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4/7/24 Galatians 5:1-15

Bet you guys didn't know you're gonna do some Christian hokey pokey this morning, did ya?

Good job, kiddos, good job.

All right, well, I am very thankful to be with you all again this Lord's Day.

Over the last couple of Sundays, we have had the opportunity to focus in on the work of Christ as the good shepherd.

As we looked at just the coming of Christ, the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ.

And I pray that those messages, those truths, have brought much joy into your hearts and minds over the last few weeks.

We need to be reminded of the hope that we have.

And just in case you were not able to be with us for those Sundays or Good Friday, you can always go back and watch those through our website or through the app.

We try to record and make those things as accessible as we can because we know that sometimes you're not able to be with us.

Or maybe you're serving in a ministry, like kids ministry or security, and you're not able to maybe be in the room with us.

But one of the things that, even if you are serving this church, the thing that we want you to be more than anything is to be a worshiper.

And so we try to provide those so you can go back and listen later on.

And just as a word of thanks, for those that do serve in ministries that take you out of this room on any given Sunday, thank you.

You allow so many to be able to be in here, to allow their kids to be safe, for allow us to be safe, and we just really thank you for that service.

But this morning, I would like to return to our study in the Book of Galatians, the Book of Galatians.

And we are heading into the last two chapters this morning.

We're going to pick it up in Chapter 5.

So if you have a Bible, please find your way to Galatians Chapter 5, starting in verse 1.

If you're using one of those black ESV pew Bibles, that should be on page 974.

974, Galatians Chapter 5, starting in verse 1.

Now, before we jump into the text, I do, it has been a few weeks since we've been in Galatians.

I want to give a quick recap of where did we leave things off?

Where did we leave things off at the end of Chapter 4?

Well, Chapter 4 ended with Paul reminding the Galatian Church that you are sons of promise, Christian, you're sons of promise.

In contrast to being son of slavery, children of promise are marked by those that have been saved by the work of God, that God has saved you because He has known you.

And it is God who has adopted you into His family, that you are saved because of God's love for you.

And it's based not upon what you have done, but you're welcoming into His family based on the work of who?

The work of Christ, who is the promised Savior.

In contrast, Paul explained that to be a child of slavery means that you're trying to take salvation into your own hands.

That you're trying to manipulate or fast track something that maybe does not belong to you.

That you want the benefits of Christ, but not actually have Christ himself.

And what Paul reckons that is, is failing to see that the law of God, the law of God was given primarily so that you would see that you're in need of a perfect law keeper.

That the law was given so that you would go, is there anyone that can keep that?

Because I haven't, I can't.

And Paul is saying that is the purpose of the law.

So don't be a child of slavery where you're trying to use the law to give you something that was not ever created to give you.

To not return to the bondage of law.

And so Paul has been, I would say, rather emphatic on that discourse of making a clear distinction between law and gospel that he knows that Christ has come to set us free from the bondage of law in which we all once were, every single one of us.

But if you are familiar with the story of Israel, much like the Israelites, when they were freed from their captivity in Egypt, let out from Egypt, through the Red Sea, and on their way to the Promised Land, they were tempted and even desired to return back to slavery, thinking that it would be better.

Much like for the Christian now, sometimes we are tempted to return back to what once enslaved us, because we don't quite see or quite understand exactly God's purpose and timing in our lives.

But Paul is saying, no, just like the Israelites of old, you can trust where God is leading you.

You may be sojourning on your way to the Promised Land, but He will bring you there.

So take heart, trust Him.

So we have been set free from the bondage of sin.

But let me go ahead and stop there.

Let me pray for us one more time.

Pray for you.

I ask that you pray for me, and then I will read Galatians for us.

Well, Father, we want to come to You one more time to Your throne of grace, knowing that we are completely dependent on You to move through and speak through Your Word this morning.

And Lord, we are so thankful that You have given us, Lord.

You have not left us in the dark on who You are and what You do, but You've revealed Yourself in such a special way with a Word that allows us to come to faith, allows us to be edified, encouraged, built up in our knowledge and identity in You.

And Lord, I know that we all come in here with a lot of different things going through our minds and hearts.

And Lord, we trust that, that You've all brought us here right now for the purpose of hearing this Word to bring us to a greater love and affection for You.

This is for all of us, the youngest of the oldest.

We need You.

In Your name we pray.

Amen.

