

Galatians

TO THE CHURCHES IN GALATIA

REMINDEES, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND WARNINGS.

GALATIANS 5:13-15

Churches can be messy places because they are full of people. God knows His church is messed up because it is full of people, people He purchased with the blood of Jesus. Todd Wilson writes, "Clearly, God is convinced the church is a mess worth making!"

- **On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the degree of messiness you've seen in the church?**
- **What drives the messiness of churches?**

God knows we are a mess, yet too many Christians think we/they aren't. They may believe, when they see a mess, it is clearly something wrong in others and not themselves. Churches are not, and never will be, "mess-free zones." Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp wrote a book called *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making* and speak about the church this way, "While we would like to avoid the mess and enjoy deep and intimate community, God says that it is in the very process of working through the mess that intimacy [and true community] is found." If we truly desire meaningful Christian community, the question we must ask ourselves is this: how do we work our way through the mess?

- **How have you seen people work through the mess?**
- **How have you seen people avoid the mess?**
- **How does the Gospel equip us to work through the mess when we focus on Jesus?**

Paul will give the Galatians a reminder, a warning (two of them, actually), and an encouragement about learning to do life together. The churches in the area of Galatia had made a mess of things. Paul will move to help them sort through the mess, both Biblically and theologically.

Read Galatians 5:13-15.

- **Why does Paul remind them that they are called to freedom?**
- **How do we build our lives and our community on the foundation of that freedom found in Christ?**

WEEK TWENTY-ONE

A Reminder – Paul reminds them that our freedom comes from the Gospel and not our works. In turn, other people's freedom also comes from the Gospel and not *their* works. Paul is reminding them to stop focusing on morality and the Law and instead focus on Jesus. The only way we will be transformed is through God's love. Our culture, and our churches, don't have a sex, anger, or drinking problem...we have a Jesus problem.

- **How are we reminding ourselves, and each other, that without Jesus, our sin leads to our death?**
- **How are we sharing the reminder that Jesus had to come to die for all our sins, in our place?**

A Warning – How can we tell if we truly understand our freedom? The test Paul gives us here is simple. How do you view other people—specifically those who are a part of the community of faith? One of the defining results of the Gospel in our lives is that we not only get to celebrate and worship God, we also get to celebrate and love other people and their gifts. When we see other people excelling, we get to rejoice in that. When other people fail or fall, we grieve and cry out on their behalf; we desire to see everyone grow, because our standing before God (how He feels about us) is not tied to others. Our standing is tied to Jesus, and that sets us free to rejoice in other people.

- **How do you rejoice in other people and thank God for them?**
- **If you have not, do you desire to?**
- **Where are you engaging in the mission of God? What is it and what does it look like in your life?**

An Encouragement – There is nothing we give to God that helps Him in any way. God has extended His perfect love to us by bestowing grace and mercy. In Romans 5:5, we are reminded that God places His Spirit in us so we can then love each other and Him. God's love changes us. God's love transforms us. God's love changes people.

- **Do you find yourself being a goat (with an attitude of selfishness) or a sheep?**
- **What is love? How well do you love?**
- **Share how God's love has led to changes/transformation in your life?**
- **How are you at being God's conduit of love to others around you? If you are part of a community, allow them to speak into this for you.**