

## Victory of the Lamb – Living Forward – January 20, 2019

### Galatians 5:13,14 The Gospel Made Me Do It – Pastor Bill Limmer

Raise your hand if you came in some sort of automobile to worship today? How many of you pushed the vehicle the whole way here? Can you picture if you had to push your car all the way to worship?

**(picture of me pushing my car into Victory)** I live just less than two miles from the ministry center and that would have been a bear or some other b word if I would have had to push my car two miles to get here. And I live about as close as anyone to Victory. Can you imagine the struggle, the feelings of frustration, exhaustion, the inadequacies, the anger, the times you would want to give up if you had to push your car from your home to Victory, not to mention back again? Well that would suck. But the amazing thing is, you turn the key and you are set free from the burden of pushing the car. So it is cold outside do you want to be inside the car seated and warm or outside the car struggling and cold? Or in the summer when it is hot do you want to be sweating like crazy or do you want to be in the cool of the air-conditioned car? Skip all of that, it can be a perfect day outside, and we don't want to push our car, right?

I bring this up because I know that more than one of you is living under the burden of the law and not the freedom of the gospel. So check out the exciting news! Galatians 5:13 **You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free.** The difference between living under the law and the under the gospel is like pushing your car or driving your car, except a lot worse. Another way of looking at the burden of the law is like a chain that weighs us down and confines us, makes things difficult, if not down right impossible. Can you imagine carry this chain with you wherever you go? Some of you don't have too because you are. Some of you are carrying around the chain of addiction, animosity, greed, guilt, hatred, jealousy, lack of self-control, lust, people pleasing, regret, revenge, the chain of shame, stress, anxiety, depression, the chain of frustration, the chain of I can't get ahead, etc., Under the law you are serving whatever chain you are carrying around. I know by personal experience.

Those things are heavy. There are heavy things in life. But Jesus is the key that sets you free. Because Jesus served you. Hebrews 7:27 **He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.** Another way of saying it is: Hebrews 9:15 **For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.** You are no longer chained to the law. You are not in a transactional relationship with God. So quit trying to make it one. You don't need to carry around the chain of trying to prove yourself to be better than someone else to try and get God's love. That would be tether yourself to the law. Kinda like in tether ball where you are only going to get so far away from the pole of the law. And you just go around and round in circles. And the faster you go the closer to the law you get. The chain game sounds like I gotta, I should have, I could have, I blew it, I never do anything right. You don't have to compare yourself to others and have the chain of failure wrapped around you. God is not settling the score with you or giving you what you earn or deserve, or punishing you. God's relationship with you is based on Jesus and his perfect works not you and your imperfect works. You are not saved by works, you have a relationship with God based on works just your works, they are the perfect works of Jesus. Jesus is the key that sets you free. Ephesians 2:8,9 **For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.** Sports if score didn't matter they wouldn't keep score.

God has already won the victory for you so there is no score to keep. So why not today, let's agree to not to keep score, let's agree to love.

From a guy who was once embedded in the law, Galatians 5:13 **serve one another humbly in love**. This is not a could have, should have, gotta, this is I get to because we are not keeping score. Pressure is off, love is on. We live in a world where Christians are labeled as bigots or backward, let's be known for serving the least of these and loving our neighbor not under the law but in love. 1 Peter 2:12 **Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify your God.** *Many people living on the same streets as we do never see our loving actions. Instead, they see our absence, or worse, our defensive reactions to the changing US culture. They see our antagonism against their tribe, against them. We give them the impression of insecurity, self-protectiveness, and hate on the outside. . . We have claimed to love them from a distance, but we have failed to show them directly and personally that we are selfless, loving and good.* (Hope of the Nation pp.220,221) Those of us who are Christian are linked to Christ, to one another and to our community. **(Linked logo?)**

This is what Jesus did. The Samaritan woman in John 4. She was the exact opposite of Jesus. She stood for everything that was contrary to Jesus but Jesus met her where she was at. He offered her a gift – living water. Only the gift really wasn't water – it was better. Jesus offered himself. Jesus washed his disciples' feet. Which was stunning. He was their rabbi. These are hands that cured leprosy, healed the blind, made people walk. These are hands that would have nail holes in them in less than 24 hours. Jesus did for them what they never dreamed of doing for each other. And then he told them: **Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.** Jesus was doing "show and tell."

While it may not be here just yet, it will be, and it is on the coasts, that our culture thinks of Christians as villains, just ask Karen Pence. We now have the opportunity to express our love for God by loving our neighbor. So what does love look like? Love speaks in words and actions. Generosity makes us available. We can step outside of ourselves and our personal agendas and love on others like Jesus did with the Samaritan woman, the disciples, and you and me. Here are some examples: donate to the Happy hands and heads by bringing new gloves and hats to Victory, buy someone's meal unexpectedly and tell them their meal is free just like God's grace. Invite them to find out more. Feel free to hand out my card. Donate food or clothing to a shelter. Serve a meal at a shelter. Love shows and tells. Grace in action teams. We are going to be rolling out in the next couple of weeks opportunities for you to do some one-offs in the community, small groups maybe do some as well. But love is not just one planned acts of kindness or random acts of kindness, love walks with people in good times and in bad. Love does for someone what they would never think of doing for themselves. We have some amazing stories right inside this congregation of people going the extra mile and walking with people in life through difficult things. I am humbled by your love.

Imagine if we lived as citizens of heaven and not citizens of this world. Imagine what it would look like if we saw other people like Jesus sees us. But imagine, what would happen if all of us went to work tomorrow with a renewed commitment to serve those who serve us. What one thing can you do this week to serve the spiritually needy in love. But love compels me to warn you, it's contagious. Its' going to mess you up. You start doing this and I don't think you are going to be able to stop. You will end up

living a life of humble serving love because love replaces the law. And how does that all work? Jesus is the key that sets you free to serve one another in love.