

GM // name // newbies // online // excited to be in our new spot → New digs -- same gig -- (faith & and hope in Jesus, not buildings or people).

If you have a Bible turn to Galatians 1:10.

Also, will have verses up on screen.

Galatians is a book about fighting for our freedom in Jesus.

**B4 the Beastie Boys told us we needed to fight for our right to party ...**

**The apostle Paul told us we need to fight for our freedom that comes through faith in Jesus.**

**B/C there are false gospels and false beliefs that sing their sweet intoxicating songs like seductive sirens, luring us away from the Gospel of freedom.**

**If you're new to Christianity maybe this notion of freedom is a surprise to you.**

Christianity isn't known for its freedom ... we tend be the cranky curmudgeons that are always telling everyone what they CAN'T do.

**That is unfortunate b/c the good news of the Gospel is that we are set free.**

And in this next part of Galatians we are going to see how freeing this Gospel is.

### **Galatians 1:10-12**

**10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.**

**11 For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. 12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**

*[read v10 again]*

**Here is an unexpected liberation from a horrible kind of slavery.**

### **The Gospel Sets Us Free From People Pleasing**

This is something we all have in common.

We are slaves to the approval of others.

We run around trying to please people all the time.

**Even when we act like we don't care ... we care.**

We need approval.

We dress for approval.

We get into hobbies for approval.

We go to church for approval.

We consent to society's ethics for approval.

**If you still don't believe me I have a pair of witnesses  
who will prove to you that I'm right.**

**Their names are MR. Social Media and MRS. Selfie.**

**If we didn't crave approval then sites like Facebook,  
Twitter, Instagram, Reddit -- [seriously how many of  
these do we need] -- all these would've become  
another MySpace.**

**[If you're still nursing a MySpace account we have  
an intervention room for you.]**

Most of these things are outlets to fish for complements.

**Even the self-effacing posts are applauded for their  
"authenticity". → we can get addicted to any type of  
praise!**

[When I tweet ... I find myself going in to see how many  
likes, comments, shares, pokes, hearts, reactions I got.]

**Why do you think we are so hungry to get a “well done” from others?**

**The Bible tells us that’s what we were made for.**

God created and then blessed what he created.

He looked at the work of his hands and called it good.

When he formed the man and woman from the dust, he looked at them and blessed them.

He said, “This is very good”.

Which is to say ... he looked on us and gave a good judgment.

**He said, “You are complete, nothing lacking, enough. I delight in who you are, just as you are.”**

**We were made to hear the loving affirmation of our Creator and King resound in our hearts.**

**But here is where it all went wrong ... we traded HIS TRUTH for a LIE that said, “We weren’t enough.”**

**→ [Satan’s deception ... “Maybe there is even more than what God says you are.”]**

And so we ate that lie and it went into our souls and has been there ever since.

I could argue that every sin stems from this need for approval.

It drives us **to do what we shouldn't ... AND ... to NOT do what we should.**

Let me give you some common examples:

1. A spouse desires affection but doesn't get it.

This approval deficit may build up over time or immediately drive them to find it somewhere else.

With a real person ... or with pornography.

2. A boy or girl grows up with little to zero approval from their parental figures.

They become promiscuous trying to find that approval through people willing to take advantage of their neediness. OR

They join an accepting group, sometimes a gang, sometimes a social club, sometimes a church. That group gives them approval as long as they become just like "one of them" and "keep the rules".

3. After years of believing their never enough or don't measure up, or always being put down-- that man or woman needs to numb the pain. And they binge on food or alcohol or drugs as an escape.

These all happen on a spectrum and in different ways.

And if we thought about it, we would find ourselves somewhere in one or more of these scenarios.

**But the good news of the Gospel is that we can be set free from people pleasing.**

**Through faith we are a NEW CREATION.**

**God takes our poisoned heart and gives us a new one.**

**This new heart is His work ... His creation ... he looks on it and says ... “This is good. This is complete. This is enough.”**

**That is the wonderful news that breaks into our hearts at salvation.**

We hear the highest, most important blessing that we really want.

And that is the blessing of God the Father.

He looks down and says what he said to Jesus at his baptism.

“This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.”

**Think about how God welcomes Christians into heaven.**

“Well done ... good and faithful servant!”

**We were made for blessing!**

**And the beauty of the Gospel is that we don't work to earn it.**

**We start FROM blessing and work from that.**

**Just like Adam and Eve.**

God created them and before they did anything it says he blessed them.

Same with Jesus.

Before he did any of his public ministry, God the Father blessed him from heaven.

