Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning - August 4, 2019

The Transforming

Power of the Cross

*Galatians: How the Gospel Sets Us Free*

New Covenant, not Old Commandments

“Keep in step with the Spirit!”

 Galatians 5:13-26

 The back and forth dialogue of Galatians begs an underlying question: “Paul, if the Law is dead to us, and we are dead to the Law, what is our guide to living? What is our standard? And, if people are being told what to do, then how will they avoid the bad things and do the good things?”

 The answer is the New Covenant and its blessings (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Here, Paul has anticipated these questions, and works out the implications of just the New Covenant works. When we finally believe God’s promises, He saves us.

 That means not only the forgiveness of sins, but also the presence of His Spirit. His fruit, grounded in love, is effectively God’s Law written upon our hearts Rom. 13:8-10. There is no gap left by a missing Law, for in our becoming God’s children, His heart is becoming our own. So we make a beginning of putting sin to death and choosing holiness. Romans 8:1-17 describes the process beautifully.

Freedom from the Law brings love, not lawlessness! v. 13

 *Because love fulfills the Law, affirming and helping others.* vv. 14, 15

 We can be sure that destructive behaviors are lawless.

 *Because living by God’s Spirit overcomes our lower nature.* vv. 16-18

 The constant battle within us is proof of the Spirit’s work, and will continue as long as we are alive.

 *Because we need no Law to tell right from wrong.* vv. 19-21

 The works of the flesh (which still indwells us) are clear and obvious. They were wrong before the Law and after it.

 *Because God’s Spirit ALWAYS is bearing fruit.* vv. 22, 23

 As there is no law against doing good and having joy, there is no danger of loving or rejoicing to excess! Nor can the Spirit’s fruitfulness can be co-opted for evil. He is the Holy Spirit.

 *Because those who truly are Christ’s put sin to death.* vv. 24-26

 The Spirit’s work does not render us passive! It is through Him that we crucify the flesh and therefore live in harmony with one another. Following God’s Spirit creates humility and contentedness which, in turn, heads off destructive conflict.

Freedom Principle #10: The Good News of Jesus Christ frees us by encouraging and empowering us through God’s Spirit to avoid evil and live righteously.

***Applying the Principle:***

*1. The battle of the Spirit against our flesh (the remnants of sin within us) is relentless and real. This means. . .*

 *There is no time when we can let down our guard.*

 *There is no one sin we must commit.*

 *There is no pattern of sin to which we are enslaved.*

 *There is no one who is left defenseless in temptation.*

 *What sin is plaguing you against your will?*

 *Do you believe God’s provision of power as well as forgiveness?*

 *Are you willing to put your faith in God’s power into practice?*

*2. The battle of the Spirit against our sins requires our full participation.*

 *Are you engaged in your spiritual life, or passive?*

 *Are you expecting God to change you against your will?*

 *Are you willing, by the Spirit, to turn your back on “that sin”?*

*3. The cultivation of your life by the Spirit is real and powerful.*

 *As in gardening, the fruit of the Spirit flourishes when we. . .*

 *Get rid of the weeds of apathy and inattention.*

 *Irrigate our life with the waters of God’s word.*

 *Walk in the light of God’s fellowship.*

*Are patient, trusting God for the harvest. Don’t give up!*