

Galatians 1:11-2:10

A Prisoner Set Free

Galatians provides one of the most personal accounts of Paul's life.

Unlike other letters like Romans, dictated to Tertius, he writes this with his own hand (6:11)

He is certainly concerned for the Galatian, whom he had led to know Christ due to the heresy of the Judaisers who were among them.

The Judaisers basically were saying that the gentiles had to become Jewish and obey all the laws of their culture and traditions to become Christian.

These young believers, therefore started to go along with the Judaisers, seeking their approval.

And so Paul is keen to intercept and correct this false teaching quickly.

In doing so, he shares a part of his life that is very significant.

He tells the story of his own spiritual journey.

Perhaps there is something happening in Galatia that resonates with his own story.

And this is what we are examining today.

Prison

[Brooks Was Here - From the Shawshank Redemption]

How does this make you feel?

What Questions do you have?

This clip may be very similar to what motivates Paul to write Galatians.

Paul saw the Christians he led to Christ turning from the peace and security of life in Christ towards the message of the Judaisers.

Driven

Here is Paul's Story

He was a driven man.

But why?

Why did he become this up and coming Pharisee?

What do you think he motivation was?

What motivates a person to be so religiously fervent?

As I have said before, conviction does not truth make.

Come to understand fanatical Christianity, or fanatical Islam, or fanatical atheism.

What drives this?

Discussion

Who are the people you seek approval from both consciously or unconsciously?

How reasonable are your expectations?

What feelings does this generate?

Who are you living for?

Why do you do the things you do?

What are the roles of fear and hope in your life?

When will good ever good enough?

Foundations of Theological Reflection - Why?

Discernment of motivations.

Discernment

Conviction is not guilt.

The Spirit brings conviction, the devil brings guilt.

Conviction is very specific and therefore allows for particular action.

Guilt is nebulous and vague, rendering it impossible to address.

One breeds hope and action while the other breeds malaise and despair.

Conviction is an invitation.

Guilt is an accusation.

The difference between a pull and a push.

This leads to the understanding of discernment of the Holy Spirit and the Character of God.

2 Corinthians 5: 14 - "The love of Christ compels us."

Galatians 2:20 - "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."

Freedom

That's what it means to be a prisoner in your own mind.

We talk about freedom all the time, but freedom from what?

And freedom for what?

Freedom to be selfish? To be rich? To be safe? to live anyway I well please?

From poverty? From suffering? From greed? From fear?

Paul knows what it means to be a prisoner in his letter to the Philippians.

It is while he is under guard, not free to travel that he writes these words:

"Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, rejoice!"

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation by prayer and petition,
presents your requests to God.

And the peace of God that transcends all understanding
will guard your hearts and your minds in Jesus Christ."

Phil 4:4-7

[Taiwanese Prison]

What you do in this life matters.

Why you do what you do matters.

At the Table of Jesus is an invitation, not and accusation.