



FOOTHILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH | LIFE NOTES

GALATIANS: FREEDOM

SYNOPSIS OF SERIES

The entire purpose of this letter is to make a clear the difference between the gospel of Jesus Christ and false gospels. Galatians attacks two false ideas in particular, legalism and lawlessness. It dismantles the lies of these ideas and paints a true picture of salvation by grace through faith alone. Paul stands firmly in defense of the gospel.

CONTEXT OF GALATIANS

The letter was written by Paul sometime around AD 50. On Paul's first missionary journey, he planted churches in Pisidia Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. These were Greek people – Paul's mission was to bring the good news of Jesus to the Gentiles. Many people in these areas heard the message of Jesus Christ from Paul and accepted it. The message that Paul preached was a message of God's grace. Specifically, Paul emphasized that a person is saved by his faith in Jesus, not by his works. As Paul opened the door for Gentiles to experience Jesus, there were some Jewish teachers who did not buy this "faith alone" message. They believed that Gentiles Christians, like Jewish Christians, needed to follow the traditional ceremonial customs from the Mosaic law. They taught that these Gentile believers had to observe all dietary laws and be circumcised in order to be fully accepted by God. Some of these Jewish teachers made their way into Galatia and were now teaching Paul's congregations that his message of "faith alone" was inadequate.

GETTING STARTED

What is your favorite fruit?

Have you ever tried to grow fruit? What did you learn about the process?

DIGGING DEEPER

Galatians 5:16-25

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

What is Paul explaining in the text we just read?

How have you seen this 'tug of war' play out in your life?

On Sunday, Kyle defined each of the fruits. Did anything surprise you that was said?

Why does Paul use the word 'fruit' to describe the outcomes of walking in the Spirit?

How have you seen God grow the fruits in you?

On Sunday Kyle said, "we should not ask God to just change our circumstances, but we should ask God to

change us through our circumstances." What do you of that statement?

Look back at verse 24. Paul tells us that our sinful nature has been crucified. If our sinful nature has been nailed to the cross, then why do we still struggle?

What are some practical steps you can take to not give sin power in your life?

In verse 25, Paul says 'keep in the Step with the Spirit'. What do you think it means to keep in step with the Spirit?

MOVING FORWARD

Read the following illustration to your group.

Picture your sinful nature, your flesh—that old ego with the mentality of merit and craving for power and reputation and self-reliance—picture it as a dragon living in some cave of your soul. Then you hear the gospel, and in it Jesus Christ comes to you and says, "I will make you mine and take possession of the cave and slay the dragon. Will you yield to my possession? It will mean a whole new way of thinking and feeling and acting."

You say: "But that dragon is me. I will die."

Jesus says, "And you will rise to newness of life, for I will take its place; I will make my mind and my will and my heart your own."

You say, "What must I do?"

Jesus answers, "Trust me and do as I say. As long as you trust me, we cannot lose."

Overcome by the beauty and power of Christ you bow and swear eternal loyalty and trust. And as you rise, he puts a great sword in your hand and says, "Follow me." He leads you to the mouth of the cave and says, "Go in, slay the dragon."

But you look at him bewildered, "I cannot. Not without you. "He smiles. "Well said. You learn quickly. **Never forget: my commands for you to do something are never commands to do it alone.**" Then you enter the cave together. A horrible battle follows and you feel Christ's hand on yours. At last the dragon lies limp. You ask, "Is it dead?" His answer is this: "I have come to give you new life. This you received when you yielded to my possession and swore faith and loyalty to me. And now with my sword and my hand you have felled the dragon of the flesh. It is a mortal wound. It will die. That is certain. But it has not yet bled to death, and it may yet revive with violent convulsions and do much harm. So you must treat it as dead and seal the cave as a tomb. The Lord of darkness may cause earthquakes in your soul to shake the stones loose, but you build them up again. And have this confidence: with my sword and my hand on yours this dragon's doom is sure, he is finished, and your new life is secure."

Keeping in step means continually looking to Jesus to lead us, not just one time...all the time.

ALARM CHALLENGE

Set your phone alarm to go off every hour when not sleeping. Use this as a way to connect with Jesus. Consider his love for you. Listen for his voice as he directs you. He will help you keep in step.