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**WELCOME TO MOUNT HERMON**

Sunday 19th July 2020

**SCATTERED BUT UNITED**

To the saints in [Addingham], the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1 v 1-2

**Message from David**

At life group on Tuesdays we are looking at Paul’s letter to the churches in Galatia. This can be seen as Paul presenting the gospel in something of a rant, the book of Romans being a more measured presentation of the same principles. Yet it is a clear statement of salvation through faith and not by works. The Jewish believers had been telling the new Gentile converts that they needed to be circumcised and to follow the law of Moses. This incensed Paul and led to this letter being written. We can also so easily be tempted to follow a ‘gospel’ of salvation through works. We like to know where we are and a form of religion (a set of rules) is very comforting. To think we have achieved something through our own efforts is rewarding. That is perhaps why some people of European origin are turning to Islam - the rigidity of the religion gives a framework in which to feel secure. But Paul presents the gospel as a message of freedom: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5.1). “Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8.2). Freedom can be a scary concept to those who have been slaves, but we are encouraged to embrace it, though not for sinful pleasures, but rather to serve one another humbly in love (Galatians 5.13-26).

**Bible verses for reflection**

Galatians 5,13-26

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no-one can boast. Ephesians 2.8-9

Therefore no-one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. Romans 3.20

But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. Titus 4-7

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. Romans 5.1

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**Our vision: to help people find their way back to God**