

“Life of Love”

Galatians 5: 13-18

Rev. Min J. Chung

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Galatians 5: 13-18

¹³ *For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.* ¹⁴ *For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* ¹⁵ *But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.* ¹⁶ *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.* ¹⁷ *For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.* ¹⁸ *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

INTRODUCTION

The last passage, Galatians 5: 1-12, talks about not losing the Gospel freedom through the means of legalism. This passage talks about not abusing the Gospel freedom through the means of license. Last week we talked about being freed from the obligation to the whole law as a means of salvation. This week we will talk about how we are obligated to obey the law for different reasons and motives. We are freed from the law as a way to win merit from God. But we are not freed from the law as a means to love God and love others. For the law is an expression of God's nature and heart so we can use it to please and imitate Him and become like His Son. The whole Galatians uses circumcision as a symbolic act that represents legalism. After all, circumcision is a minor surgical operation of the body, why did Paul make so much fuss about it? Because there is a doctrine of implication if you include it as a means of being saved or accepted as a Christian. False teachers were pressing that circumcision was neither a physical operation nor a ceremonial right only a theological symbol. The slogan of the false teachers was: unless you got circumcised and keep the law, you cannot be saved. We can see this in Acts 15: 1, 5 through the Jerusalem council.

Acts 15: 1

¹*But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”*

Acts 15: 5

⁵*But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.”*

They were declaring that faith in Christ was insufficient for salvation, there had to be circumcision and law- obedience had to be added to it. Meaning you have to choose between a religion of law which circumcision included, or religion of grace between Christ which is of grace or circumcision. If you add anything to Christ, you lose Christ. Salvation is in Christ alone by grace alone through faith alone. This passage will talk about what that freedom looks like. A person who is freed from sin is free to love. This

passage will talk about a life of love, how we are called into freedom and into a life of love.

[Shows video of little girl asking her Dad to put down the toilet seat after he uses the bathroom.]

This three year-old girl lectures her dad about thinking about others. Initially I was thought she was saying ‘put it down for me, I don’t want to lift it up’ and she was kind of saying that. But after her lecture, I realized she was really telling him a principle saying ‘you have to put it down for other people.’ She was teaching him to think about other people.

There are things we don’t do that if we don’t do it, others have to do it. And there are things we do, if we do it, others don’t need to do it. That means when we do those things, we are serving other people. That is a simple summary of what we’re going to talk about-how to love and serve people. The theme of this passage in one sentence: we are freed to love by the Spirit.

I. Freed- “What are we called to?” [13]

¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Paul has already spoken of freedom several times in this letter in Galatians 2: 4; Galatians 4: 26, 31; Galatians 5: 1. From one point of view, Galatians is entirely about that kind of freedom- freedom from sin to be free to love. Still up to this point, Paul has not yet clearly defined it, at least not in practical terms, dealing with the ethical life. Now he does so, showing that only the true nature of Christian freedom- that it is through the life of the Spirit and by the Spirit’s power- that the Christian can live for God, not fulfilling the desire of sinful natures.

So he defines it like this: when you’re free, you’re free from something and you’re free to something. You’re free from your fleshly desires so that you are free to love and serve other people.

A. From- Called away from the flesh

¹³For you were called to freedom

Paul is confident already about the believers. He has confidence that they will get to this direction of freedom as Christ is working in them as the Holy Spirit is working in them. As he is confident as he starts with the word you, ¹³ *For you were called to freedom.* Then he gives the warning: “*Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*” The warning in the last passage was don’t fall into the slavery of legalism. This passage is saying don’t fall into misuse and abuse of that freedom. Don’t fall into the slavery of legalism- don’t be a good-looking sinner, you might look like you’re doing good things but inside of your heart you are operating in your sinful nature and being selfish. This passage is saying don’t fall into misuse and abuse of freedom so that we look like libertines- looking like an obvious sinner, doing what is obviously sinful to others and doing whatever we want. Don’t allow this

freedom to become an excuse for our sinful indulgence because whether you are a legalist or a libertine, you're operating both according to your sinful desires. You are called away from that, you are freed from that so that you are free to and called to love through serving. Negatively, freedom from Christ is not license but positively it is service both to God and man.

