

Sermon

“Resistance Fatigue”

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Today’s scripture from Galatians stands in a moment of conflict and dissonance within this community where the newest followers of Christ are being pressured to comply with traditional Jewish practices. Of course, it goes much deeper than this – it stands in a moment when followers of this Christ realize these new found polity is not easy to live by in a world that seems to resist “love thy neighbor” philosophy. Perhaps this is a bit like the time we are living through today?

Paul writes this letter to the Galatians it states in very large letters – in other words, emphatically imploring them to listen to his words. In today’s world, it would be in ALL CAPS... What is this whole debate about circumcising the male Galatians actually about? We will start here.

Friends, Let’s talk today about courage—not the kind that roars, but the kind that quietly refuses to bow. The kind that stands firm when the pressure to blend in, to compromise, to “just go along,” feels overwhelming.

Because that’s exactly what the believers in Galatia were facing. The pressure was real. The stakes were high. And the temptation? Oh, it sounded so reasonable.

“Why not just get circumcised?” they were told. “If you want to worship the One God of Abraham, why not do it the proper Jewish way? That way, you’ll

Inspired by workingpreacher.org commentary on Galatians 6:1-6 by Rev Brigitte Kahl.

be protected. You'll be exempt from worshiping Caesar like the rest of the empire. No one will bother you. No one will question you. You'll fit in."

Sounds logical, doesn't it? Sounds safe. But friends, faith was never meant to be safe.

Paul saw right through it. He saw that this wasn't about honoring God—it was about avoiding trouble. It was about making faith more palatable, more acceptable to the powers that be. It was about appearances. About keeping the peace. About dodging persecution.

But Paul reminds us: the cross of Christ is not something we hide behind. It's something we carry. And carrying it means we will stand out. It means we will be misunderstood. It means we will be asked to explain ourselves in a world that wants neat categories and binary boxes.

The Jesus-followers in Galatia were breaking all the rules. Jew and Gentile, worshiping together. No circumcision. No emperor worship. Just Jesus. Just unification, love, understanding and acceptance. And that made people nervous. That made the empire nervous. That made even some religious folks nervous.

So what do you do when the world says, "Just compromise a little"? When it says, "Why make things harder than they need to be?" When it says, "Don't rock the boat"?

You remember who you are. You remember whose you are. You remember that you are heirs of Abraham—not by flesh, but by faith. You

remember that the cross is not a symbol of comfort, but of courage. And you stand. Not with arrogance. Not with anger. But with quiet, Spirit-filled resolve. Because in the end, it's not about making a good impression. It's about being a new creation. And that, Paul says, is everything.

Now church, let's be honest—living against the grain wears you down. The Galatians were feeling it. And maybe you are too. When you keep swimming upstream, when you keep resisting the pull of the world's old hierarchies—its “us vs. them,” its “insiders and outsiders,” its “worthy and unworthy”—it gets exhausting. Paul saw it. He felt their weariness. He knew what it meant to feel like giving up.

But instead of scolding them, Paul does something beautiful. He doesn't preach from a mountaintop—he speaks from the soil. He talks about seeds. About dirt. About farming. Because sometimes the deepest truths are the simplest ones. And the land has always known what we forget: you reap what you sow.

Now, that's not a threat—it's a promise. It's a reminder that what we plant with our lives matters. If we plant selfishness, we'll harvest emptiness. But if we plant love, justice, kindness—if we sow in the Spirit—we will reap life. Real life. Eternal life.

But here's the hard part: seeds don't sprout overnight. Growth takes time. Sometimes it feels like nothing's happening. You pray, you serve, you

love your neighbor, you speak truth—and still, the world looks the same. Still, injustice seems to win. Still, your efforts feel small.

But Paul says: don't be fooled. Don't be discouraged. The harvest is coming.

You don't have to force it. You don't have to fabricate it. Just keep sowing. Keep doing what is right. Keep working for the good of all—especially those who need our help – those on the margins most affected. Because in God's time—not ours—the seeds will break through the soil. The fruit will come. The Spirit will bring the harvest.

And yet – the Flesh, once again referenced. The Flesh brings selfishness, and competition that leads to domination and division, separating us, pinning us one against the other – just as it did here – Jew against Gentile. And in that process, we lose sight of Jesus, we lose the ability to see the good for all and we become, as a society, self-destructive. But you have come here today not because you feel righteous over others but because your spirit understands the larger truth – that suffering of one is suffering of all. That we, as a society, cannot flourish if some are dying of starvation, of addiction, of a poor education and limited choices, and without hope of a better future. You understand how critical it is to come to the well of hope - come to the spirit of hope that not life someday, but life this day can indeed reflect the qualities and teachings of Jesus – to love thy neighbor as thyself, to give of ourselves, of our resources, of our time because when we do, what we get in return is immeasurable. What we do does matter and it does make a

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difference. Hugs matter, cards to a friend who's feeling down matter – phone calls matter. You make the world better because your spirit is full of light and love. You can't help it. You will brighten someone's day today – it's not a maybe – you will, maybe mine. Don't doubt the power of these teachings. Encourage your friends, your neighbors, your co-workers – come back to church – your spirit needs this – your kids need this. If you don't like the way it is, help us make it better. Perhaps God is calling you to do just that.

We are baptized into this very hope. Hope that Scarlett and Oliver will know God, will be able to turn to God when things are rough, to make life choices and they lean into love every day of their lives.

So don't give up. Don't grow weary. Don't stop planting hope in a world that desperately needs it. Because the ground is good. The seed is good. And the God who watches over it all is faithful. Amen