Alright, Galatians 5 verses 1-15 is where we're going to be this morning.

Let me go ahead and just read those for us.

For freedom, Christ has set us free.

Stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

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

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

You are severed from Christ.

You who would be justified by the law, you have fallen away from grace.

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

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

You were running well.

Who indeed, who hindered you from obeying the truth?

This persuasion is not from him who calls you.

A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

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.

But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted?

In that case, the offense of the cross has been removed.

I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves.

For you were called to freedom, brothers, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

Church, that is the word of the Lord for us this morning.

Thanks be to God indeed.

We're thankful for God's word.

So here, Church, in the beginning of verse 5, Paul is once again drawing us to one of the most important distinctions that any person can wrestle with.

And it's the distinction of justification.

How is one made right with God?

How is one made right with God?

How can I be justified?

How can I be declared clean?

How can I, though a sinner, be told that you are saved, that you are justified, that you are declared clean?

Will it come through my works of the law or will it come through my faith in Christ?

Do I live free in Christ or am I enslaved to something else?

See, these distinctions, Paul has been working through repeatedly through the preceding chapters.

But I want to remind us that we have to, the reason why Paul continues to go back to this is because this is something that we continually struggle with, don't we?

Maybe not explicitly, but certainly implicitly.

And so it's still relevant to our own ears.

The Galatians were being taught false doctrine, false teaching.

And what they were taught is not limited to the Galatians.

This is why it's in our Bible.

This is why, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we have this for us today.

Because this false teaching about how we're made right with God continues to be something that churches struggle with.

It happens in churches all the time.

And I would guess that if we had time to go around the room and maybe hear testimonies of those of you who maybe grew up in a church or have been a part of the church for a long time, you would give testimony that sometimes you get mixed messages when you come to church.

Maybe you were shown that salvation, yeah, it has Jesus to do with it, but really the emphasis is on what?

On what you do.

So this is one way of looking at salvation that's driven by your actions, that the Christian life is more concerned about what you do rather than what Christ has done.

So the emphasis is not on growing in your knowledge of Jesus, you're resting in him, but the emphasis of the Christian life is how are you performing?

When people look at you, do they see a perfect Christian?

Do they see someone that doesn't struggle with sin?

The emphasis is more on appearance.

And so, in response, sometimes Christians can feel like they're on a treadmill, constantly trying to prove themselves, maybe to God, maybe to others, that they're legit.

It has everything to do with their actions as the emphasis.

But another way of looking at salvation is a road marked by the finished work of Christ.

So the emphasis of the Christian life, then, is actually taking hold of what Christ has done, making Him known.

So the Christian life is not grounded upon what you do, but what Christ has done.

Good works, what you do, flow out of what you believe.

It's a reordering.

Does identity come before activity, or does activity provide your identity?

These are important distinctions to make.

In church, I believe these opening lines of Galatians 5, that Paul is highlighting those two approaches.

Those two approaches that the Galatians seem to be at a fork in the road on.

One road of the emphasis on what you do, leading to salvation, one driven by obedience, or the other road of grace.

That it's from your position, it's from your justification, it's from because Christ has saved you, even when you were dead in your trespasses, therefore you now are free to live.

So we should take notice then, as we walk through these verses, that Paul really is talking to two different groups.

And we have to acknowledge that, or else we could get very confused.

One group being brothers and sisters in the faith.

Brothers and sisters in the faith.

The other group being those that have not placed their faith in Christ, but are still trying to attain it through some kind of means, through some kind of observance to a certain commandment.

And we know most poignantly, that is through the act of circumcision here for the Galatian Church.

That in order to have saving faith, you must do this.

See, there's a sneaking in of something that you do in order to finish what Christ has begun.

But what does Paul say?

Let's look at verse 1 together.

He starts off with saying, For freedom, for freedom, Christ has set us free.

Stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Do not return to your old master, Christian.

Don't put on the burial clothes once again.

That's not who you are anymore.

You have been set free.

Christ is for you.

Hear this morning, Christian.

Christ is for you.

He's not against you.

He's for you.

And for freedom, He has set you free.

But one of the main points I want to look at this morning is those two different roads.

But I believe that Paul begins to unpack, starting in verse 2.

And this is really the road of salvation that comes through an observance to the law of God.

A hope that is tied to what you do rather than just what Christ has done.

He says this, look, trying to get their attention.

Their attention, our attention.

Look, I, Paul.