B. To- Called to love through serving

The word serve is the same root word for slavery. Last passage was talking about not being in the slavery of legalism. This passage is talking about you have to be under slavery, you have to be a slave. You have to serve, serve as a slave. Freed from slavery means you become voluntary slave of other people. The word serve is in second person plural so it's to all of us- every single one of us in Christ. And it's in present active meaning constantly serving that it becomes our habit, character, and attribute of the church of Jesus Christ. It's an imperative" a command in a way that we have a choice- to serve ourselves or others.

If we think about people in love with some people, they look like slaves. If you watch parents, they look like slaves- driving their kids around and doing other things for their kids. Their kids are treated like kings and queens but still complain about all these things. People who are in love look like slaves because whatever is good for the other person, you do it. That's why we sometimes say, "love hurts," because it hurts us but if it's good and beneficial for others, we serve and do.

If we look into this passage we are called to be with others. We are called to live in community so that we can love and serve one another. Christians are not to be Christian ninjas, going in and out with others not knowing. We are called to love other people within our heart as motive. Love ought to be our motive. We are called not to use others but to serve others. Love in our hearts and hands, show service to others as an expression of the love we have for them.

This is what true freedom is: freedom from sin and proof of that freedom is that we serve other people. We think of these two kinds of slavery, how we can overcome sinful slavery is through another kind of slavery- being preoccupied with serving people and loving people. Whenever I see someone who quits an addiction, they get into another addiction. We have to use this principle: if you want to overcome sinful addiction, pick up some good addiction like serving and loving other people. One of the ways to overcome our sins so we can love and serve other people.

II. To love- "Where are we going?" [14-15]

As we are being feed, where are we going? We're going to become lovers, we will learn how to love.

A. Present reality [15]

¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

Why is he suddenly talking about biting? Because people were biting one another. There was probably a controversy between false teachers and the people who believe in the Gospel. There was a group of people following, there was a good chance that there were people fighting one another. There were a lot of problems existing in the body of Christ, within the churches of Galatia. Paul is talking about what is presently happening in Galatia churches, a serious problem. Evident by the tense of the verbs that he's using- bite, devour, consume. Those verbs are in present tenses- constantly, this is happening and it's intensifying. And it's plural, so it's not just one person fighting but it's many people fighting. There is progression- biting, then devouring, then consuming. There are little bites, devouring one another, consuming one another. They seem to be moving by increasingly strong degrees to a bad climax that's coming.

Especially the word devour is like an animal language. Like what an animal does to another animal- devouring. I think what this passage is showing us what it looks like to live selfishly. We are made in the image of God, to picture him, to picture what kind of loving God He is. Yet when we are being selfish, we are in one sense animals. If you think about animals- because the whole creation is affected by sin, as soon as man sins the whole world is affected by sin. So it becomes the survival of the fittest and they live for their own need and fleshly desires. Animals don't have spirit in them or the image of God in them. They might have the image of man that pictures what man is like, but they are living according to their flesh. What this passage is saying is if you're not glorifying God, worshipping God, and showing what kind of loving God He is, you are like an animal. You are sub-human- you are not becoming the man or woman that God created you to be, to picture who He is like. When we live for our pride, our selfishness, our self-glory, we are like animals.

This is wonderfully pictured in Daniel 4 by King Nebuchadnezzar, emperor of the superpower nation Babylon. He has every reason to be proud, he is up in his palace and he is looking at his kingdom, and this is what he says:

Daniel 4: 30

³⁰*and the king answered and said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?"*

So he was pretty proud and he was looking at his accomplishment and glory and was attributing it to himself. And immediately what happens, God gives him grace of showing him what his heart is like. Immediately, I don't know if it was a psychological problem or a physical happening, he suddenly acted like an animal. It says his dwelling was like a beast, he is eating grass like an ox, his hair grew as eagle feathers, and nails like birds claws. He started to look and act like an animal. We may think, 'oh, God is punishing him.' Well, God is disciplining him by grace to show him what he looks like spiritually- that he is not glorifying God. That he is not living according to the intent of God by imaging Him and glorifying Him. He is glorifying himself and living selfishly so God is showing

him, you are like an animal. So he can repent of his sin and return to the Lord- grace of God was showing Nebuchadnezzar what he looked like spiritually. Sometimes we are like that- through hardships and difficulties God is showing us what we look like spiritually so we can repent of our sins and come back to the Lord. Galatian believers were like that, so God is showing them through the words of Paul the present reality. But they're not going to remain there because God's grace is going to work in their hearts.

