

Series: **Leadership 2022**
Today's Title: **"Deeply Rooted" - part 2**
January 9, 2022 – *Galatians 5:1-13*

Objective: To help Christians choose the path of grace as they become deeply rooted in Christ.

Next Sunday I'll begin a sermon series: **"Confident Hope"** - a study of **1 & 2 Thessalonians**.

This study will take us to the beginning of August.

Today, we will take another look at our 2022 theme: Deeply Rooted.

I want to begin by introducing you to a young lady in our church by the name of Jordan Tabor - and I think she is a great example of a follower of Christ being deeply rooted in Christ and His Word.

Interview / discussion / testimony

1. How old are you? What grade are you in?
2. You've been involved with something unfamiliar to many of us: The National Bible Bee.

Video -

Can you tell us when you got involved with this - why you got involved - and what it's about?

3. There is a competition part to this - that we'll talk about in a moment - but first, tell us about the summer study and what is involved with that?

4. Competition - you're quite the competitor - and you've fully embraced the competition part of the National Bible Bee - can you tell us about the national competition?

- *Pics (5) of Jordan at the NBB*

5. Has your involvement with the National Bible Bee helped you grow in your faith? Has it brought you close to God and your understanding of your riches in Christ? How?

Opening prayer (for Jordan - and for sermon)

As many of you know...I love sports.

I played sports growing up - and as long as I could into my adult life.

I still love to play sports...when I have the chance.

What I love is not only the game...but the competition.

Competing gives me adrenaline that is intoxicating at times.

I've not only loved playing sports, but I've always loved watching sports.

Over the years my enthusiasm for some professional sports has waned - and my enthusiasm for college and Olympic sports has remained high.

Why has this happened?

I realize my observations are generalized and simplistic - but for many professional athletes - especially those in the major sports of baseball, basketball, and football - the joy of the

game and of competition seems uncommon in many professional athletes.

The business of the game - their contract - their sponsorships begin to take center stage.

But in the college ranks, and there are certainly exceptions to this, but the joy of the game and the fun of competition seems to be more present - more obvious.

I've noticed a similar distinction in many Christians.

- Some live their faith out of duty and obligation - and seem to be frustrated with the world around them.

- Others live with a contagious joy and the grace of God overflows out of their life.

I don't have any enthusiasm for going through the motions of religion.

I want to live the faith with a contagious joy - in the grace and love of God - and I want that to be obvious to others.

Last Sunday I introduced our theme for 2022: Deeply Rooted.

We looked at **Colossians 2:1-9** and talked about living out our faith.

We saw how Christ must be the focus of our ministry.

We considered the Apostle Paul's warning of the dangers that work to lure us away from Christ.

We also looked at how our faith is strong when we're deeply rooted in Jesus.

Today I want to continue with those thoughts - but from a different passage - and a slightly different angle at which to view these important truths.

Turn to **Galatians 5:1-13**.

Today, we're going to see a good way - and a bad way - of living for God.

A good way that the N.T. encourages us to follow.

A bad way that the N.T. discourages us to follow.

Every Christian's choice: grace or law. vs. 1

Being saved...putting your faith in Jesus - at that very moment is when you receive total and absolute forgiveness of your sins - and when you receive eternal life - the life of God in you - the Spirit of God in you. This is what Paul is referring to when he states in the beginning of **vs. 1**:

"For freedom Christ has set us free..."

This statement looks back at the work of God - the action of God - when He "set us free" from our bondage / slavery to sin and the penalty of sin.

We are freed from sin's penalty when we put our faith in Jesus.

But, at that time, and each day after that, the Christian must make a choice.

Each of us...consciously or subconsciously...will ask ourselves these questions:

‘Will I live by the grace of God and my love for God and others?’

Or...

‘Will I live by the law of God - by rules, standards, and regulations that will keep me acting / living in holiness?’

This is what Paul is referring to at the end of **vs. 1**:
“stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

Paul puts forth a choice - a fork in the narrow road that each Christian - each follower of Christ must choose which path they will take.

