**"THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS"**

 **Chapter Five**

**Read Galatians 5 :1-26**

**There are certain OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER that we want to visit tonight just to make sure we are all on the same page….Amen!?**

**OBJECTIVE (1)**

1) We want to fully understand that **liberty in Christ** does not mean license to do whatever a Christian wants to do!!

**OBJECTIVE (2)**

2) We want to understand how easily one might be separated from Christ, and fall from grace.

**OBJECTIVE (3)**

3) We want to appreciate the need to walk in the Spirit, and the true evidence of one led by the Spirit. (There goes that word **evidence** again as was taught here last Thursday.)

**Please allow me to give a summary in capsule of the scriptures we just read, so that we can have somewhat of an Idea of what is written in them!**

In verses 1-6 especially the first verse, Paul reaches the climax of this epistle, stating what can properly be called the theme of his letter: **"Stand fast therefore** **in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage."** He follows with dire warnings about the consequences of seeking to be circumcised and justified by the Law. He then reminds them that the hope of righteousness is for those who through the Spirit eagerly wait for it with a **faith** working through love (**1-6**).

The next few verses (**7-15**)continue with warnings about allowing others to hinder their progress, with Paul's harshest words reserved for those

trying to impose circumcision. Yet Paul does not want anyone to think

that liberty in Christ means license, and encourages them to use their

liberty in order to serve one another in love. The two-fold benefit of

this proper use of liberty is that one actually fulfills the Law, and

at the same time does not give the flesh an opportunity to cause them

to bite and devour one another. **Amen?**

Paul then in verses (**16-26** as we all read, stresses the need for the Christian to walk in the Spirit so as not to fulfill the lust of the flesh. He describes the enmity between the flesh and the Spirit, explaining why we must bear the fruit of the Spirit instead of practicing the works of the flesh. Not only is there no inheritance in the kingdom of God for those engaging in the works of the flesh, but those in Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Having been made alive in the Spirit, they ought to walk in the Spirit so as not to be conceited, not provoking nor envying one another.

**Let me now break down these scriptures as much as possible that we may be illuminated by the Spirit of God….**

In a closer look at the scriptures….Paul speaks to the assembled converts in the church at Galatia and apparently he has been shown by the Holy Spirit that something was not going so well with the church there was a major problem that needed to be addressed, so he proceeds to instruct, correct, and plead with them……

He starts off with……

 1. A call to stand strong in the freedom we now have in Christ

 (**1a**)

**What does it mean to stand strong……???**

1. **remain loyal**
2. **Remain faithful**
3. **do not waver**
4. **stay put in your belief**
5. **keep your integrity**
6. **Be ready to defend your freedom or Liberty in Christ!!**
7. **STAND YOUR GROUND.**

**Then he continues in verse 1 part.b… here he gives out a warning,**

 2. A plea not to be entangled again with a yoke of bondage (**1b**)

What was the main bondage he was addressing.....

In this particular case, it was… **CIRCUMCISION!!!**

 **B. PAUL WAS MAKING HIS CASE THAT CIRCUMCISION IS and WAS NO LONGER**

 **NECESSARY VERSES…(2-4)**

1. If one is circumcised out of a belief that it is necessary, in order to be a follower of Christ…. Here’s what Paul said…….**Christ will profit you nothing** (**2**)

This raises the question in the here and now…

What can we say hinders the church today?……………….…**Tradition!!!**

I ask this to say the following….

**Are there things being done in the church today that is considered necessary in order to follow Christ and a must in order to be faithful and yet unknowingly be in bondage to a tradition or the law !!!???**

**I BELIEVE THE ANSWER IS A BIG …YESSSSS!!!!!!**

 **The truth of the matter was and still is, that …**

 2. Observing circumcision as a necessity also required keeping the whole law (**3**)

 **The problem is that No man could ever keep the entire laws of**

 **God!!**

 **Which brings on a serious problem…..**

 3. Attempting to be justified by the Law will separate you from

 Christ and you will thereby fall from grace (**4**)

 **Why?**...because the law was a School-Master given to the Jews to

 teach them obedience….TO GOD…!!!!

 **C. To the true follower of Christ…THE BASIS FOR OUR HOPE OF**

**RIGHTEOUSNESS comes only by being faithful to Christ!! (5-6)**

 **In verse #5 Paul says…**

 1. Through the Spirit and by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope

 of righteousness (**5**)

 Then he proceeded to tell the Galatians what they needed to know…..and I pray we are within ear range of what he says next….

 2. **Circumcision is inconsequential**; what avails is **faith** working

 **through love** (**6**)

In other words what the Holy Spirit is trying to say to everyone who is a beloved follower OF CHRIST….. is that we need to put away whatever is ***tradition*** because it is not about keeping traditions it’s about being righteous in our following Christ through faith and love!!! AMEN???

**II. A LIBERTY THAT FULFILLS THE LAW (7-15)**

**Paul saw in the church that there were a few that were influencing the church with tradition in following the practice of circumcision!!!**

**So he warns the Galatians and us as well….today**

1. **A WARNING ABOUT THOSE WHO WOULD BIND THE LAW (7-12)**
2. Despite a good start, the church had a great start but, they

 were being hindered and it did not come from God (**7-8**)

**PAUL SAID….**

1. Beware of the influence of **"a little leaven"** (**9**)
2. Paul was very confident that the Galatians would come around,

 and the Lord will judge the trouble makers (**10**)

Beloved there are many churches today where there are some in the church that will attempt to persuade others to follow certain **traditions** that are not even useful in the church, but because the elders that began the work (and are no longer amongst us) established certain things in the church it stayed with the church and it has become a tradition. It is a hard thing to break out of something that traditionally has been implemented as part of the way the church runs, I will say this, I nor my family, will not follow the traditions established in any church, for if I am free in the Spirit, then why would I want to be in bondage again!!!

Traditions are Bondage…led by the Spirit of Bondage!!!

I THANK GOD I’M FREE !!!!For where the Spirit of God is there is Liberty!!!!!

 4. A reminder that Paul himself was not preaching circumcision,

 with a strong condemnation of those who were troubling them

 (**11-12**)

1. **A PROPER USE OUR LIBERTY WILL FULFILL THE LAW (13-15)**

Here is what I believe we as a church should be doing if we want to fulfill the law..and that is….

1. we should be using our liberty to serve one another in love, and the Law will be fulfilled (**13-14**)

**However, Paul says…**

1. Abuse your liberty, and it will become an opportunity to

Consume one another! (**13b,15**)

Paul now comes to the part where he describes the Liberty which we enjoy so richly!!!

Paul says…it is ….

**III. A LIBERTY IN WHICH ONE IS TO BE LED BY THE SPIRIT (16-26)**

 **A. WE MUST WALK IN THE SPIRIT (16-18)**

 1. Only then will we not fulfill the flesh, which is contrary to

 the Spirit (**16-17**)

1. If we are led by the Spirit, we are not under the Law (**18**)

**Verses 19-23 Paul gives a complete breakdown of …….**

 **B. THE WORKS OF THE FLESH VS. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (19-23)**

 1. The works of the flesh...

 a. Identified by Paul (**19-21a**)

 b. Will keep one from inheriting the kingdom of God (**21b**)

 2. The fruit of the Spirit...

 a. Identified by Paul (**22-23a**)

 b. Against which there is no law (**23b**)

 **C. THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST'S ARE TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT (24-26)**

 1. For they have crucified the flesh with its passions and

 desires (**24**)

 2. For they live in the Spirit (**25**)

 3. Therefore they should not be conceited, provoking and envying

 one another (**26**)