B. Future direction [14]

¹⁴*For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

This is actually something positive about the law. Through his letter, Paul has been arguing against law in defense of the Gospel of pure grace. Now in the most striking fashion, he returns to the law and seems to speak favorably of it. Saying that when Christians love and serve one another, the law is fulfilled.

The word fulfilled, I believe there is a play of two meanings in the Greek word. It's one word with two meanings. One definition is 'summary,' another definition of being fulfilled. So on one hand it refers to the fact that the law could be summarized by the words in Leviticus 19: 18 "*you shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" This idea was a commonplace and repeated opinion and Jesus endorsed in Matthew 22: 39 and Luke 10: 25-28. So if the law is summarized in this 'love your neighbor as yourself,' it is basically pointing forward to Jesus. Jesus is the person who lays down his life for others. The law is a summary of the person of Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, the other definition of the word is fulfilled. In this sense, Paul is suggesting that a new life of love is made possible within the Christian community. It is through the Spirit that the law finds fulfillment. Because we could not fulfill it, it is pointing forward to Jesus. Jesus lives a perfect life and dies for us so he fulfilled the law of love- all the laws on our behalf when we fail. 'Love your neighbor as yourself'- the whole law is fulfilled in one person that is Jesus Christ as he said, "law and the prophets are about me."

In one sense, Jesus fulfilled all the laws we could not fulfill- becoming the personification of love. In another sense, Jesus summarizes the law- fulfilling the law as we obey out of love. Through the means of law as we obey the intent of law, we become more and more like Jesus Christ. He can still teach us as we understand the intent of the law and as we emulate that in our lives we become more like Jesus Christ.

This is illustrated in 1 Corinthians 13, the love chapter; it is still the same in Paul's system in 1 Corinthians 13. We can easily compare ourselves to this passage to see if we are loving people or not.

1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

⁴Love is patient, love is kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with truth. ⁷Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

And then this obscure verse in the passage, 1 Corinthians 13: 11. When I was a child, I couldn't figure out how they fit together until I started to understand law from the perspective of Jesus.

1 Corinthians 13: 11

¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

The word child is mentioned about 4 times and then suddenly it talks about a grown man. How is that related? Going back to verses 4-7, Paul is describing the characteristics of love. But why does Paul describe it this way? Personifying the word love, I think he is picturing the person who is loving. Basically saying that a loving person is patient, kind. When it talks about a child and a man, as Paul thinks about a loving person he is saying, 'when you're selfish and not loving and living for your own glory, you are like a child. But as you grow unselfish like a parent, growing up to become a man or woman of God, you are becoming a loving and mature person.' So in Paul's mind, a child is a selfish person; and a man is a selfless, loving person.

When we think about 1 Corinthians 13 in light of chapters 12 and 14, it is talking about how the church should picture Jesus. We as the church of Jesus Christ should picture Jesus together. Paul is not just talking about characteristics of love through verses 4-7 but the personification of love. He is thinking about the most loving person who is Jesus. He is describing the person of Jesus, the love of Jesus. Jesus lived and fulfilled all the laws that we could not fulfill so we can go to Him again and again and again. When we sin we can go to Him again because He fulfilled the law on our behalf. But we must still live to obey the intent of the law as the law summarizes Jesus so that we would become like Jesus Christ.

When parents give laws to their children, 'thou shall not ____,' parents usually have a picture in their mind of how their child shall live and what their child should become like. God does the same thing. When God gives laws, He has a picture in His mind of how we should live and what kind of person we ought to be and in His mind that person is Jesus. Whenever He gives a law, He wants us to be loving like Jesus and become like Jesus. That's why all the laws are about Jesus.

