Galatians 3:23-4:7—No longer slaves to fear (Good news...all things have changed)
5/28/17

1. **No Longer a slave to Fear—But a child of God.**
   1. The Jews in slavery to Egyptians. But God sent a deliver—Moses
   2. The passed through the Red Sea and became children of God.
   3. Jesus is the ultimate deliver. When we are baptized into Him we clothe ourselves with Him and His righteousness and we are no longer slaves.
   4. Fear is a powerful motivator but not the best one. God wants us to move beyond fear to love.
   5. God wants us to live as His heir, free from fear and walking in His power! This is good news and it changes everything!
   6. We no longer need to be afraid to fail...because we are already God’s kids.
   7. We no longer need to earn our place...it is established and secure.

**Application—Living in Freedom**

1. **Recognize that we are Free from the Law (no longer under the law)!**
   a) Christ fulfilled the law.
   b) Romans 8:1-4
   c) We have been clothed and covered by Christ

2. **Stand by Faith (We are seeds of Abraham) not by works**
   a) Maybe you feel or are even living as a slave this morning! Time to be set free!
   b) No longer live in fear...Yes seek to live for Christ but understand that you worth, identity, value and acceptance is not based on your successes or failures, your sin or no sin, but in Christ.
   c) Rest in God’s love. You have been adopted into His family.

3. **Walk in the Spirit**
   a) Do not grieve the Spirit but walk in the power and freedom of the Spirit.
   b) Live not in condemnation but in relationship to Holy Spirit. When you have the Spirit, He has power to convict you and He will. Trust in that. But He won’t bring shame...that is from the evil one.
   c) Romans 8:1 and Romans 8:14

**Conclusion: Guard your heart against returning to Egypt/slavery.**
   a) Satan wants to steal and kill your joy. He wants you to find your worth and value in the things of this world. Don't let him.
Manuscript—No longer slaves to fear

Welcome. We are continuing our series on Good news: Everything is about to change. Today I want to talk about how the good news of Christ delivered us from fear. Think for a second what are you afraid of? I am not talking about spiders, snakes or other slimy creatures but deep-seated fears that control your life and shape your destiny. For example, a fear of rejection; fear of being alone, or a fear of failure are all negative fears that shape you and can end up defining you and steering your direction in life. Growing up one of the fears that shaped me was my fear of being unlovable. I allowed that fear to define me and ultimately lead me into destructive behavior. Fear is a powerful motivator. But the truth is that not all “fear” is bad. Some fear serves as a good purpose. For example, there is a healthy fear of fire that if you touch it you will get burned. But if you are so afraid of fire that you never experience the joy of a good campfire or roasting marshmallows or are living in constant fear of getting burned then that fear is bad. In Proverbs we read that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. We are called to have a healthy fear of God. However, we are also called to not fear God because perfect love cast out fear. So is that a contradiction? Not really, more like a limitation on our English definition of the concept of fear. For example, when scripture teaches us to have a healthy fear of God it is more like a reverence and deep respect for God. That is different than our concept of being afraid of God. That is not what God wants. Healthy fear could be defined as respect. While, unhealthy fear is debilitating and harmful.

Unfortunately, as fallen human beings we are all broken and have elements of negative fear that have and seek to continue to control us. For instance, some of you are striving in life seeking to find self worth in fear that you are not worthy or loveable. Some of you are afraid of being a failure so you kill yourself trying to succeed. Some of you are so afraid of being alone that you are willing to settle on any relationship as long as you are not alone. The truth is that on our own and especially with the help of Satan we allow our fears to push us around and even define us. For a long time I feared losing my salvation if I sinned too much or too bad. I feared that God would stop loving me. This fear often motivated me to not sin but in the end it stole my joy and peace with God. God wants me and all of us to not sin, but the motive should be out of love for Him, ourselves, and others not out of fear of rejection. Unfortunately, too many people, including believers, are operating out of a fear motive or living in condemnation. The good news is that Jesus came to change all of this. Jesus came, lived, and died that we may walk with Him in freedom, specifically freedom from fear that is rooted in the Old Testament law, which is trying to be good enough for love and acceptance. With Christ all is meant to change. We are no longer slaves to fear but children of God. Listen to Romans 8:14-17. Amen. This is good news we are no longer slaves to fear but children of God. We are heirs with Christ, thus we call God Abba, Father.

