
Sermon Notes

August 7, 2022

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Faith Working Through Love Galatians 5:1-6

“The Homestretch”

- ❖ *Galatians* may be divided into 3 sections
 - chs 1-2, Paul’s autobiography and credentials as a genuine apostle
 - chs 3-4, theological concerns: especially salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone
 - chs 5-6, practical, down-to-earth ways the gospel impacts the way those who follow Christ live
- ❖ Live up to the level of freedom you are given in Christ!

Freedom

- ❖ The concept of “freedom” is so frequently used, abused, applied and misapplied to so many things that it is often hard to agree upon a common understanding of what it is
 - Bill of Rights?
 - dismantling social structures that “hold me back”?
 - personal autonomy?
 - freedom from any form of authority?
- ❖ “Doin’ what comes naturally”

- the very notion of God becomes “an inconvenient truth”
- what many want is not freedom “of” religion, but freedom “from” religion
- this is NOT the freedom for which Christ has set us free
 - on the contrary, this is what the Bible calls bondage
 - Stott: “Freedom from my silly little self...”
- ❖ Paul is clear that real freedom comes only from Christ and is found only “in Christ”
- ❖ Contrary to popular misconceptions, true freedom is not self-fulfillment, social equality, a liberty that leads to license, the power to do whatever we want or to believe whatever we choose to believe
 - true freedom is liberation from sin, death, and the devil
 - the only way to experience true freedom is by trusting in Jesus

Live Free

- ❖ Those who follow Christ must not be tripped up and trapped again by what Paul calls *a yoke of slavery*
 - a misplaced belief in the OT law
 - the mistaken belief that you need to “do something” to get right with God
 - such beliefs actually lead to being “cut off” from Christ
 - if you think your standing with God is contingent on any action you have done or not done, you are not free!

- ♦ the Galatian heresy = “I begin the Christian life by the grace of God, but I must finish my salvation by my own power.”
 - ♦ my standing before God depends entirely on what Christ has done, not on the basis of anything **I DO**
- ❖ Authentic, justifying faith produces fruit in our lives
 - do not attempt to manufacture your own righteousness
 - trust in God for His righteousness
 - God looks at those who belong to Him and sees them clothed in the righteousness of Christ
 - although we are not yet righteous, look forward in faith to the day when we will be righteous
 - ❖ As we live in eager anticipation of that moment, our faith is actively at work in and expresses itself through love
 - you cannot stop love from leaking out of anyone who has genuine faith in Jesus Christ
 - John Calvin: “True faith cannot be separated from sanctification.”
 - true faith is always a working faith
 - true faith is active and expressive
 - Luther: “He who wants to be a true Christian... must truly be a believer. But he does not truly believe if works of love do not follow his faith.”
 - ❖ What does God want me to be and do?
 - come to Him through faith in Christ
 - be a fully devoted follower of Christ

- express the genuineness of my faith through actions that spring out of love for God and love for others
- ❖ Paul and James use language differently, but both say the same thing when it comes to the notion that a true faith is a working faith (*cf.* James 2:18)
 - only a working faith can bring real freedom
 - ultimately, the faith that results in an active love is the only thing that truly matters
- ❖ Seek Christ and revel in the freedom He gives you!

Personal Application

1. With this passage of Scripture in mind and using your own words, define both what freedom is and what it is not.
2. Are there any ways you can identify in which you are trading in your freedom in Christ, slipping backward and becoming tripped up and trapped by a yoke of slavery?
3. What evidence can you point to that faith is expressing itself through love in your life? If the evidence is lacking, what needs to happen in order for you to produce the fruit of faith in an active and expressive way?