**This is freedom!**

**If you live to please people, you will always have to EARN that blessing.**

→ [Side Note: Parent's think about how ungospel our parenting is a lot of the time]

We repeat the mistakes of our parents who disciplined us into people pleasing.

**You have to DO something, or HAVE something, or BE something to earn the blessing.**

**And then to get another blessing you got to EARN it again!**

**The cycle never ends; it burns you out; it makes you bitter, and you die unsatisfied.**

**But the Gospel changes it.**

B/C Jesus earned that blessing for us.

**He did the work ... we receive it by faith.**

**AND, we remain in that blessing by faith!**

**Now, its one thing to know that to be true ...**

**But to live in that reality ... that is where we struggle and have to fight for our freedom in Christ.**

**And one of the big reasons we struggle is that we know WHO WE USED TO BE.**

It's hard to imagine that God really forgives ALL of that.

**Maybe that isn't your struggle ... maybe you do believe God forgives it all ... which is awesome.**

**But maybe your struggle is that you live in fear of people finding out about your past.**

**But hiding from your past is just another form of slavery.**

### **Galatians 1:13-17**

**13 For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. 14 And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. 15 But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and**

**who called me by his grace, 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.**

This is how free Paul is in the Gospel.

He doesn't hide who he was.

And that's the power of the Gospel ...

### **The Gospel Sets Us Free From Our Past**

Paul was a Pharisee.

There was no one more dedicated to the Jewish religion than those guys.

As a Pharisee, he was devoted to the law of Moses.

For good reason.

Israel had lost its power and place in the world B/C they failed to keep God's covenant with them.

So, the Pharisees became this zealous group to prevent that from happening again.

They were vigilant with memorizing the law.

They didn't want to allow any possibility that it would be forgotten.

They taught it and enforced it [like Nazis]

They added new rules and regulations to the laws, just to make sure that God would be pleased.

This zeal to be righteous by keeping God's law was their hope to see the nation of Israel restored to power and prominence.

So, no surprise they were freaking out as Jesus broke their rules ...

- like healing people on the Sabbath [not supposed to work on Sabbath. broke a rule]
- eating with sinners [you are what you eat with. broke a rule]
- claiming that he was God's son [blasphemy! biggest no-no. broke the biggest rule!]

Jesus was a threat ... sure he was doing many miracles, and had authority and wisdom that they couldn't deny, but he was leading people to disobedience.

**John 11:47-48 [just after raising Lazarus]**

**7 So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. 48 If we let him go on like this,**

**everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”**

These were the people who disciplined Paul his whole life.

**Paul went to the Harvard of Pharisee school.**

**And he graduated magna cum laude. [Fancy]**

He was the consummate Christian hater.

He was proud to have been a part of the group that crucified Jesus.

And out of a misguided zeal, he was dedicating to purging Israel of these Christian heretics.

He was about as likely a convert to Christianity as Osama bin Laden.

**But that is the power of the Gospel.**

Paul isn't hiding his past.

And it's bad!

He confesses ... “I persecuted the church violently and was out to destroy it.”

I don't know anything more offensive than that!

**But here he is, talking about it ... the part we all would want to hide away and hope never gets discovered.**

And that is true freedom.

**The Gospel frees us from our past, but it never makes us hide from our past.**

B/C ...

**The Gospel Redeems Who We Were and What We Did**

**Galatians 2:15-24**

**15 But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.**

**18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. 19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. 20 (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) 21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22 And I was still unknown in person**

to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. 23 They only were hearing it said, **“He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”** 24 **And they glorified God because of me.**

True freedom isn't hiding who you were.

It's celebrating God redeeming what you were.

Paul is boasting in God's powerful work in his own life.

“I went from Christian persecutor to Gospel preacher.”

His story is the power of the Gospel on display.

If you are a Christian you have your Gospel story too.

Our past is part of our Gospel story to be heralded not hidden.

I can say without shame ... I was a porn addict.

I was a people-pleasing ... self-righteous ...

overly-opinionated ... jerk! → [Some of you might use me to point out that sometimes God works slowly]

God redeemed that Jesse. [HE STILL IS ... ]

But here is a fact ... when we boast in our weakness and in our past, we put God's power on display.

What gets us to buy the latest ab blaster, thigh master, or PX-90 video?

It's the before and after pictures!!!

We look at the transformation and think ... I'm just like that person.

That could be me!

**Our testimony in Jesus loses its potency until we get honest and boast in our weakness and failures ....**

**That is what Paul is doing here.**

And Paul's story gives us hope.

I'm pretty sure no one in this room murders Christians.

If Jesus can transform Paul's life ... he can do it to you.

