SELAH

Five mornings in Galatians 1 and 2
September 7 to 11

MONDAY FREE PEOPLE ARE RESCUED.

TUESDAY FREE PEOPLE ARE CALLED.

WEDNESDAY FREE PEOPLE ARE CHANGED.

THURSDAY FREE PEOPLE ARE MADE RIGHT.

FRIDAY FREE PEOPLE ARE LOVED.

Each morning has a place to write. A notebook works. So does the notes app on your phone. Ten minutes is enough.

NW Hills
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

SELAH

FREE PEOPLE ARE RESCUED.

(Write your answers down)

STOP

Yesterday we started a new series in Galatians. Today the week starts pulling at you again. The list is already long, the phone is already going, and somebody needs something from you before nine. Stop anyway. Nothing on that list will fall apart in the next ten minutes. This is the first of five mornings, and the only thing you have to do right now is be still and let God have your attention.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

Write your answers down before you move on.

EXHALE

Start with your breathing. You have not thought about it once today, and it has been happening the whole time. That is worth noticing. Before you woke up, before you decided anything, your body was already being kept alive by something you did not manage. Let that be the shape of this prayer.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

As you inhale, pray, "You gave yourself to rescue me..."

As you exhale, pray, "...I do not live there now."

LOOK

These are the opening words of the letter we started on Sunday. Paul is only three sentences into saying hello and he has already given away the whole gospel. Most of us save the important part for later. He could not wait that long. Read it slowly, two times, before you go on.

> *Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*
>
> **Galatians 1:3-5 NIV**

ASK

Jesus gave himself to rescue you out of the present evil age. Not to improve you. Not to give you a better strategy. To get you out.

Notice that Paul never says who got paid. He says what you were brought out of. That is the pattern everywhere he talks about this, and it is worth resisting the urge to fill in the blank. The point is not a transaction. The point is that you are out.

- Rescue is a word for people who could not get themselves out. Does that describe how you think about your own faith, or do you tend to think of it as something you figured out?
- Paul says Jesus did this to rescue us from "the present evil age." What does the present evil age look like on a normal Monday in your life?
- Where in your life are you still living like somebody who has not been rescued?

Write a short prayer thanking God that the rescue was his idea and not yours.

Or, if the word rescue feels far away from where you actually are this morning, write a prayer asking God to show you one place he has already gotten you out of.

HEAR

If sitting in silence is not something you normally do, this part is going to feel strange. That is fine. The most common way people rush this is by treating it like the last item on a list, something to finish so the quiet time counts. Do not finish it. Sit in it. You can start with a simple prayer: "I'm listening for you, God. Speak to me."

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.

SELAH

FREE PEOPLE ARE CALLED.

(Write your answers down)

STOP

A day has gone by since you last sat down like this. Some of it was good and some of it was not, and all of it is still with you. Do not sort it out before you start. Bring it in as it is. God is not waiting for you to get organized first.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

Write your answers down before you move on.

EXHALE

Slow your breathing down on purpose. Not deep, just slow. Most of us go the whole day at whatever pace the day sets, and the body follows along. For the next two minutes, set the pace yourself.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

> *As you inhale, pray, "Your grace called me by name..."*
>
> *As you exhale, pray, "...before I had anything to give."*

LOOK

Paul is telling his own story here, and he starts it earlier than you would expect. He does not begin with the day he changed his mind. He begins with God. Read it slowly, two

times.

> *But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being.*
>
> **Galatians 1:15-16 NIV**

ASK

God called you by his grace. Not because of a resume. Not after a review. The calling came first, and everything you have done since is a response to it.

Paul says God set him apart from his mother's womb. That line is about God's timing, not about anybody's body, and it is not a promise or a comment about anyone's family. If that phrase lands on grief this morning, let it go by and stay with the word grace, which is the part Paul is actually making his point about.

- Paul says God called him by grace. If you had to explain why God called you, what would you be tempted to put in that sentence instead of grace?
- God's call came before Paul had done anything for him. Does that ring true in your own story, or does it feel like you had to get somewhere first?
- What would change this week if you stopped trying to qualify for something you have already been called into?

Write a one-sentence prayer thanking God that he moved first.

Or, if you are not sure you have ever been called, write a prayer asking God to make his voice plain to you.

HEAR

Most people go their whole lives without hearing the voice of God out loud. That does not mean he is not speaking. The obstacle today is expectation. If you are listening for

something dramatic, you will talk right over the ordinary thought that was actually him. Sit still and pay attention to what surfaces.

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.

SELAH

FREE PEOPLE ARE CHANGED.

(Write your answers down)

STOP

You are halfway through the week. By now this either feels like something you look forward to or something you are making yourself do. Either one is fine. Showing up on the mornings you do not feel it is most of what a practice is.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

Write your answers down before you move on.

