

Intro: A number of years ago there was a cartoon that paraphrased a famous quotation.

- Original Quote: Admiral Perry, Battle of Lake Erie, 1812: *"We have met the enemy and they are ours!"*
- Paraphrase: Cartoonist Walt Perry: *"We have met the enemy and he is us!"*

That is part of what the Apostle Paul is talking about in Gal 2:15-20.

As we continue our series on Book of Galatians this morning, and our study on Freedom, I want to talk with you about *"Freedom From Myself!"* Like Pogo, the cartoon character, sooner or later in our Christian life we discover that one of people that keeps us in spiritual bondage, one of the people that limits us, one of the people that steals our Freedom in Christ...Is OURSELF! Just like the cartoon says, *"We have met the enemy and he is us!"*

It is often true that we are our own worst enemy!

Paul expresses that perfectly in Rom 7:15-25

Turn with me in your bibles to Gal 2:15-21 and let's talk about where we find freedom from ourselves and the bad decisions, internal struggles, self-imposed limitations, and awful attitudes that keep us in spiritual bondage.

Remember the historical background to Galatians we talked about last week:

- Paul pattern was to plant a church...then leave when it was established
- Judaizers come in: You must keep the Mosaic Law with all its rules and regulations to be a follower of Jesus
- Peter compromised: 2:11-13
- Paul confronted: 2:14

Now Paul revisits the truth with the Galatian church. Because they were facing the same kind of issues, Paul is going to be sure they "get it". He isn't leaving anything to chance. He wants them to know...

1. Do not believe the Judaizers, they are distorting and perverting the Gospel
2. You can't "earn" your way TO God...or earn favor WITH God by adding something to the Gospel make it better

When you do that...you become your own worst enemy!

REMEMBER:

Gal 5:1 *"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."*

So, how do you maintain your Freedom in Christ and resist the pressures to go back to spiritual slavery?

1. Understand There Is Nothing We Can Do To Earn Salvation Or Favor With God.

2:15-19

There are really two issues being discussed in these verses. And they cut right to the heart of something I hear from people all the time when I am having a spiritual discussion. It goes something like this.

I'm not worried about what's going to happen when I stand before God! My good deeds outweigh my bad!

When I stand before God...All my GOOD deeds....one side, All my BAD deeds other side...and if my good outweighs bad...I'm Ok! That is a works based salvation.

Nothing further from the truth! Paul Says:

- Vs 16: Not justified by works of the Law! (In context, Judaizers, Jewish rules) But applies all Good/Bad You can be PERFECT in every single area of life...and have ONE sin...and that is enough to separate you James 2:10: *"Whoever keeps the WHOLE law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it!"* Is 64:6: *"All of our righteousness is as filthy rags!"*
- The same is true in trying to live FOR God once we know Him in our own strength. 3:1-3: *"You Came to Christ through faith...and now you are trying to live for Him in the flesh!"* It simply isn't possible. I know Christians who struggle every single day with a self-imposed burden of expectations they have for themselves. Last week we talked about Freedom from Pleasing Others...Today it's important for us to understand that even if the burden we carry is self-imposed, it is still a burden we shouldn't have!

Vs 18: *"If I rebuild what I tore down...then I make myself a transgressor" (sinner) Doing it to myself!*

Illus: how many times have you heard someone say: *"I know God has forgiven me...and I know the person I offended has forgiven me...I just can't seem to forgive MYSELF!"* That is backhand way of saying, I can earn favor with God. Saying, *"I can do something to be good enough for God to love!"* NO! He loves you with all of your sins, all of your flaws, all of your faults. And if you carry the burden of trying to be Good Enough...then you are placing yourself in a bondage you will never break free from! Like hamster on the wheel....never ends!

