

# BOOK OF GALATIANS

## *“Liberty and Bondage”*

Scripture Reading: GALATIANS 2:1-5

- ) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
- ) **SLIDES 7-8.** Read today’s Scripture text.
- ) **SLIDE 9.** We continue in our expository study of the Book of GALATIANS. This is message #10. Today we move on to chapter 2. Today’s message I have titled *“Liberty and Bondage”* (v4).
- ) Expository preaching has many advantages. The most obvious is that you cover every chapter and verse of a book of the Bible. Presently, for us, it’s the Book of GALATIANS. I do my best to unpack as many truths as I can find in the verses that we are covering.
- ) Unfortunately, it has one disadvantage (if you can call it a disadvantage). Many times, within a book of the Bible, the same truths are repeated. And what I may have covered in a previous sermon I may be repeating again. Whenever this occurs, I will try my best to shed different light on that truth without repeating something I may have already said.
- ) I want you to know this up front. It will happen.
- ) What do we see in today’s text? Looks like Paul is headed back to Jerusalem 14 years after his visit in chapter 1. We do not know for certain if this is his next visit to Jerusalem or if there were other visits in between. It’s not important.
- ) **SLIDE 10.** But we know he is taking Barnabas and Titus with him. Who is this Barnabas? Barnabas is the same man from ACTS 9 who spoke well of Paul to the other disciples on Paul’s initial visit to Jerusalem.

- ) **SLIDE 11.** He is also the same Barnabas from ACTS 4:36-37. Read. Tradition has it that Barnabas met Paul in Damascus shortly after Paul's conversion. And that's why he was with Paul when Paul paid his first visit to Jerusalem.
- ) **SLIDE 12.** And this slide will give you a geographical idea of the island of Cyprus. Explain. ACTS 13:1-12 give a detailed account of Paul's missionary journey while in Cyprus.
- ) Paul also has with him a man named Titus. This man Titus is the same Titus that Paul's leaves on the island of Crete and the recipient of the small 3-chapter Book of TITUS. Map.
- ) **SLIDE 13.** But let's get to the heart of the matter of these five verses and that would be the truth of the gospel. Read.
- ) **SLIDE 14-16.** Three questions. 1) What is the truth of the gospel and does it matter if we get it right or not? 2) Can we just say that we believe in Jesus and leave it at that? 3) Is it possible to add to or take away something from the saving gospel message that could jeopardize one's salvation?
- ) Not that we could lose something we already truly have. But do we truly have it? Are we really saved? Could we be believing in a false gospel?
- ) These are great questions and must be answered in the light of Scripture. And the correct answers are not what I think is right or what you think is right. The correct answers are what God says is right.
- ) **SLIDE 17.** In this Book of GALATIANS, Paul is extremely concerned about the right answer to these questions. Let's not forget what we learned from our study back in chapter one. 1) If anyone preaches another gospel, let him be anathema (eternally condemned); 2) Paul was taught the gospel by a revelation of Jesus Christ. That means what he writes carries equal weight with the words of Jesus Himself.
- ) Conclusion: this is serious stuff folks.

- ) **SLIDE 18.** Here are verses 4 and 5 again and you'll notice that I have two words underlined in this text. The word "*liberty*" and the word "*bondage.*" For Paul (and for us), the truth of the gospel is directly related to these two words. In what way?
- ) **SLIDE 19.** Let's begin with the word "*bondage.*" What is bondage? Read.
- ) **SLIDE 20.** A word more commonly used today instead of "*bondage*" is the word "*legalism.*" Read.
- ) For the Christian today, the extreme example of theological legalism would be a set of rules and regulations set forth by a church or religious system that one must follow to be saved.
- ) Some examples. If you drink alcohol, you are not saved. If a woman doesn't wear a dress to church, she is not saved. If a man does not wear his hair short, he is not saved. And for someone like the TV preacher TD Jakes, if you do not speak in tongues, you are not saved. This list can get rather long and ridiculous and very unbiblical.
- ) **SLIDE 21.** We see a 1<sup>st</sup> century example of legalism (or bondage as Paul calls it) in verse 3. Read. Circumcision. Let's talk about this. What was the purpose and the importance of circumcision?
- ) **SLIDE 22.** GENESIS 17:10-12. Read. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham (Israel).
- ) **SLIDE 23.** Failure for an Israelite male to be circumcised meant that man would be cut off from the people of Israel. To the Jew, circumcision was a non-negotiable issue. A male gets circumcised. Period. It's the Law. And you obeyed the Law because your eternity depended on your obedience to the Law.
- ) **SLIDE 24.** Now here comes Titus, this Greek male, walking in here uncircumcised. And what we have here in GALATIANS 2 is an effort by some of the Jews to enforce the Mosaic Law on Christians. Is this right? Can they do that?

- ) **SLIDE 25.** How does Paul identify these people? Read. They are false brethren introducing false teaching. It's the same problem Paul has with the churches in Galatia. People coming in distorting the gospel of Christ. Circumcision is not necessary for salvation. It is a work, and we are not saved by works.
- ) **SLIDE 26.** What does the NT teach us? Read.
- ) **SLIDE 27.** And what does Paul say about circumcision? Read. There were Jews who believed that since they were circumcised, that their relationship with God was good and that their eternity was sealed. That is not the case. Explain.
- ) **SLIDE 28.** The Christian is not under the **LAW**. We are under **GRACE**. So, what exactly does that mean for us? It means we are not under the Mosaic Law or circumcision any longer. We are under a new covenant and the teachings of the NT. Does this mean we don't have to follow any laws?
- ) Sure, we have laws, and they are outlined in the NT writings. But we have liberty in Jesus Christ. However, we never have liberty to sin, but we certainly have liberty from the Mosaic Law.
- ) Just as there can be abuses of legalism (like forcing certain rules and regulations down a person's throat and telling them their salvation depends on it), there can be abuses of liberty also. So, the pendulum can swing in the other direction also.
- ) There are people who believe that since we are not under the law, there are no laws we need to follow. They would say, "*I am saved so now I can do whatever I want.*"
- ) **SLIDE 29.** This belief system is called **ANTINOMIANISM**. Definition.
- ) This extreme view of liberty is not addressed here in our text from GALATIANS today. Paul only addresses the bondage (the legalism) of circumcision.

- ) **SLIDE 30.** But he does bring it up antinomianism in ROMANS 3:7-8. Read. Explain. You cannot continue in habitual sin believing it is OK to do so all the while justifying your actions because you say you have liberty in Christ.
- ) **SLIDE 31.** Let's end this morning by looking at our three questions once again. Explain.
- ) Have you ever struggled with legalism? Someone may have told you that you must do this or must do that to be saved? You must go to church or say this prayer or do these acts during Lent or you must be baptized? That's legalism folks. And legalism is unbiblical.
- ) **SLIDE 32.** If we believe that we must contribute in some way to our salvation, then we believe a false gospel.
- ) Have you ever struggled with antinomianism (liberty)? You feel like you have the freedom to sin all you want because you are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ? That's not a good place to be either. You better do a reality check on your salvation.
- ) Liberty and bondage. The truth of the gospel is somewhere in between. As we'll be looking at this as we continue through this great little Book of GALATIANS.
- ) The truth isn't always easy, but it does matter. And the truth will set you free!

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