

Title: But He Still Loves You – Galatians 5 1-12

Read:

¹ Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you. ²⁻³ I am emphatic about this. The moment any one of you submits to circumcision or any other rule-keeping system, at that same moment Christ's hard-won gift of freedom is squandered. I repeat my warning: The person who accepts the ways of circumcision trades all the advantages of the free life in Christ for the obligations of the slave life of the law. ⁴⁻⁶ I suspect you would never intend this, but this is what happens. When you attempt to live by your own religious plans and projects, you are cut off from Christ, you fall out of grace. Meanwhile we expectantly wait for a satisfying relationship with the Spirit. For in Christ, neither our most conscientious religion nor disregard of religion amounts to anything. What matters is something far more interior: faith expressed in love. ⁷⁻¹⁰ You were running superbly! Who cut in on you, deflecting you from the true course of obedience? This detour doesn't come from the One who called you into the race in the first place. And please don't toss this off as insignificant. It only takes a minute amount of yeast, you know, to permeate an entire loaf of bread. Deep down, the Master has given me confidence that you will not defect. But the one who is upsetting you, whoever he is, will bear the divine judgment. ¹¹⁻¹² As for the rumor that I continue to preach the ways of circumcision (as I did in those pre-Damascus Road days), that is absurd. Why would I still be persecuted, then? If I were preaching that old message, no one would be offended if I mentioned the Cross now and then—it would be so watered-down it wouldn't matter one way or the other. Why don't these agitators, obsessive as they are about circumcision, go all the way and castrate themselves!

Think:

Everyone in this world has to make their own mind up when it comes to God. Yep, that teacher at school, your mate at college, the shop keeper down the road, your parents and even you. There is no excuse. If you are listening or reading this you already know about God, and you will have to make a decision one way or the other. Actually the Bible even talks about the world itself pointing towards God. So haven't you made your own mind up what's next? Well if you are a Christian that seems pretty straight forward. God tells us to help other people discover him. But what about that guy who chooses not to follow Jesus and then mocks you? What about the guys who tempt you to ditch Jesus and follow some other path? Well it seems that God has some pretty harsh things to say about them. Paul explains in this passage that the person who does this type of thing, is going to get judged very harshly. We like to ignore this part of God's message when we talk to our mates. We are very happy to talk about Jesus as a friend and how he died so that we can party in Heaven, but the flip side of that coin is a little less appealing. It might be less appealing but at the end of day God is straight about it. Whether people choose to believe in God or not is irrelevant, they still end up in front of him after they die. God's fair too, if you choose not to be with him on this earth, then you won't spend forever with him in Heaven. But be warned; don't take others down with you.

Pray:

Father I know you have a message of love and not hate. When the questions come up with my mates about what happens if they choose not believe, please help me communicate it in a way they will understand. Father please give me the words to communicate your love even through your judgment. Amen.

Action:

That's a tough message to hear today. How did it make you feel? Why not pop over to aftershock.org.uk and leave a comment to let us know. Bye.