Our challenge is that we struggle to live in that freedom and often find ourselves back in slavery to fear. Even though as believers we are not under the law, we find ourselves again, like in the Old Testament times, trying to earn our worthiness, acceptance, and identity. So today I want to look at how and why God has set us free and how we can live in that freedom; for we are no longer slaves to sin but children of God.
To explore how we walk in freedom and not fear, I want to read a passage in Galatians. Now if you are unfamiliar with the book of Galatians just think of the first three letters of the name: G.A.L. Imagine this stands for: Going Against Legalism. Legalism essentially means following a set of rules (specifically the Old Testament law) in order to be accepted and righteous. Following or rather a failure to follow all the rules resulted in living in fear. For instance, fear of death, fear of being good enough, and fear of not being accepted by God. But the good news of Christ changed this, however, Christians were struggling living in this truth. So the Apostle Paul wrote the book of Galatians to speak about the believer’s freedom from legalism, which was rooted in fear. Read with me Galatians 3:23-4:7.

How awesome is that! Here we read God’s ultimate plan unfolded through Christ. We read in the appointed time that God sent His Son, born of a women, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, which is you and I, that we might receive sonship. With the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ everything changed. This has always been God’s plan. In this passage we not only read the good news but also keys on how we are to live within this new freedom we have in Christ. But in Christ we are no longer slaves to fear but are children of God.

Now, to better understand our passage today and how it relates to fear we need to better understand the “law.” Especially since we are not Jewish and sometimes the word law can be confusing. So allow me to explain. First, we need to understand that the moment sin entered into humanity, humanity became a slave to sin. That meant that we were born into a nature of sin and also suffered the consequence of sin, such as a broken relationship with God, sickness, and ultimately death. All that is a consequence of sin. However, God had a plan. And that plan was in His perfect time to send a savior—His Son to save us from sin. But before God sent His Son, He first revealed and proved that we need a savior. This was necessary, because even today most people believe they are just fine and good with God as they are. However, this is not the case. God is holy and requires His children to be holy. Are you with me so far? So, continuing with God’s plan, He gave the people, through Moses a ton of rules to follow called the Levitical law to illustrate a holy life. Now this “Law” was also meant to protect God’s people, like a guardian, but the ultimate purpose of the Law was to reveal that no one could follow the Law and thus be holy and therefore need a savior. But the good news of Christ changed everything and fulfilled the law for each person. That being said, Christians were and still are struggling living in this truth—that we are no longer under the law because Christ fulfilled the law. So the Apostle Paul wrote the book of Galatians to speak about the believer’s freedom from legalism, which led to a life of fear.

The first thing I want to highlight in walking in freedom, as no longer slaves to fear, is recognize that we are, in Christ, free from the law, that is we are no longer under the law but now through faith children of God. The law has not been abolished but fulfilled. We read in Galatians 3:23-25 that we were held in custody, locked up, basically prisoners of the law. But Christ changed it all. Through Christ we have fulfilled the law. Before Christ the righteousness of God was met by following the law. The good news is that after Christ the righteousness is not found in following the law but through faith in Christ. Here is why this is so powerful. We all deal and struggle with sin, every one of us, even as believers. Although, we are not our sin, we still sin. 1 John 1:8 says if you say you don't sin then you are a liar and deceived. Romans 3:23 tells us
that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. In Romans 7 the Apostle Paul describes our struggle with the flesh, that is our sin, and our spirit. How we want to do good but we always find sin right there with us. It is a battle within us. This battle can easily cause fear and condemnation especially when we fail. I cannot tell you how many times I have felt condemnation for my sin. A condemnation so strong that I have wanted to give up on my faith. I have felt as though I am not good enough and cannot please God. I no I am not alone for I have counseled many people who reject Christianity because they fear not being good enough or fear failure. This is a lie from the enemy—Satan. Listen to the good news of Romans 8:1-4. This is what the Apostle Paul is stating in Galatians 3:23-25. Because we walk by the Spirit and not by the law or our flesh we need not fear our failures because there is no condemnation in Christ. No please do NOT misunderstand me. The fact that God no longer condemns us for our sin is not a license to sin. That would make God’s grace cheap. Rather, the fact that we are no longer under the law and in bondage to sin frees us to serve God not our of fear of being good enough but from a position of love. If you understand that God loves you not because you did or did not sin, but rather because you are His child then you will not want to sin. And when you do sin you will feel convicted because you love God but not condemned. Sin is no longer your master, thus there is no more fear. Again, this does not mean we do not fight against the flesh, our desire to sin, which we all have. We are still to fight, but we fight from a position of victory and not a position of fear of defeat. This makes all the difference in the world. In victory we have joy, peace, and confidence in Christ. We are drawn into a deeper relationship with God as we recognize His grace and love of us. In the position of defeat we live in fear that we will never be good enough and we are one failure away from being rejected. In Christ, we are to be no longer slaves to fear but we live as children of God.

