Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – June 16, 2019

The Transforming

Power of the Cross

*Galatians: How the Gospel Sets Us Free*

The one gospel is for ALL nationalities.

Galatians 2:1-14

*The Story: Paul, Peter, and The Joy Stealers*

 After God had revealed the gospel to Paul (Galatians 1:11, 12), He again reveals that Paul is to go to Jerusalem, for the express purpose of cross-checking His gospel with what the Jerusalem apostles proclaimed. Paul was not called on the carpet, but on the contrary, went voluntarily, and he did not go alone. He brought a Gentile with him.

 Significantly, the Gentile, Titus is not required to be initiated into the nation Israel by covenant sign. The “real brothers” accepted this, but there were “false brothers” who observed the whole thing with the intention of undoing this progress, and persuading all Jesus followers to keep the Law. All was settled when the Jerusalem apostles extended full fellowship to Paul and blessed his mission to the Gentiles, as they had gone to the Jews.

 Or so Paul thought! When Peter and others were on Paul’s home turf (Gentile Antioch, in Syria), they were eating and drinking with the Gentiles. But when some other Jerusalem leaders joined them, they quickly withdrew, and stopped fellowship with the “unclean” Gentiles!

 Paul calls Peter out on his hypocrisy, creating quite the stir, point-ing out that Peter had STOPPED “living like a Jew” (keeping kosher and observing the cleanliness laws, Acts 10!), only to revert when pressured.

 This narrative is key because it illustrates perfectly the tension felt by both Jews and Gentiles as they struggled to deal with their new-found freedom in Christ. Freedom brings responsibility and requires courage.

Freedom Principle #3:The Good News of Jesus Christ frees

 us by erasing the Jew/Gentile distinction.

***The Back Story:*** After The Flood (Genesis 7-9), the scattering of the nations at Babel left humanity without a center. So God chose Abram, renamed him “Abraham,” because he would be the father of MANY nations through a “Seed” who would come.

 Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all were given the same promise, and the nation “rested” in Egypt for nearly 400 years. Moses, in leading them out, was given the layers of the Law because they repeatedly disobeyed God’s commands. A complex system WITH priests became a substitute for being a nation OF priests (Exodus 19:1-6).

 So the Law became the Jewish way of life. But in Acts 10, God shows Peter that the distinction between clean and unclean, Jew and Gentile, was gone. Why? Because all along the Law was temporary, to be fulfilled in the true Temple, High Priest, and Sacrifice, Jesus. Cornelius, a Roman soldier, no less, and his household, were given the same Holy Spirit as the Jews received at Pentecost! It was a new day.

 But Israel, as a nation, never transitioned away from the Law. In Galatians, Paul is not innovating, but applying what the Prophets had proclaimed and Jesus completed. What had been God’s will had served its purpose, and after Jesus, merely “Judaism,” or the national religion of the Jews, as it is to this day.

***Applying the Story: How does this freedom story change us?***

 **The total, irrevocable destruction of the wall (Eph. 2:11-22) that had separated Jew from Gentile implies that. . .**

 *Biblical truth applied enables us to act righteously.*

 *We are transformed as we hear and obey. James 1:22-25*

 *All of God’s promises to Abraham are fulfilled for all in Jesus.*

 *He is the promised “Seed.” 2 Corinthians 1:20*

 *All of God’s New Covenant blessings are ours in Jesus!*

 *Through Law we inherit nothing. Hebrews 9:15; 12:24*

 *Our ethnicity has ZERO impact on our standing with God.*

 *God is no respecter of person or race. Galatians 3:28*

 *We can celebrate, rather than defend, our racial heritage.*

 *God loves racial diversity. Acts 17:26, 27; Revelation 7:9-12*

 *No group is squeezing ahead of us in God’s Kingdom.*

 *The Chosen People are not all Jews. Romans 2:28, 29*

 *Living “like a Jew” is commanded for no one.*

*All are released from the Law’s bondage. Colossians 2:11-15*