We are called to this freedom, but our freedom is responsible freedom. A freedom that does not love and serve other people is not real freedom but bondage to selfishness and self-centeredness. Liberty is not license. The freest person is the greatest lover. God's freedom leads us to narrow, selfless, sacrificial path of Jesus Christ- the road much less traveled.

So how can we grow to be like Jesus? How can we grow to be more loving like Jesus? How can we become more free from our sin nature? Paul's answer is we grow as we battle. We grow as we fight within our hearts within our two natures. We grow as much as we fight.

III. By the Spirit- "How can we get there?" [16-18]

The Holy Spirit is mentioned in this surrounding passage about 7 times- it is very important. It is by the means of the Holy Spirit we can become like Christ- we can learn how to become more of a loving person.

A. We have two natures in our hearts- sin nature and spiritual nature [16]

¹⁶ *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

There is a contrast between "sarc" (flesh), and "pneuma" (spirit) as one of the characteristic themes in New Testament, particularly Paul in theology. When we say the word spirit, it could mean the Holy Spirit or our spirit. In this case it is talking about the Holy Spirit as it says "*walk by the Spirit.*" And we can think, 'wow, we have sin nature and we have the Holy Spirit.' We have sin nature but we don't necessarily have *our* nature in fact our nature is the Holy Spirit. If we study Paul's words carefully, he's saying we have sinful nature and also a spirit's nature that's now in connection with the Holy Spirit so that the Holy Spirit can strengthen us to fight. Proof of that is Romans 8: 16.

Romans 8: 16

¹⁶*The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*

What spirit is he talking about here? It is the Holy Spirit. we only have sinful nature, but when we put our faith in Jesus Christ, another nature is born. Spiritual resurrection takes place and the DNA of Jesus is now in us. DNA of not just the 1st Adam but the 2nd Adam is in us. That nature, our spirit's nature, can communicate and relate with the Holy Spirit in such a way we receive His power and grace. Our sinful nature wants to be glorified, our spirit's nature wants to glorify God- both of them exist.

B. The natures express themselves through desires – sinful desires and the spiritual desires [17]

We have sinful desires and spiritual desires. How do we know we have two natures? We know we have desires. We can't really feel the nature but we can definitely feel the desires within us. There are 2 categories of desires in our hearts.

¹⁷*For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.*

The desires of the flesh are against the desires of our spiritual nature, which is in connection with the Spirit. Desires of our spirit- the spiritual nature we have in our hearts, which is given by the Holy Spirit, are against the fleshly desires. We know we have fleshly desires- we can feel and understand this. When there's one piece of something but two people, you want to have that one piece. We know of selfish desires. Or you want the other person to offer it to you or if you offer it, you want the other person to say "no."

We also need to understand that if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you have desires of the Holy Spirit. Our spiritual desires that want to glorify God. We can see this in Romans 5- how does the Holy Spirit give us this spiritual desire that is inside of us. This is right after the context of our suffering- in the midst of our suffering we still have internal power and strength.

Romans 5: 5

⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

"Our hearts" is another word for our spirit's nature. Through the means of the Holy Spirit, in connection with our spirit, the Holy Spirit is pouring His love into our hearts so we have desires of the Spirit, desires of God, the mind of God, reasons of God, purpose of God, motivation of God, logic of God, likeness of Christ in us. We have these desires in us, two kinds of desires in conflict.

This kind of love that He gives us through the Holy Spirit is a foreign love. In this world, some people can be nice to others, it just looks like but is not real love because inside of our hearts we have sinful natures- we have motives for ourselves and for our own glory and pleasure. Only when the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts through our faith in Jesus Christ, another nature is born because the Holy Spirit gives us the true love, a foreign love that the world cannot understand. The world has never seen unless it has been given by the Holy Spirit. We now have a foreign love inside of us that can actually love.

C. The natures through desires are at war with each other [17]

We have two natures that express themselves through desires.

¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

A Christian has a war in his heart. In fact some people get discouraged a lot because there are so many fights in the heart. They can see their sinful desire and they are discouraged by that. As we look into this passage and throughout Galatians, it shows that the battle in your heart is in fact the proof that you are Christian. It is this sin nature inside of us that is in battle against our spiritual nature. It wants to stop you, continual hindrances, that keep you from what is

right. Christian is not someone who does not sin, a Christian is someone who fights sin.

