighed down in the opposite of the freedom of forgiveness...

That is us being weighed down by guilt...when we come in here and sing, ***"No guilt in life, no fear in death..."***

So I so desperately want you to TRULY HEAR God's Word this morning:

FOR FREEDOM...CHRIST HAS SET US FREE...

- not so we can go back to a yoke of slavery...
- Not so we can keep an imaginary scoreboard in our minds of I did this many good things to cancel out all the bad things I did last week...

- ***NO...BUT TO HEAR GOD'S WORD....SO WE CAN SING WITH A SETTLED ASSURANCE:***

- *"No power of hell...no scheme of man...can ever pluck me from His hand!"...*
- *Till' he returns, or calls me home...Here in the power of Christ I'll stand..."*

And we sing that...

But yet...far too often...***INCLUDING ME...***

We feel like instead of standing in the power of Christ...

- I've got to climb up another step...
- I've got to do this....
- I've got to earn this...

And to God we look like my littles trying to bear-hug that suitcase out of the car and into the hotel...

But yet ***God's WORD*** says...***STAND FIRM...***

- Refuse to move off the ground that you're already on...where Christ has said...***YOU ARE FORGIVEN!***
- ***Instead of saying ... "I CAN DO IT ON MY OWN" ...***
- ***Rest in the reality...THAT CHRIST HAS ALREADY PICKED UP THAT HEAVY SUITCASE AND TAKEN IT ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP FLOOR OF THE HOTEL!***

So when you have the "bad weeks"...

- run to Christ all the more...
- Not like one who is hiding...trying to be back in good graces...
- But like one that jsut says...***HOW...***
- ***How could you send Your SON...***
- ***TO DIE FOR A WRETCH LIKE ME...***

See it's in the depths of our sinfulness...

We begin to catch a glimpse of the greatness of HIS GRACE!

So today...

I just want to encourage you from what God's Word says...

- Stand Firm.
- Rest in Christ's finished work.

Because like I said earlier...

***We can't improve the finished work of Jesus Christ.
So...Stand Firm In What You Cannot Add To***

2. Let Your Faith Get To Work

Now if I stopped right there...

Somebody might walk out and say...

- "Well then it doesn't matter what I do."
- "If I can't add anything...then I guess I'll just sit here."

But that is not what Paul said.

Look at **vs. 6** one more time...

"faith working through love."

9 weeks we've been in this book...

- AND we have seen over and over what faith is NOT...
 - It's not works.
 - It's not rule-keeping....
- **And for the first time, in vs. 6, Paul tells us what faith DOES.**
 - **FAITH WORKS.**
 - Not to earn our salvation...
 - **But the outcome of our faith...is good works!**
 - **LOVE!**

Like the old preachers used to say:

- Faith is the ROOT.
- Love is the FRUIT.

So here's what I want to ask you this morning...

- What is the fruit of your salvation?

Charles Spurgeon said love is like a wrench that fits every bolt there is.

- Some of you can teach a child.
- Some of you can write the check.
- Some of you can sit in a hospital room at midnight with somebody who just needs someone there...

Church...

- It is not the size of the work.
- It's the root it's growing out of.

Today in our church is Serve Sunday... and I have stood up here this morning and told you the work you do in this church is not the reason that God accepts you...

- ***And that is absolutely true...***
- ***But it is ALSO equally true...that you have been saved for good works, as we see in Ephesians 2:10***

It's also equally true, like we see in **Ephesians 4:12**, that God has given the saints to be equipped for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...

Therefore, **LET YOUR FAITH GET TO WORK...**

- If you are a member of this body...how can you serve God's church?
- If you are a college student...don't just use your time here in Stephenville to be **a consumer of the church...**but how can you be **a contributor to building up the body of Christ?**

Not to earn anything...we already have everything in Christ...

- But because you have a faith that is **ALIVE...**
- Because we're not saved and stored...
- Because we are saved to serve!

And here's the thing about signing up to SERVE today...

- if you sign up... **SO God will be pleased with you...you put that yoke back on...**
- **BUT IF YOU SIGN UP TO SERVE BECAUSE GOD IS ALREADY PLEASED WITH YOU IN CHRIST...**that is faith working through love!

We are saved and SET FREE... so let's get to the work of loving others as Christ has loved us.

3. The Offensive Gospel

Today...where are you standing?

- *Are you standing firm in the finished work of Jesus Christ... resting that HE ALONE IS ENOUGH...*
- *OR ARE You still trying to CARRYING A YOKE...STILL TRYING TO EARN IT...still trying to be good enough for God*

And church, I have to tell you that what I am about to say is offensive...

- *It is meant to be*
- *Paul said, if it isn't...then it isn't THE GOSPEL*

The Whole of The Bible Tells Us This:

GOD IS HOLY.

In the beginning, God created all things...and He alone is perfect...

WE ARE SINFUL.

But every single one of us has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God

AND THAT CREATES A PROBLEM.

Because our sin separates us from a Holy God...in this life and in the next...*And no amount of rule-keeping can fix it...YOU ARE A SINNER SEPARATED FROM A HOLY GOD...*

BUT JESUS IS THE ANSWER.

Because God...sent forth His Son...

- Born of a woman...born under the law...
- He lived the perfect life...
- *He carried the yoke that you and I were never able to bear*
- He went to a cross and He REALLY died...taking the punishment that your sin deserved...
- He was REALLY buried...
- And three days later He REALLY rose from that grave...defeating sin and death forever...

WHY?

- So that you could be FREE!
- Not free to do whatever you want...
- FREE from a weight that you were never meant to carry
- Free from having to earn what HE has already bought!

SO THIS MORNING...

- You may have walked in here HUNKERED DOWN...still trying to bear hug that heavy suitcase of trying to be good enough...
- But you can walk out of here STANDING FIRM...resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ...
 - RESTING THAT HE'S ALREADY GRABBED THAT HEAVY WEIGHT FOR YOU...
 - HE BORE THE WEIGHT OF THE WRATH OF GOD...**FOR YOUR SIN...**
 - ***And today we can get what it is that we don't deserve... because He took what He didn't deserve...***

TODAY: Would you turn from your sin...

- Confess Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior...
- And believe that He is WHO HE SAYS HE IS?

And scripture tells us that:

if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved

If that's you...don't leave this room the way you walked in...

- Grab any member of this church...this week...any time...
- And we would LOVE to show you what it means to be **SET FREE by JESUS CHRIST**
- Christ is enough!
- Today...***Won't you trust Him?***

Big Idea

Freedom Isn't Something You Earn; It's Something You STAND In.

**Church, I Love You So Much.
Let's Pray.**