**Trouble Not the Children of God**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Galatians 5:10-15**

**Wednesday Evening**

**September 7, 2022**

**Galatians 5:10-15**

10 I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is. 11 And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.

12 I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off! 13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

**10 I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.**

Saints, in spite of his obvious concern over the Galatian believers and the dangerous situation they faced, Paul believed that they would come to their senses.

 His confidence was based on trusting the Lord to bring them back to the faith they knew to be true.

Paul also was confident that the person who had been troubling and confusing the Galatian believers would receive due punishment.

**Psalm 105:12-15**

12 When they were few in number, Indeed very few, and strangers in it. 13 When they went from one nation to another, From one kingdom to another people, 14 He permitted no one to do them wrong; Yes, He rebuked kings for their sakes, 15 Saying, "Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm."

**Psalm 20:6**

“Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven With the saving strength of His right hand”

**1 Samuel 26:23**

“May the LORD repay every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed”

**2 Thessalonians 1:5-12**

5 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— 6 since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you,

7 and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, 10 when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

12 When they were few in number, Indeed very few, and strangers in it. 13 When they went from one nation to another, From one kingdom to another people, 14 He permitted no one to do them wrong; Yes, He rebuked kings for their sakes, 15 Saying, "Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm."

Saints, while Paul knew that the troublemakers were a group of Judaizers, he singled out the leader of this group, whom he probably did not know.

Paul suspected that this man carried a certain amount of weight as a leader. Whoever it is does not so much stress Paul’s ignorance of this person’s identity as the worthlessness in Paul’s eyes of any status he might carry.

“Whoever he may be, however high in leadership or however revered by the Jews, this man is teaching wrong doctrine,” Paul was saying.

And by the same token, no matter what this leader’s position, he would pay the penalty for his wrong teaching.

**11 And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.**

Saints, Paul asked a personal question; apparently he was reminded of an accusation against him. If Paul were preaching that people needed to be circumcised in order to be saved, then why were the Judaizers still persecuting him?

He would be preaching the same message they preached! But the fact that he was still being persecuted was proof that he was still preaching salvation through the cross of Christ alone.

Why was Paul persecuted for this message? To human nature, and especially to Jews brought up to love and revere their law, the concept of needing someone else’s death in order to be saved was offensive.

The very thought of describing the Messiah as an executed convict disgusted them. But the impact of Christ’s cross on their pride was the greatest stumbling block.

As Paul described to the Corinthians, “When we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended, and the Gentiles say it’s all nonsense.”

**1 Corinthians 1:23-25**

23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Paul had witnessed the rejection of the gospel by both Gentiles and Jews, each for different reasons.

**12 I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!**

Saints, Paul’s words here, though very harsh, were not meant in jest. He wanted to make another point regarding circumcision.

Those troublemakers referred again to the false teachers, the Judaizers, who were preaching that the believers needed to be circumcised.

In effect, Paul said that if the false teachers were so concerned about zeal for the law, maybe they shouldn’t stop at circumcision but go the whole way and mutilate themselves.

According to their own logic, wouldn’t this make them even holier? The comparison to pagan rituals was probably not lost on the Galatians.

Pagan priests of the prominent cult of the goddess Cybele in Asia were eunuchs, castrated as a part of a sacred ritual.

By making this statement, Paul placed circumcision as no better than the pagan rituals of cutting parts of the body.

**13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.**

**John 13:34-35**

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

**1 John 4:20-21**

20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

Saints, when Paul ministered among the Galatians, he did not give his converts a new set of rules to obey (as the Judaizers had done), for that would have made them slaves to the law.

Instead, the Galatians were called to live in freedom. Paul was the messenger, but they “were called” by God himself, the author of the gospel.

Some of Paul’s critics may have condemned his preaching of Christian freedom, saying that it would lead to people living without restraint or guidelines.

Paul had an immediate and forceful answer, explaining that freedom was not to be used to satisfy the sinful nature. Satan and the flesh use our freedom from law as an opportunity to enflame our desires.

Saints, When we indulge the sinful nature, we open the door to many kinds of unfruitful behaviors and attitudes.

**2 Peter 2:8-11**

8(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)-- 9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

10 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, 11 whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

Saints, the demands of our human nature present a constant threat to our real freedom in Christ. We need his ongoing help to keep our “flesh” under control.

Christian freedom is freedom to serve one another in love. Love for other believers flows outward from what God has done in each believer’s heart.

The Greek word for love (agape) refers to selfless, self-giving love. Christian freedom does not leave believers wandering through life without laws, rules, restraints, or guidelines. Instead, they freely live according to God’s standards and glorify God through loving service to others.

**14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."**

Saints, in fact, Christian servanthood ultimately does what slavery to the law cannot do—it fulfills the law! Quoting from Leviticus,

**Leviticus 19:18**

“You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD”

Saints, Paul explained that the whole law can be summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Jesus made this same point (Matthew 22:35-39; Luke 10:25-28).

**Matthew 22:35-40**

35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" 37 Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

**Luke 10:25-28**

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"

27 So he answered and said, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.' " 28 And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

Saints, in fact, the entire law is fulfilled as the Christian community acts in love toward one another through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul made it clear through this letter (and others) that the law cannot save anyone. But he did not cast aside the law as worthless. Believers must still be concerned with it; otherwise Paul would not have made this statement.

No one could ever completely fulfill the law; but if someone could, the Christians (not the Judaizers) would most resemble that person because of their love for one another.

**15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!**

Saints, Paul used the present tense in these verbs, indicating that these problems were occurring as he wrote. Such conflict threatened to tear the church apart.

The verbs increase in intensity— biting, devouring, and ultimately, destroying one another. The source of the conflict went back to the false teachers and the confusion they were causing among the believers.

The presence of the conflict supports the theory that factions were developing in the church—some people going with the law-centered teachers, some staying with Paul and the gospel, and some deciding to pursue their every sinful whim based on the “freedom” they had in Christ.

Such continued confusion would ruin their faith, their testimony, and ultimately the church itself. While some differences of opinion would be natural, the Galatians had gone beyond that.

They disagreed on foundational issues. Like piranhas, they were destroying one another.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**