The church father named Jerome, he really wanted to fight his sin, his lust. He wanted to remove himself from the Roman culture because it was really making his mind and heart filthy. He wanted to remove himself from the temptation so he goes away to a desert so that he can get away. This is what he wrote in the desert:

“I removed myself from the pleasure of Rome and was stationed in the desert which had nothing but scorpions and wild animals for company. But often in thought I was dancing in a chorus of girls. My face was pale from fasting but my mind burned within my freezing body. The fires of sex seized, burning in my heart.”

He was able to get rid of external temptation but he could not get rid of these desires inside of him, he still had to fight.

D. We will always have multiple desires of double motive [17]

Whatever we do, we have two motives. We have several desires fighting in our hearts. And there are often two kinds operating in one situation.

¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

“Desires”- different kinds of desires. Even right now there are several different kinds of desires battling within our minds and hearts. ‘Why isn’t the sermon ending soon, I want to go watch football, I want to go eat. But I want to be fed.’ There are all kinds of things battling. Different kinds of desires operating- two kinds in your nature.

Usually I study all day, 8 or 9 hours studying at a café or meeting people. And when I come home in the evening, I watch recorded sports to relax a little bit. This weekend while I was watching sports, I had multiple desires operating. Since 1976, I have been a Chicago Cubs fan. This week they actually clinched a playoff berth, there is a possibility they can break 180-year curse to win the division. So I was very happy and excited. Then yesterday, I watched the Illini football recording and they got crushed. I was happy and I was miserable- multiple desires operating during this weekend. It’s always like that in life- we have two kinds of natures and all kinds of desires. Please do not expect yourself to be happy because in order for you to be happy, all your desires have to be met. Get rid of this notion that you can be completely happy on this earth. We must fight our hearts. Expect complete happiness in the next world but not this one. But there is always multiple desires operating even in one situation or occasion. Multiple desires of double motive.

V. We must keep on fighting led by the Spirit [17-18]

Praise God the Spirit of God is inside of us so that by His grace, by His power, we can continue to fight.

¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

Let me ask you, in that phrase, what is our identity? We have sin nature; we have spirits nature, are we sinners, or are we saints? According to this passage, our identity, because of our justification in Jesus Christ, we are Christians, we are saints in Jesus Christ. So it's saying, 'you want to do the right thing.' It's talking about the perspective of the spiritual nature. We are saints fighting against our sins even though sin remains in us. We want to do the right things but there is sin nature operating within us. Our identity is that we are in Jesus Christ, but we ought to fight because some kind of desire inside of us want to keep us from doing the right thing as we want to live for the glory of God. As we want to honor Him, there are still self-glory, selfish, self-centered desires, so we must continue to fight.

Summarizing all these things is what it means to be led by the Spirit.

¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

So many people have superficial versions of what it means to be led by the Spirit. Some people think it means sitting there mindlessly and the Holy Spirit tells you what to do. So you do things and those things are 'led by the Spirit.' That's a shallow way of understanding it. Sometimes God, the Holy Spirit leads you like that but really led by the Spirit means that in our relationship with God, as we fight the battle, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit in our nature. So that through the Word and prayer we understand what God wants, we desire what God wants. And we are moved and led by the Spirit is speaking and strengthening our nature through the essence of our being as we grow to be like Christ we are led by the Spirit that way. We must continue to fight in our hearts.

Conclusion- "Keep feeding, keep fighting, and keep serving"

Three applications.

Keep feeding: daily grace. You need God's Word, you need to pray. Keep on feeding your own heart. An anonymous person wrote this poem:

"Two natures beat within my breast; the one is foul, the one is blessed. The one I love, the one I hate, the one I feed will dominate."

Make sure you don't feed your sinful nature with thoughts and desires that stimulate that feed your sin nature. Feed your heart with love, with God's grace, prayer, Word so that your heart can be stimulated to grow and dominate your sin nature so you can overcome.