Remember, Paul the apostle.

Right, Paul, the one that had used to be a persecutor of Christians.

I, Paul, tell you this.

If you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.

No advantage to you.

So Paul is clearly, he's clearly saying that if you are circumcised, because you're circumcised, because you think that is what finishes your salvation.

That's what locks you in.

That's what saving faith entails.

That's what gains salvation.

That's what gains assurance.

Then Christ is of no advantage to you.

You actually don't need Christ.

You need something else.

Because the Christ of Scripture, the Christ of the Gospel is one that's all sufficient to save his people.

That he is that good shepherd that we were talking about the last couple of weeks.

And Paul was saying that if you need someone or something besides the finished work of Christ, then you actually have never believed in the Christ of Scripture.

He's of no advantage to you.

And Paul doubles down with this logic in verse 3.

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

If you're going to add one law into the requirement of salvation, if you're going to add one good work into the requirement of salvation, then you have to keep all of them.

All 613 Old Testament commandments, you got to keep every single one of them.

And if you don't know what all 613 are, well, then just keep the summary of the law.

To love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

And to love your neighbor as yourself, meaning to have an ongoing, perfect, personal, perpetual obedience to God, never sinning.

If you want to keep circumcision, then just keep it all.

Because if you add one, you got to keep it all.

And why is Paul making that point?

Because he knows you can't.

He knows you can't.

This is why Christ came, because there's only one that has, that has lived a life without any sin.

And it's not me.

It's not you.

It's only Jesus, who has no sin, who did love the Lord, his God, with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and did love his neighbor perfectly, without ever sinning.

Paul even plays on words here, in starting in verse 4.

He says, if Christ is no advantage to you, you are severed from Christ.

Remember the context that he's talking about, with circumcision being the background.

Right?

If you're going to be so about severing skin, what you're doing is you're actually severing yourself from Christ.

These have no advantage to you.

You are rejecting Christ.

And he says, and by you trying to be justified by the law, you have fallen from grace.



Now remember, who is he talking to here?

He's talking to those who are trying to justify themselves by the law.

So he's not talking to Christians in this moment.

This is really important.

Because this is not a text saying that you can lose your salvation.

We have plenty of clear texts that tell us that when you belong to Christ, when you have placed your faith in Him, when He has bestowed His salvific love on you, that doesn't ever get revoked.

That you are in His hand.

Nobody can snatch you out.

That there is nothing that can separate you from the love of God.

So he's not talking, I believe, to Christians here.

But he is making a point that when you try to do something, that you were not created to be able to do, you're going to fail.

You're going to fail.

Much like a toddler.

Parents, you know this.

A toddler who tries to stand on maybe a wobbly stool to reach a toy that was placed out of reach for him.

What's going to happen as he reaches out?

He's going to fall.

It's not going to be good.

But the good news of the Gospel Church is that God has provided.

There is one person that has attained what we could not.

And this is why salvation is by grace.

It's a gift.

It was given to us because we couldn't get it ourselves.

So Paul was constantly trying to unpack or to show the...

If you are trying to bind yourself to any law of God for your justification, then you don't get it.

You don't get what is required.

You actually don't understand the law of God.

But Paul in his grace continues to show us, but what is the road of salvation for sinners?

It's one marked by faith through grace.

Look at verse 5.

It talks about this separate way, this other road, the good news.

There's a road brought by the Spirit of God that God has moved.

And it says by faith, a road that we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

And it's this road, church, that Jesus is the only advantage of.

The only advantage we have is because of his righteousness, not ours.

Because he is the one that obeyed the law perfectly.

It was his work on the cross that gained our salvation, right?

It's his observance to the law of God.

That's what righteousness means.

It means observance to the law of God.

It's his observance to the law of God that has not only secured us, but it's also our hope.

Let me show you a quote by an old Scottish pastor.

Sometimes I...

Here's a confession.

I really wish I could preach in a Scottish accent, because I think it's so cool.

But that's not me.

So I'll just lead to reading cool Scottish quotes to you.

All right.

This is from a pastor named John Coffoon.

He says this, A sinner depends on the righteousness of Christ for justification to no good purpose if he does not rely on it only, and neither in whole nor in part on his own obedience.

What is he saying?

If you add anything, then you take it all away.

It's Jesus plus nothing that gains salvation.

Much like the hymn we sing around here all the time.

Nothing in my hands I bring, but simply to the cross I cling.

