



Futile Efforts

Galatians 1:1-10

Friday, June 26th, 2020

¹ Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. ² I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain. ³ Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. ⁴ This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. ⁵ We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. "

Everyone knows the discouraging feeling of futile efforts. For example, having invested into a relationship with all your heart only to realize in the end that it was all in vain – a disappointing experience; an experience that Paul, when it came to spreading the Gospel, wanted to avoid at all costs. But what was his fear? What threatened the preaching of the Gospel into potentially becoming a futile undertaking? Paul wrote of "false brothers", who sought to limit the freedom we have in Christ.

Paul didn't hold back in using drastic images to emphasize the urgency of this matter. The false doctrine Paul was fighting against was directed at the mere heart of the Gospel. This cannot be ignored. This must be contradicted. If the freedom we have in Christ is limited, then one of the essential truths of the Gospel is in danger. There is only true freedom in Christ and through Christ!

This realization shows us two things: it can be both a warning and an opportunity. It warns us to question ourselves: have I built up barriers that are preventing others from meeting Christ? Likewise, it presents an opportunity: the realization that we have true freedom in Christ especially addresses the current times we live in. Many people are longing for real freedom. They are searching for freedom only to find themselves trapped in the things that drive them on. But there is hope. There is true freedom.

It is my desire that through us our neighbors may be able to see a living faith in Jesus Christ. A living faith that is rooted in the truth of the Gospel but at the same time is free to overcome all limitations and barriers, so that everyone may have the opportunity to experience how the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ sets them free. Then we can know that our daily Christian life and the sharing of the Gospel will not have been in vain.

Prayer: Thank You, heavenly Father, that Your love sets me free. Thank You, Lord Jesus, that Your forgiveness lets me live a life in freedom. Thank You, Holy Spirit, that You have embedded this truth deeply in my heart. Amen.

-Philipp Graß-