We are to “stand firm therefore”.

Hold your ground.

You have been “rooted” in Christ (Colossians 2:7a) - so remain in Christ.

But...there is a danger.

There is a bad path - an unhealthy and joyless path we can take here.

In our attempt to “stand firm” in Christ, we can reject our freedom in Christ - and enslave ourselves.

In our attempt to live a God-pleasing life, we can work against the freedom He has given us in His Son.

Notice: “submit **again** to a yoke of slavery.”

That word “again” is important - and informative.

It’s a simple adverb - but it tells us:

- 1) We *were* under the yoke of slavery before coming to faith in Christ.
- 2) We can *go back* to our old slavery. This doesn’t mean a loss of salvation, but a loss of the joy and freedom of our salvation.

In the church in Galatia in the 1st century - and today - right here at CDOBC - we have the same choice before us - and the same temptation within our choice.

Today, I want to detail the two paths’ Christians can take in trying to live out their faith.

Path #1: Freedom in the grace of God and our love for God.

Path #2: Slavery to the law of God

The path of Christian slavery. vs. 2-4

The Apostle details the path to Christian slavery.

Read vs. 2, 4

This is being done for religious piety and law-keeping. That is what Paul is talking about.

Paul is not saying we lose our salvation.

He is saying we lose the benefits and freedoms of grace when we choose a system of Law.

We lose the joy of our salvation in Christ when we try and earn our salvation through our works.

We will “have fallen away from grace” if we choose Law - and those we try and introduce to Christ through this hybrid of grace and law will not know what the grace of Christ is - and they will remain lost as they try and earn their salvation through their spiritual works.

If we look to be justified by religious rules and regulations, we will never experience God’s grace in Christ.

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

Paul points out that you can’t pick and choose part of the Law - or only a few religious rules that you prefer.

You either fall onto God’s grace and mercy - or you must live in perfect alignment with the Law of God.

Even if you come up with your own list of religious rules - whether it’s your made-up list or God’s list - you won’t live up to either standard - because sin is too powerful, and both your sin and the Law will enslave you.

Galatians 3:10

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.”

Nobody can obey the entire Law of God.

The reason for the Law of God is not to make us perfect - or to give us a path of obedience for life.

Paul tells us why the Law was given.

Galatians 3:23-24

“Now before faith (Jesus / Gospel) came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.”

- God used the Law to point us to Christ.
 - He used the Law to show how it's impossible to live in perfect obedience to a system of works.
 - He used the Law to point us to grace.
- So, Christian...what will you choose?
To live by Law - or by grace?

The danger of listening to the wrong people. vs. 7-12

Once again...just like we saw in **Colossians 2** last Sunday - we have a warning.

The Bible does not advocate being closed minded or being ignorant of the world around us.

But the Bible is clear that we need to apply wisdom with what we listen to and what we read, and what we watch.

We need to be wise and understand God's truth - but also understand the subtlety of false teaching.

If we don't apply wisdom in these areas, we will expose ourselves to danger.

The danger is losing the truth of Christ.

The danger of choosing the wrong path is losing the joy of Christ and your freedom in the grace of Christ.

The danger is listening to “plausible arguments” (Col. 2:4, 8) which are false - and will lead you away from the grace and freedom of Christ.

Read vs. 7-10

The problem the Galatians were facing was they were being told - by someone or by a group of someone's - that they needed something more than faith in Jesus.

They needed Jesus + something.

In their case, they were being told they needed to be circumcised and to adhere to other works of the O.T. Law.

They were being told Jesus + circumcision.

Jesus + dietary restrictions.

Jesus + Sabbath observance.

Jesus + _____.

Galatians 1:7

“Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.”

Galatians 3:1

“You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?”

Christian...listen clearly.

What saves you is your faith in Jesus Christ.

Faith in His sacrifice on the cross as payment for your sins.