2. Understand God Has Set You Free From EVERY Burden, Including Burden Of Self.

Gal 2:16

There is so much truth in this verse that we need to slow down and take a moment to fully understand what it says. In verse 16 there is the first appearance of a word in this letter (*and probably the first time Paul uses this word*) that is vitally important we unpack it carefully and grasp exactly what Paul is writing. (Warren Wiersbe)

Vs 16: *We know that a person is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ."*

- **Justified:** *Is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous in Jesus Christ.*
Understanding this definition will help us see why Paul was so adamant about Gospel that He called Peter out
Eternal Question: Job 9:2: "How should a man be just with God?" Hab 2:4 "The just shall live...by faith!"

>**Act:** An ACT, not a process! No Christian is more "justified" than another. Since we are justified by faith it is a one time, all at once ACT of God in the heart and life of a sinner to make them just before God! It is a once for all transaction between a sinner that believes in Christ's death and resurrection and a forgiving God! If this were done through works, it would be a process...not an ACT!

>**Of God:** It is not the result of man's character, actions, works or effort. Even the ability to put faith in Him is a gift from the Father. Not one single sinner has ever "earned" right standing with God by their works.

Vs 16: "We know that a person is not justified through works of the Law!" Through ANY works! Gift of God
Not an act of Self! When we try hard to live up to that standard...Good Enough" Pick Up a Burden cant carry!

>**God declares:** He does not **MAKE** us righteous...so that we are now PERFECT. He **DECLARES** we are righteous because when He looks upon us He sees the blood of His Son, upon whom our sin and guilt was placed, and He says, Not Guilty! And because Christ's work was so perfect...we can NEVER be called Guilty again!

>**Sinners:** Not good people...Not people who are trying hard. Not people who's good outweighs their bad. Not people who are striving to keep the Law...or People trying to live by their own understanding and sense of right and wrong. Not people who are living out "Their Truth". NO: Sinners who put their faith in Jesus and His perfect work on the cross! Those who by faith come to God say, "I can't carry this sin and guilt: Forgive me!

Those are the people who are JUSTIFIED: JUST AS IF THEY HAVE NEVER SINNED!

3. Finally, We Have To Make The Daily Choice To Die To Self.

2:19-20

Notice what Paul says here: "I am crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

- **Crucified:** Lit = An completed action that took place in the past and has ongoing continuing results
Faith in Christ means I no longer have faith myself to earn my way to God! I lay my life and effort down
- **Christ Lives In Me:** I am so spiritually identified with Christ that He lives through me by His indwelling Spirit
That is one of the ongoing results: He now lives through me, and it no longer me trying to live for Him, it is the Spirit of God in me empowering my thoughts, actions, behaviors, enabling me to do what cannot do alone
- **Life I live I live by faith:** The Christian life is not a life of me TRYING harder, working more, doing more. It is a life of surrender to the Holy Spirit living within. In fact, I don't just SURRENDER my life...I DIE TO SELF!

All MY hopes...become His Hopes for me. All my dreams...Become His dreams for me. All my work...becomes His work through me. My part is to trust Him, put my faith in Him, surrender to indwelling Spirit, Him live in me.

Illus: That is such a hard lesson to learn. That God's plan, dreams, hopes, are better than what I want for myself!
Every single time in my spiritual life I have traded MY plans, MY hopes, My Dreams for His...Awful Mistake! And, every single time I thought what He put before me was wrong...I learned...His plan for me...Better than my plan!

GOD WANTS TO SET YOU FREE FROM SELF IMPOSED BURDENS!

CONCL: In his commentary on this passage of Scripture Warren Wiersbe asked a series of questions that I think are perfect for you and I to consider today.

1. Have I been justified by faith in Jesus? Have I been "saved" If you don't KNOW...see me, Come...PRAY
2. Am I trying to mix Law and Grace? Am I "trying harder" to earn my way to God? Faith plus NOTHING!
3. Am I rejoicing in my right standing before God...or do I "beat myself up when I sin?"
4. Am I walking in liberty...not License? Am I using my freedom to live for HIM...Or live for SELF?
5. Am I sharing the free Grace of God with others as I have opportunity: When they say: My good out weighs Bad, NO, doesn't work that way: I live by Sermon on Mount: NO Or I live by 10 Commandments? NO