

Sermon Series Title: For Freedom Christ has set you Free! Rediscovering Christian freedom through the Galatian correspondence.

Cell Notes 5 June 2016 Theme: "...But when God" (remembering God's grace, living in freedom)

Key words: freedom, oppression, salvation, brownie-points, grace, law, gospel etc.

See attached: notes for our new sermon series and The Resolution on the Work of God from Synod.

Welcome

- How is it with your soul?
- Complete the sentence "but when God....", using an experience from your own life.

Worship

Sing: Praise to the Lord who executes justice for the oppressed; gives food to the hungry, opens the eyes of the blind, lifts up the bowed down, loves the righteous, watches over the foreigners, and upholds the orphan and the widow (Psalm 146).

Pray: the needs of the group and that you may be enlightened as you read scripture and see how the Holy Spirit is at work in our world today.

Word:

Galatians 1: 1-24 (as you have read the notes and as you read the passage imagine yourself as a congregant in the churches to whom Paul was writing)

- What strikes you in this passage? Why?
- Paul describes his conversion experience in Gal. 1 verses 13-17. His conversion experience is first recorded in Acts 9, then in Acts 22: 6- 21 and Acts 26: 12- 18. Frederick Buechner in his book, "Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC describes Paul's conversion as follows: *"During his Pharisee phase or "blue period" Paul was on his way to Damascus to mop up some Christians when suddenly he heard the voice of Jesus Christ, whose resurrection he had up till now considered only an ugly rumour. What he might have expected the voice to say was "Just you wait." What in effect it did say was, "I want you on my side." Paul never got over it . . . Paul also discovered that all the brownie points he had been trying to rack up as a super-Pharisee had been pointless. God did business with you not because of who you were but because of who he was."*
 - o Before his conversion, Paul was a violent, brownie-point-earning religious fanatic. What has been your experience of religious violence, or "brownie point earning religion;" whether physical, verbal, political or psychological? How has God intervened, or how do you expect God to intervene?
 - o What kind of freedom did Paul experience after his conversion?
 - o What kind of freedom have you experienced in Christ?

Or...

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- What strikes you about the passage? Why?
- Paul accuses his contemporaries of preaching a “false gospel,” (Gal. 1: 6-10). They were probably using Gen. 17- Abraham’s circumcision- to argue for the circumcision of Gentiles. Apartheid was declared a heresy (or a false gospel) by some leaders of the church (e.g. Allan Boesak, John De Gruchy, Trevor Huddleson, Desmond Tutu, Peter Storey, etc). Against those who read scripture uncritically or to justify Apartheid. We are celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the ordination of women for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Methodist Church of SA: scripture was used to exclude women but now we acknowledge the sinfulness of how we interpreted scripture to oppress women.
 - What has been your experience of “false gospels?” How was scripture used to justify Apartheid and the exclusion of women from the ministry?
 - How have you found the gospel liberating, or useful in critiquing the sinful status quo in our society?

Works

- Thank you for your generous response to the sanitary towel drive! If you still want to donate more, the box will still be at help desk/ at the office until Wednesday 15th June.
- The punch-line at synod was; ‘The church does not have a mission, God’s mission has a church.’ Look for opportunities to be part of God’s mission in the world this week!