Your faith in His resurrection - that He not only paid the price for your sin - but He conquered sin and its penalty of death - and He promises to raise you unto a glorified, spiritual body - for all eternity.

Paul didn't preach Jesus + something else - as he explains in **vs. 11-12**.

Paul says:

Read vs. 11-12

vs. 12 - Paul vents - but his venting is within the boundaries of Holy Spirit inspired truth.

Paul is really upset - because these are very serious issues.

These things hold people's eternity in the balance.

He's saying, *'If removing the foreskin was a good thing...why not go all the way with it!!!'*

In Galatia there was a pagan goddess that was worshipped - by the name of Cybele (Ku-bayla) - the Great Mother of the Gods (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Great-Mother-of-the-Gods>).

She was believed to be a protector of cities, among other things.

Those who served as priests in her temple and extremely devout worshipers were eunuchs - self castrated eunuchs - so they could serve and worship.

This is what the Galatians would have thought of when Paul says those who are unsettling them should go all the way with it - and be like the devout followers of Cybele.

Side note...today, Cybele is the deity worshiped by some in the transgender community and is an icon for pagan feminism. (See: <https://www.learnreligions.com/cybele-mother-goddess-of-rome-2562630> and also <https://www.gallae.com/about-us>)

It's a logical jump...if a little bit of O.T. Law was needed to supplement faith in Jesus - why not all the O.T. Law?

Why pick and choose only some of the Law?

Galatians 2:16

“...know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.”

None of the Apostles taught Jesus + something else. Don't let yourself fall for someone teaching Jesus + something else.

So... “standing firm” (vs. 1) means staying true to the Gospel and not believing something that isn't part of the Gospel!

But...it also means doing something positive - doing things that will build and establish your faith in Christ.

The Christian's path to freedom and righteousness. vs. 5-6

We cannot get to freedom and righteousness by the works of the Law.

These (freedom & righteousness) can only be attained through God's grace.

Read vs. 5-6

There's no spiritual advantage to circumcision - or non-circumcision.

Faith in Christ - leads to love for Christ - and love for others.

The greater motivation for holy living is not law, but love.

Augustine's (Church Father - 354 - 430 A.D.) great statement is based on this truth.

"Love God and do what you like."

If you love God, you will love others.

Jesus said all the commandments are wrapped up in these 2 commands (Love God, Love others).

So, Augustine understood if a person loves God, then their heart's desire will be to serve God and please God - so he says, *"Do what you like!"*

The result of God's grace = love. vs. 13

Unfortunately, and this is the great fear of the legalist - the rule-makers - that someone might abuse God's grace and indulge in sin, thinking God is gracious and forgiving toward me, so it's no big deal!
So, Paul gives 1 more caution here.

Read vs. 13

God's grace leads us to love.
Love God...and then love others.

Apply it...

As you root yourselves deep in Christ - as you build up your faith and establish your faith in Christ...

Choose the path of grace, not the path of Law.

You can choose the wrong path - a harmful path - even when you have good intentions.

Choose to walk in - grow in - and share with others the grace of Christ. The truth of Christ and His grace are not in opposition to each other - they are perfectly harmonious together.

Grace is where we find the freedom and liberty in Christ and His salvation.

Beware of the dangers of false teaching / false ideas.

Even small - what seem to be insignificant ideas can be harmful.

vs. 7 - "A little leaven leavens the whole lump."

Join a small group - read Scripture and pray - read books / blogs - watch YouTube videos that are biblically sound and can build your faith in the truth of Christ.

Love is the measure / indicator of spiritual growth and maturity.

Love.

Love is the mark of Christ in your life.

Not morality, ethics, or any other indicator / trait.

Morality and ethics are good - they should be in alignment with what Jesus and the Apostle's taught, but they are secondary.

Love is primary!!!

Love will lead to serving others - doing what's best for them.

This is the mark of someone who is deeply rooted in Christ.

A life of love - and living with the truth of Christ which leads to serving others.

Close in prayer