Keep fighting: constant battle every moment. That sounds difficult- fighting is hard yet there is something else that is worse than the war between the flesh and spirit, having no war within. Maybe because you are living according to your flesh, you don't have a war within you. Praise God for the war within; serenity in sin is death. The spirit has landed in the territory of our hearts to do battle with our flesh. So take heart if your soul feels like a battlefield at times- it means you are alive. Sign of indwelling of Spirit is not that you have no bad desires but that you are at war with them. Growth does not happen through passivity but through war. Through preoccupation with good; be too busy to sin, keep on serving and loving. You need serious attitude of the battle that is needed. Causality will produce casualty- keep on fighting.

Keep on serving. Be in the vicinity of love so you can continue to serve. You need God's grace as you serve. So God's grace will fill you and you will overflow with His grace as you serve others. Keep on being busy serving and loving other people.

When we use things for a while, we cannot really see those things as special. When I first got my laptop though, I was so amazed- I saw the glory of God in my laptop. All of us are like these laptops. Some of us are like unused and unplugged. You don't really have a relationship with God, so you can't be used by God. So you need some jumpstart- you need to have a relationship with God and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. You need to be alive.

Another person is used and unplugged. You are serving the Lord and doing things, but you lack in your relationship with God and don't receive His grace. What happens? Some of you will get burnt out. Your strength will run out when you do it by your own strength- legalism.

Some of you are unused and plugged. You have a relationship with God, you are trained, you're an older person but you are not really serving. 'I need some break,' and you're not serving. You need to be used. Wake up.

Fourthly, which is what we ought to be as Christians- used and plugged. Strengthen by God= plugged. And then God uses you: daily relationship with God so that His power and Spirit can overflow into our ministry to other people and loving of other people.

Keep feeding: daily grace. Keep fighting: constant battle every moment. Keep serving: overflowing with His service. Sounds burdensome so one encouragement is this: if you think about this passage, in our hearts, our flesh (sinful nature) is compared to the Spirit rather than our spirit. Why is this passage not comparing our flesh in opposition to our spirit but to the Holy Spirit? I think the reason is because we are so united to Jesus Christ that we are so one with Christ and His Spirit, that our fight is even though our spirit is fighting our sinful natures... it is the Holy Spirit so in connection with our spirit, that is fighting for us and through us. That means as the Spirit of God is residing in our hearts we have unparalleled help from the Holy Spirit so we can fight, we can love, we can

become like Jesus so we can picture Him. So the world can see Him through us as the Spirit of God is giving us unparalleled help into our hearts.

[Has a water bottle on stage]

We are like this water bottle. Useless material that someone made into a bottle. Useful instrument that God is working in our hearts. The raw material is being made into something useful, some kind of instrument as we are being molded. \$5 water bottle, not very valuable by itself. Value comes from what is inside the bottle and how and when it is used. But to be used, it must be clean and empty so it can be full of what He wants to fill as we are filled with the Holy Spirit. As we are filled with the Word and Living Water. Can you imagine something inside this being used inside the desert? Can you imagine something inside this being used on my couch after I play basketball? Depending on what is inside of it and how and when it is used, it can give Living Water to others. We are like that- we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, filled with the presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit so that people who are dying, thirsty, hungry... He can fill us, so we can deliver Him to others. Our prayer ought to be 'fill me and use me for Your glory for we have unparalleled help of the Holy Spirit available for us.'

[Shows an interview with a grandma who was about to be robbed at gunpoint in her car]

When selfishness encounters selfless love, selfless love wins. That happens in our hearts when our sin nature encounters spirits nature- spirits nature will win. This doesn't mean in this kind of context when these two encounters she cannot be killed- there is a possibility she could be killed. If that was the case, she could have still made an impact because of Jesus in her heart. But when a robber met a lover in the car, the robber is not the one who stole but the lover stole his heart for Christ. 2000 years ago another robber met another lover on the cross and the greater robber was the lover, He stole his heart and his life is never the same again. We need to pray that our hearts will be so filled with Spirit that we will be fearless people that we will continue to love others until He returns. And the Lover will return, He will be the greatest robber of all time- He will rob all the graves and He will take all of us away, home where we belong. Until then, let's learn how to love and grow to be like Jesus.