So this is a road marked by the work of God, by the righteousness of Christ.

But it also says that it's a road that we still wait eagerly for the hope of righteousness.

That we eagerly wait.

That we know that God is not done with us.

Paul knows that the Galatians are struggling with sin, and he's going to talk a little bit more about this later on.

Even the sin and the interpersonal dynamics between themselves.

But he's saying for the Christian, Christian, you have hope.

You have hope for the future, because Christ is not done with you.

So if you are acknowledging that there's still some elements, you're like, that's not righteous.

That's part of my old nature.

That's part of my old self.

Paul is encouraging the Christians, hope with eagerness.

Christ is not done.

Which I think is very good news for us, because we live in a very complicated world, don't we?

We live in a complicated world that has a lot of brokenness from other sin, from our own sin.

And what Paul is saying, that there will be a day where it's finally complete.

All of the work of God, all of the promises of God will see full consummation.

So hold on.

Don't give up.

Moving on to verse 6, he says, but how does circumcision fit into all this then?

How does it fit into this conversation, this discussion?

Well, what does it say?

It says, it doesn't count for anything.

Circumcised or not.

Circumcision does not play a role in your eternal destiny.

But what does?

Where your faith is at, where your trust is at, where your love is at, that does play a role.

In this faith that Paul is talking about, it's not just a mental ascent.

I hope you guys see the distinction between that.

A mental ascent is where you just maybe cognitively believe something, right?

But the scriptures tell us demons believe that Jesus is God, right?

They had an understanding of who he is.

But what's different then?

Because what we even have, I've met many people that believe that Jesus died on a cross mentally.

They think that was a historical fact.

They would even say that they could even believe that he is God himself.

But they don't have saving faith.

Why?

Because they have not placed their dependence on who Christ is and what he has done.

They're not banking on what he has done rather than what they do.

And so this faith, it means being completely anchored in them on who Christ is, what he did with his life, what he did with his death, what he did with his resurrection, and what he will continue to do as Lord and King over all creation.

Are you dependent and trusting and following that?

That's what Paul is getting at.

And looking at verse 7, Paul is frustrated.

He's frustrated with this church because he loves them.

He started off so well.

And any person who has ever been in ministry for more than a minute knows this frustration.

When you're walking with someone, and you have this common union with Christ, but then you see over time, maybe they start listening to other people that draw them away from Christ, away from his finished work.

And you go, why would you abandon that?

Why would you move past the gospel?

Why would you replace it with something else?

Because the truth didn't change.

Jesus didn't change.

So what happened?

Well, we as people, unfortunately, we can be very much influenced by what other people say.

It's why you have to be very careful on where you get information.

Who do you trust?

Who's your pastor?

Who's the one that knows your soul?

Who's the one that's going to speak into it?

Because there's a lot of people that want to give you information.

But as Paul has mentioned elsewhere, they don't care about your soul, though.

They're not going to give an account for you, in which God says, your pastors will give an account for your soul.

So even a little bit of confusion over the gospel, maybe even a little bit of a muddy of water between the difference between law and gospel, Paul says it's like leaven.

Even just a little bit of it can influence everything in which it touches.

So we have to fight always for that gospel doctrine.

It's so important.

What are the main things?

What are the things that are true and right and hold fast to them?

Thank you.

Paul goes on to talk about how he's confident in the work of God in their lives, and that the truth will prevail.

Perfect justice will come through.

And this is also an encouragement for those who have been in ministry more than a minute, that God is even at work all the time.

And it's not up to me.

I can shepherd, and I want to, and do my best, but I also know that I'm not the ultimate shepherd, and thanks be to God for that.

But if I could jump down to verse 12 for a moment, Paul does show a little bit of righteous sarcasm, doesn't he?

He says, in hoping that these individuals are very quick with the knife, it's like, I hope they slip a little bit and cause some pain to themselves.

I debated on how to preach this on Family Sunday, because it's always Family Sunday that we come across verses like this.

Not going to explain it, because we have sheets that say, draw what you heard.

Once again, wouldn't go well.

And you may think that that might be too blunt.

A pastor, right?

A apostle, right?

A writer of the Bible, you can't talk that way.

Well, Paul will talk that way, and he does talk that way in many times.

Not because he wants to be crude, not because he wants to be rash in his vocabulary, but because he wants the churches to know how serious sin is, and how serious it is if you confuse good gospel doctrine with something else, that it does have consequences.