If you are stuck in addiction ... hiding that part of your life away ... hoping no one will ever discover it ... →

**Jesus can save you from that!**

I get the whole addiction thing. [porn addict ... still its an addiction]

You both hate it and love it.

You don't want to do it, but yet you love it while you do it.  
But afterward you are filled with self-loathing. [which drives  
you to do it again]

That is a vicious, terrible kind of slavery.

**But Jesus has the power to set us free from our  
addictions.**

**The value of our culture is to hide your past mistakes.  
Bury them ... never bring them up.**

And for good reason.

When our mistakes are discovered ... people are brutal.

Look at what happens every time someone gets famous or  
steps up into prominence.

Suddenly we dig into their past until we find vindictive pay  
dirt.

“Oh, they said this.” “Oh, they did that.”

We dig it up and use it to tear them down.

Now that may be the ethics common to our day.

But that is never to be the ethics in the church.

We aren't supposed to be the people who go digging to find the skeletons in other people's closets.

When people like Paul share their past ... we don't sit back and wag our heads to shame them.

We do what the church did ... **“He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”  
And they glorified God ...**

The church is the place of real freedom...

I am/was addict ... BUT JESUS!

I am/was a prostitute ... BUT JESUS!

I had an abortion ... BUT JESUS!

I committed adultery ... BUT JESUS!

**The church should be the safest and freest place on earth.**

**But that doesn't come without a fight.**

**We contend for the Gospel together so others can live in freedom too.**

## Galatians 2:1-10

Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. 2 I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, **in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.** 3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. 4 Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—**who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery—** 5 **to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.** 6 And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me.

7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised 8 (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), 9 and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, **perceived the grace that was given to me,** they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

It would have been tempting for Paul to capitulate and  
“keep the peace” with the guys trying to bring them back  
under slavery the law of Moses.

While the Gospel makes us gracious and humble.  
It makes us passionate and mean about the right stuff.

Think about it.

When someone messes with my kids ... my love for them  
rises up and I want to contend for them.

When someone is trying to distort the Gospel ... at some  
point its time to stop being nice.

I’m not talking about physically fighting / physical threats.  
That’s not God’s way.

Here is how we do it...

**We** confront ... **we** contend ... **we** keep holding fast.

I purposefully said “we” not “I”.

Paul came to make sure his Gospel wasn’t distorted ...

He didn’t come in secret like the other guys did.

He didn’t secretly slip in like a spy.

He was bold and came to the leadership.

“Here’s my gospel ... what do you think?”

**Beware the person who shares their disagreements with everyone but to the person they disagree with.**

**Wolves don’t come through the gate where the shepherds stand watch. They operate in the shadows.**

Paul was willing to find out if the last 14 years of his life was a waste.

That is humility and a desire for the truth.

It is also a recognition that these leaders in the church in Jerusalem were proclaiming the gospel too.

But Paul knew, ‘I can’t have “my gospel” and they have theirs.’

There is only ONE GOSPEL.

And sure enough, there is only ONE GOSPEL.

The apostles perceived the grace that God gave to Paul.

They extended the right hand of fellowship...

and sent him out to proclaim the ONE gospel that brings freedom.

This is what we do.

We contend for the Gospel so that others can live in the freedom only it can bring.

## **[BAND COME UP]**

### **NOT A CHRISTIAN**

Are you tired of living in slavery to what people think ... or the things you've done that you are ashamed of?

Only Jesus can set you free from your past and the need to please others.

He came and died for the sins you hide away in shame.

You don't have to become a better person for him to accept you.

He says, "Come as you are."

I invite you to believe in Jesus today and live in His freedom.

### **CHRISTIAN**

Its easy to slip back into slavery ...

rule keeping ... caring about what people think...trying to earn God's blessing.

Some of us have a past we keep hidden.

We can't imagine that the church would still love us or accept us if they "knew that about me."

I'm here to tell you that many of us have brought the ugly stuff into the light.

Here is the one testimony we all experience...

It feels like a massive burden I've been carrying has been lifted.

Church ... we need to be a safe place for people to trust us with their pasts.

But boasting in our weakness is boasting in the power of God!

Communion is a reminder that we were too weak to save ourselves.

Jesus died on the cross for our sins ... for our past ... to redeem it ... and repurpose it for His glory.

His body was broken ... his blood shed ... to heal our pasts.

And so we come and take with thankfulness.

And as we come with thankful hearts, I also want to invite you to give your tithes and offerings from the same place of thanks. [3 ways: online, app, or giving buckets at communion tables]

If you are a guest at OHC ... no pressure ... this is a privilege for us who call OHC home.

**PRAY**