

“Marks of True Freedom!”

Galatians 6:11-18

Intro. – Bobby Dodd, Georgia Tech’s long time football coach and athletic director, tells of the time a football coach whose team led 7 to 6 in the last minute of the game, instructed his quarterback to NOT pass the football *under any* circumstance. But when the ball was carried within the opponent’s ten-yard line, the quarterback was overcome with grandiose ideas. You guessed it. He threw the football and sure enough it was intercepted by the rival’s fastest runner. This defensive back broke into open-field and was headed to pay-dirt. He was speeding past mid-field when all of the sudden, out of nowhere, the quarterback who threw the errant pass, overtook the back and brought him down to the ground.

After the game, the losing coach remarked to his barely victorious counterpart, “I still don’t understand how your boy overtook my fastest runner.” “Well, I’ll tell you,” came back the reply. “Your boy was running for a touchdown – my boy was running for his life.”

I use this to introduce the idea that *motive* is vital to the all important matter of freedom. Are we living for the approval of men or are we living for the approval of God? The best of work is spoiled if the motive behind that work is wrong. This is the whole purpose behind the book of Galatians – to contrast those living under the Law (legalist) for salvation, to those living under Grace (Christians). Each accountable person must choose between bondage or freedom, the flesh or the Spirit, living for self or living for others.

Purpose: to learn the marks of true freedom stem from growing in Grace

Under the inspiration of God, Paul presents three “marked” men. By looking at these three marked men we will have a better understanding of the marks of true freedom:

I The Man of LAW (LEGALIST) (vv 12-13)

- Illus. – the IRS produces 480 different tax forms each year. Then it produces 280 forms to explain the 480. The IRS sent out eight billion pages in forms and instructions in one recent year. That is enough paper to circle the earth twenty-eight times!
- Illus. – the present US tax code is longer than the Bible times seven!
- the apostle has nothing positive to say about legalist – does have 4 ways to describe them:

A. Legalists Are Braggarts (6:12a and 6:13b)

1. You know what bragging is don’t you?
2. Illus. – little girl was writing a full report on her hero – Abraham Lincoln. In this report she wrote, “Abraham Lincoln was born February 12, 1809, in a log cabin he built himself.”
3. Illus. – sign restaurant featuring fried chicken: “If the Colonel Had Our Recipe, He’d be a General!”
4. Text has Paul pointing out main motive of legalist is not to win people to Christ or build them up in His grace... Main concern of legalist is to convert to *their cause* so they can brag... i.e. work is not done for the glory of Christ or His Church...
 - a. Illus. – asked by individual of the community “How many are you running Sundays?” Then immediately told (though didn’t ask) what specifically they are running at “their church.”
 - b. numbers never been proof of God’s approval... not to compare ourselves to others... in the business of SERVING THE LORD!

B. Legalists Are Compromisers (6:12b)

1. Christians then / now identify with the Cross of Christ, but to the Jew the Cross was a stumbling block and to the Gentile the Cross was foolishness.
2. Legalists will always emphasize their works (e.g. circumcision, use of one cup during communion, not coat racks of Sunday school material etc.). Attractive then and now because it avoids the “shame and persecution of the Cross.” i.e. compromise over truth!

C. Legalists Are Politicians (6:12a)

1. KJV uses the word *constrain* where NIV and NASB *compel*.
2. Doesn’t mean “force against one’s will” but it is a strong word filled with emotion/purpose.

3. Judaizers had a “sales talk” to convince people of Galatia that legalism (salvation by works) was THE way to go...
4. Christians not to be politicians; instead, we are to be ambassadors who rely on the Bible and convicting power of God’s Spirit... plant/water the Gospel seed and God gives the increase!!

D. Legalists Are Hypocrites (6:13)

1. Judaizers had no intention of keeping the Law – their MOTIVE was simply to win as many converts to their cause and report more statistics and get more glory for themselves!
2. In short, they didn’t practice what they preached... It was a sham!

Note: the legalist is a marked man, but, certainly doesn’t have the marks of a free man!

II The SON of God (6:14-16)

- Apostle keeps coming back to “the Cross of Christ” Why? Because Jesus was a marked man
- 2:21 – “I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through Law (i.e. by works a.k.a. legalism), then Christ died needlessly.”
- this explains why Paul and you and I must glory ONLY in the Cross!

A. The Person of the Cross

1. No less than 45 times is Jesus mentioned by name in this short epistle = 1/3 of the verses make a direct reference to Christ!
2. My point – Paul gloried in the Cross because of the *person* of the Cross.
 - Jesus absolutely captivated the Apostle Paul. Does Jesus captivate us is the question?
3. All self-glory... turned to loss when Paul became a Christian!
4. Legalists didn’t/don’t glory in Cross because they don’t glory in Christ; instead, they choose to glory in self and works of self or self-righteous works.

B. The Power of the Cross

1. The Cross means freedom:
 - a. freedom from self (2:20); b. freedom from the flesh (5:24); c. freedom from the world (6:14)
2. To yield to Christ, means power to overcome the world, to overcome flesh.
3. There is no POWER in Law to give man victory over self, the flesh and yes the world.
4. Righteousness by works (legalism) inflates the ego, flatters the flesh, and caters to the world.
 - those who are *in Christ* crucify all three of these because of the POWER OF THE CROSS!

C. The Purpose of the Cross

1. To bring in a “new creation” = a direct reference to the Body of Christ His Church
 - a. 2 Corinthians 5:17 “*Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*”
 - b. Illus. – nothing smells fresh/clean like new car... Being *in Christ* (Church), fresh/clean envir.
2. To create a new nation:
 - a. 6:16 “the Israel of God”
 - b. Matthew 21:43 Christ to Jewish leaders, “*...the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*”
 - c. 1 Peter 2:9 “*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.*”

The wounds of Calvary prove the Son of God is a *Marked Man* – Because of this we can be free – X paid...

III The APOSTLE of God (6:17-18)

- Apostle Paul was also a “marked man” and this was proof of his freedom:

A. The Brand-Marks of Jesus

1. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was proud of his mark – Pharisee of Pharisees... circumcision...(Philippians 3:4-6)... He was nothing more than a legalist...
2. He became a Christian (circumcised of the heart without hands – Colossians 2:10-12) and as a direct result in doing so, scars came as a result of his faithfulness to Christ.

3. The contrast is obvious = “You legalists (religious showboats), if you have any scars to show unto the glory of Christ, then show them. If not, shut-up!”
 4. Branded for Jesus = MARKS OF FREEDOM = results in having the right motives/incentives...
- B. The Grace of Jesus Christ
1. As Paul began this epistle, he now concludes this epistle = THE GRACE OF GOD!
 - Illus. – old professor defined grace = “Everything God does for us to SAVE us.”
 2. GRACE saves... not the doing of our good works!

Conclusion: At the conclusion of a concert, two ushers were applauding more enthusiastically than anyone else. People around them were smiling appreciative at the two energized ushers; until, one of the ushers stopped clapping. The other usher immediately was heard to have said, “Keep clapping you dope. One more encore and we’re on overtime!”

Someone said, “Do only what is required of you and remain a slave. Do more than is required and be free!”
-- Saved BY grace, THROUGH faith, AT baptism, FOR good works. We do good works not to save us. We do good works in response to being saved by HIS GRACE!

What I want you to get from this is that the marks of true freedom is understanding the grace of God. This congregation will be aflame more and more as each and every one of us understand the grace of God better and better and better! O, that we would recognize the Marks of True Freedom!