Going back to verse 11, though, this moves on to my second point.

We see that Paul is committed to preaching an offensive gospel, an offensive message.

What does that mean?

Why is Paul wanting to preach something that's offensive?

Well, look at verse 11.

It says, But if I, brother, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted?

In that case, the offense of the cross has been removed.

Remember, throughout this letter, Paul has been trying to distinguish himself from these false teachers that are inside the Galatian Church.

Trying to show that, No, no, we are not preaching the same message.

It is very different.

This is why they're upset at me.

This is why I'm upset at them.

And Paul understands that the main reason why these false teachers were so upset is because the cross is offensive.

It's scandalous.

Paul talks about other places that it's a stumbling block for so many.

Now why is that?

It's the same reason why it is today.

The pure gospel of Jesus, the pure gospel of the Christ is still offensive.

That if you talk about Jesus, if you talk about how salvation only comes from him and him alone, if you talk about how salvation is brought to you by him, is kept for you by him, people don't like that.

They don't like it.

And why don't they like it?

Well, at some level, they're not uncomfortable with Christ being the ultimate hero, the one who gets all the glory over and over again.

It's offensive because you're saying that I don't have to do X, Y and Z.

No, you're saved by faith in Christ alone, by grace alone, for God's glory alone.

And it's offensive.

It's offensive to our legalistic hearts church, which every single person has a bent towards legalism.

What is legalism?

Legalism is when you want to add something to your salvation that you want to participate in some way that you want to be able to say, I have brought this or I am keeping this.

Yes.

But the offense of the gospel, the offense of the cross, is that we lay all those things down.

All of our pretended righteousness, all of our attempts to gain God's favor, all of the resume that we want to submit even at times.

Don't you know that I read my Bible every morning?

Don't you know I pray these prayers?

Don't you know that I've given sacrificially?

He goes, I know, but none of those things made me love you.

None of those things made me love you, and none of those things are going to make me love you more.

My love is perfected in what Christ has done.

And yeah, we can do those things out of that love, out of that identity, but never before.

See, the cross humbles us all.

And so Paul acknowledges that if I preach circumcision, if I preach an observance to that law, guess what?

The cross is no longer scandalous.

The cross is no longer a stumbling block to our religious bent.

The cross is no longer completely different than anything else this world tries to offer as far as gaining salvation or gaining a right standing with God.

And Paul's saying, I'm not going to have any part of it.

I will continue to preach a cross that is offensive.

Last point.

The cross brings us to freedom.

It brings us freedom.

And freedom to do what?

Freedom to live.

Starting in verse 13, Paul shifts now to then how this identity leads to that activity.

Identity will always precedes activity.

If you have noticed, there have not been a whole lot of commands so far in the Book of Galatians.

But he's been spending five chapters discussing identity.

In these last two sections, these last two chapters, there's going to come some of that activity.

But we have to realize, where has the emphasis been?

It's been on identity.

Verse 13, For you were called to freedom, brothers.

Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Being saved from the penalty of your sins does not make you want to.

Let me put it this way.

It doesn't give you a license to sin.



When you have understood that Jesus paid the penalty for your sins, the first thing that should come to your mind and heart is not, well, now I want to go sin some more.

There's no, no, no.

When you understand your identity in Christ, when you understand the work of Christ, when you understand your justification, it doesn't make you want to care about sin less.

It actually makes you want to care about sin more because you know what it costs your Savior.

You know what it costs Jesus.

And so Paul says, give no opportunity for the flesh.

And the flesh is, it's a way of saying your old nature, your old nature that wanted to sin, that wanted to rebel, that wanted to do the very opposite of what God had instructed you to do for life.

And so Paul was saying, don't give an opportunity for the flesh.

Don't try to put yourself back in the situations that you know will lead to you rebelling against the one that saved you.

Because Christ died so that you would live.

You have actually life.

Those things that once promised you life, what did they give you?

They gave you death.

But Christ does give you life.

And one of the biggest aspects of the Gospel then is that that life is a life marked by being adopted into the family of God.

So we get a family to do this with.

A family to live with.

A family to serve with.

A family that wants to live in freedom with you, to produce.

This is God honoring actions that you actually want to do more, not less.

But your motivations are completely different than what they once were.

And Paul is going to talk a whole lot about what this living, this freedom looks like in the coming verses.