EXHALE

Breathe in slowly and let your shoulders drop on the way out. You are probably holding something in your neck or your jaw that you have not noticed since you sat down. Let the exhale be where you put it.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

> *As you inhale, pray, "Christ is being formed in me..."*
>
> *As you exhale, pray, "...I am not who I was."*

LOOK

These words have been read out loud for almost two thousand years. People have prayed them in prisons and hospitals and kitchens. They have outlasted every empire

that has been in charge since they were written. Read them slowly, two times.

> *I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they praised God because of me.*
>
> **Galatians 1:22-24 NIV**

ASK

The churches in Judea had every reason to be afraid of Paul. He had hunted people like them. And the report that reached them was not a warning. It was good news about the last man they expected.

- The people in this passage praised God for a change they had not seen with their own eyes. Who in your life have you already decided is not going to change?
- Paul does not defend his past here or explain it away. Why do you think he lets the report speak for itself?
- What is one thing about you that has actually changed since you started following Jesus? Be specific. If nothing comes to mind, say that honestly and sit with it.

Write a prayer naming one thing you want God to change, and asking him to do it at his pace rather than yours.

Or, if you feel like the one person who is too far along to change, write a prayer telling God exactly that, in your own words.

HEAR

One thing that gets in the way here is the quiet suspicion that God is annoyed with you. That he is tired of the same prayer, the same struggle, the same week. He is not. He is not put off by you and he is not waiting for a better version of you to show up. Sit still and let him say something.

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.

SELAH

FREE PEOPLE ARE MADE RIGHT.

(Write your answers down)

STOP

By day four this can quietly turn into a routine you get through. That is the risk with anything you do more than twice. So be deliberate this morning. This is not a box. It is ten minutes with God, and he is actually here for it.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

Write your answers down before you move on.

EXHALE

You have done this three times now, so your body already knows what is coming. Use that. Let the first breath be the signal that you are switching off everything else.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

> *As you inhale, pray, "God, you have made me right..."*
>
> *As you exhale, pray, "...I can stop earning it."*

LOOK

This one sentence started arguments that shaped the entire church. Paul is saying something here that people were willing to lose friendships over. Read it slowly, two times, and read it like it costs something.

know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

Galatians 2:16 NIV

ASK

You have been made right with God by trusting Jesus. Not by your record. Not by a streak. The verdict is already in and it did not depend on your performance this week.

- Most of us keep a scorecard even when we say we do not. What is on yours? What goes in the plus column, and what goes in the minus?
- Paul says no one will be justified by keeping the law. Why do you think we keep going back to a scorecard that Scripture says does not work?
- If the verdict on you is already settled, what is one thing you would do differently at work or at home this week?

Write a prayer handing God the scorecard, and name what is on it.

HEAR

The hardest part of listening is that we fill the silence with our own talking. Not out loud, just the running commentary that never stops. When it starts up, do not fight it. Notice it and come back. Not talking to God. Not letting your mind wander. Listening.

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.

SELAH

FREE PEOPLE ARE LOVED.

(Write your answers down)

STOP

This is the last of the five. Look back for a second before you start. On Monday we said you were rescued, and every morning since has been another piece of the same thing. Whatever the week actually held, none of it changed the part God has been saying to you since Monday.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

Write your answers down before you move on.

EXHALE

One more time. Slow in, slower out. You will do this thousands more times today without thinking about it. For the next two minutes, think about it.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

> *As you inhale, pray, "The Son of God loved me..."*
>
> *As you exhale, pray, "...and gave himself for me."*

LOOK

This is one of the most personal sentences Paul ever wrote, and it is the one people carry with them for the rest of their lives. Read it slowly, two times, and notice that he stops

saying "us" and starts saying "me."

> *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*
>
> **Galatians 2:20 NIV**

ASK

The Son of God loved you and gave himself for you. Paul does not write that as a doctrine. He writes it as the most personal thing he knows.

Read the order Paul puts it in. He does not say God needed somebody to take a punishment and Jesus stepped into it. He says the Son of God loved me, and then he says gave himself for me. The love comes first and the giving comes out of it. This is not somebody being made to pay. This is somebody choosing to go.

- Paul writes "loved me" and "gave himself for me," singular. Is that how you actually think about it, or is it easier to believe God loves people in general than to believe he loves you?
- Paul says Christ lives in him. What would it look like for that to be true of an ordinary Friday in your life?
- Like we saw on Monday, freedom always points somewhere. Who is one person you can spend this week's freedom on?

Write a short prayer using Paul's words as your own: he loved me and gave himself for me.

Or, if you cannot honestly pray that this morning, write a prayer asking God to let you believe it about yourself and not only about other people.

HEAR

You have done this five times now. That is not nothing. The last obstacle is the one that shows up on the way out the

door: leaving it here. Whatever God has been saying this week, take it into the weekend with you. Sit still one more time, and whatever comes into your mind, write it down.

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.