We read in Galatians 3:26-28 that we are clothed that is covered in Christ. The metaphor of being clothed or covered in Christ is meant to illustrate the truth that God looks upon us through Christ’s righteousness and not our own. Through faith, we are children of God, for all of us who were baptized into Christ have been clothed or covered in Christ. Our sin is washed in the blood of Christ. God doesn't look upon us and see our sin but He sees His Son and us found in His Son. Of course, God is not oblivious to our struggle with sin, but He no longer holds us guilty of our sin because Jesus paid for our sin with His life. We no longer need to live in fear. So, we live no longer in fear but in victory understanding that Christ didn’t abolish the law but fulfilled the law for all those who believe in Him.

Once we recognize that we are no longer under the law but heirs in Christ we then need to stand by faith and not by our feelings or what we can see. A big part of living in fear is we are not living by faith. Fear tells us that we are not good enough or that God will not provide for us, or we are unworthy. Faith tells us that we are perfect in Christ, that God will never let us down, and that we are worthy in Christ. Read again Galatians 3:29. Here we see that we are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. What is God talking about. Read just a few verse earlier in Galatians 3:16-18. Again, what this passage is explaining is that God always had one plan but that one plan had several parts. The part of our salvation, our acceptance, our identity, and value was to come through the promise given by God to Abraham. The part of our recognizing the need of a savior was the part of the law. But we are children not of the law but of the
promise through Christ. And because we are kids of the promise we must stand on God’s promise and not but our works or what we can see. Remember, when God gave Abraham that promise that he and Sarah would have a child in their old age. Sarah did not believe it so she sought to bring about God’s promise by her own strength and will. She convinced Abraham to sleep with her young servant Hagar and resulted in Ishmael. However, God did not fail on His promise and through God’s power Abraham and Sarah had Isaac. But the birth of Ishmael caused all sorts of problems with Isaac and still does today. God foretold that Ishmael (symbolic of the flesh) would always be at war with Isaac symbolic of faith. Today, Muslims trace their heritage to Ishmael and Jews to Isaac. The point is not only a cool history lesson but the fact that when we rest in our own strength that leads to fear. But when we choose faith in God we can rest in His promises and experience Joy and peace. We are heirs of Christ not by our strength but by faith in Christ.

Maybe you feel or are even living as a slave this morning. It is time to be set free. Choose by faith to rest in God’s grace and not your own righteousness or strength. Our own strength will fail us, but God never will. No longer live in fear but as children of God. Seek to live a pure life in Christ but understand that your worth, identity, value and acceptance is not based on your successes, failures, sin or no sin, but in Christ. Rest in God. You, through faith, are a child of God.

Okay, I want to close with reading again Galatians 4:6-7. Here we read that we have the gift of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the New Testament we read of the gift of God living within us, that the Holy Spirit not only guides us and gives us what we need but literally resides within us. One of the best ways to not be slaves to fear is to practice walking in the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:5-11 reminds us that the mind of the flesh is fear and death, while the mind governed by the Spirit is peace and life. Even though our bodies are dying physically because of sin, the same power that raised Christ from the dead will also raise us from the dead. It is this truth, which brings us peace even in the midst of darkest times. We no longer need to be slaves to fear, but simply know we are children of God.

Today you might be feeling as though you are a slave to fear. Maybe you have gotten off track and have believed in some lies. I want to encourage you to guard your heart against returning to slavery. Satan wants to steal and kill your joy. He wants you to find your worth and value in the things of this world. Don’t let him. Recognize you are worthy in Christ and that you are no longer under the dominion of sin. That doesn’t mean that you will not struggle with sin or have to fight against sin but it means sin has no end power over you. Jesus changed that. Now it is time to no longer live by fear but by faith and in the power of the Holy Spirit, for in Christ, through faith you are a child of God. If you have been living for Christ’s approval and in fear then today choose to live by faith. Chose to find your worth, identity, value and acceptance not based on your successes or failures, your sin or no sin, but in Christ. We are no longer slaves to sin, but we are children of God. Let us live like it! Amen.