About what it looks like to live life in the Spirit is the language that he uses.

But I want to end our time looking at verse 15.

This is an important text.

Because Paul is giving a warning to the church, them and I think even to us today, that if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

Paul is drawing on that family language.

He just said, brothers, brothers, family, brothers.

That has to mean something to you.

As you are part of this family, there is going to be some conflict.

Paul knows that in the church, much like a marriage, right?

That those that are closest to you, they are going to see your sin the most.

They are going to see your faults the most.

They will see it more than anyone else, because simply they are around you more than anyone else.

And it's okay for that to be exposed.

We actually want our sin to be brought into the light.

But that can be hard, can't it?

It can be difficult.

But though it's difficult, Paul is encouraging the Galatians that as they grow in Christ, right, as they are trying to resurrect this gospel doctrine and make the main things the main things again for them, that they are going to have to fight to love one another, have to fight to give grace to one another, show mercy to one another, help one another keep their identity in Christ at the forefront of who they are.

And not go the easy way out, which is to tear one another down.

Gospel doctrine does produce gospel culture, but both have to be fought for.

Both have to be contended for.

Both have to be realized when they are not being seen or evident.

And Paul is saying the alternative, the alternative to gospel culture is a culture that tears one another down, bites and devours.

It's language of something that's outside of humanity.

It's meant to be animalistic in its description.

Paul said this elsewhere, we do have a real enemy.

Christians do have a real enemy.

Let's not give another one.

Let's not make another one in ourselves.

And sadly, I think we could all, maybe even right now, you have stories come into mind in church history, or even your own church experience, where you have seen this warning actually play itself out in reality.

And you've seen the devastating consequences that you can be consumed by it.

That the effects of a non-gospel culture are far and deep.

Every church, every church, including us right here, must fight against the corruption of our own flesh.

They simply will have opportunity to buy and devour one another, as we see our own sin, right?

See the old areas that we want to grow in.

There's going to be tests where are we going to let preferences, personal preferences become divisions?

Are we going to let matters of Christian liberty become tests of orthodoxy?

Every church, every church will go through this until Christ comes back.

But may the church not become a battleground against one another, but may the church be that family gathering together, going let's continue to support each other.

Let's continue to give each other grace.

Let's continue to edify one another.

Let's continue to look to the one that's leading us.

Let's continue to look to our head.

Let's not move past the gospel.

Let's keep the main thing the main thing.

And the good news is that in the following verses, Paul does show us what it's like to walk in the spirit, and it's glorious.

It's glorious that that language of biting and devouring and being all consumed by one does not have to be the story of the church.

But God has given us a spirit to walk in.

It's given us a spirit that produces something far in contrast to biting and devouring one another.

But the spirit produces a union with Jesus, a union with Christ, that can carry us through all and any conflict.

Every conflict, every conflict that you go through is a way that you can grow in your union with Christ.

Every conflict.

Now, this does not mean that we can expect things to be perfect.

We know that.

We know that.

But it does mean that every conflict can give us an opportunity to walk in freedom in Christ, to grow in our opportunity to love one another, to grow in our opportunities to care for one another, bear one another's burdens.

And really to love one another.

Which Jesus said himself, your love for one another is going to be a testimony of my love to a watching world.

This is how serious it is.

And so church, we're going to end our time by thanking God for giving us this word.

Just showing us the dangers.

But also showing us those wonderful truths about these road of salvation that comes through faith.

The beauty of an offensive cross.

A cross that humbles us all and puts us all on the same plane.

And then we can actually then walk in newness of life.

Walk in that very freedom that Paul started with at the beginning of Galatians 5.

For freedom, Christ has set you free.

That's what he's about.

And what a gift it is to be shown that once again through his word.

Let me end there.

Let me pray for us.

And then we'll respond.

Well, Father, what a gift it is to have good news to share.

And where we thank you, as weird as it sounds, we thank you for the offense of the gospel.

And where we thank you that in Christ we have been set free.

Free to glorify you, free to live in the way that you designed us to live.

And where we know that the power of our old self, the power of the flesh is strong.

So Lord, continue to grow us.

We wait eagerly for your righteousness to continue to grow in us.

But we are so thankful that it is finished.

And would I pray that every single one of us, maybe even for the first time, would realize that our hope has to be in you, Lord.

And that we would place our complete faith and trust into who you are and what you have done.

And it's in your name, Jesus, we pray.

Amen.