

Jan. 12th Sermon notes

Introduction:

- Using the same sermon structure throughout this series, based on Galatians 5:13: *“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature”*.
- First part of each message explores the freedom we've been given, second part focuses on practical ways to use that freedom to love.

Main Points:

1. Called to Freedom

2. Liberated to Love

1. Called to Freedom

- **Scripture Reference:** Acts 20:17-24 (NIV)
 - Paul's dedication to testifying the gospel of God's grace, promoting and protecting it.
 - Paul's life example of God's amazing grace and the "glorious gospel".

The Unabridged Gospel – Dan S. Baty

If the gospel you know doesn't sound otherworldly and too good to be true, it's an abridged version of the gospel of God's grace. An abridged gospel is a cautious one that places boundaries on the extravagance and transformative power of God's love. It says, 'Here's a taste, but don't get too carried away.' Yes! Believe that Christ paid for all your sins. Yes! Believe that God remembers them no more. Yes! Believe that you are now the righteousness of God, but don't live as if this truth can radically change every aspect of your life. Instead, be fearful of how you might behave if you truly did believe it.

This cautious approach limits the life-changing potential of the gospel. It's like receiving a small, controlled trickle from an magnificent and awesome waterfall. You get a sense of the refreshing, life-giving water, but never the full force of its power and beauty. It's a cordial touch when what we need is a full bearhug of an embrace. By imposing boundaries on the extravagance of God's love - by not believing all means all and never means never

and forever means forever - we miss out on the overwhelming, awe-inspiring experience that can truly transform our lives.

The unabridged gospel invites us to dive headfirst into the vast ocean of God's grace, to be fully submerged and swept away by its magnificence by simply believing what we read in our Bibles and profess with our lips. It's about letting go of caution and embracing the radical, boundless love that knows no limits. Only then can we truly experience the astonishing change that comes from encountering the gospel in its entirety. It's not about moderation; it's about being completely immersed in the life-changing power of God's love.

- **Key Thought:**

- An unabridged gospel invites us to fully embrace God's grace, leading to radical transformation.

1. **Liberated to Love**

- **Key Thought:**

- Tell people what you're thinking, praying, and saying about them behind their back - when it's positive. (Main Idea)

- **Scripture References:**

- **Ephesians 4:29 (NIV):** *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*
- **Proverbs 16:24 (NIV):** *"Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."*
- **1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV):** *"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."*
- **Hebrews 3:13 (NIV):** *"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."*
- **Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV):** *"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."*
- "Be strong in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:10). Jonathan helped David to be strong in the Lord (1 Samuel 23:16). God uses our words to help others to be strong in the Lord.

Illustration: Affirming someone is like tuning an instrument – it brings out their best qualities.

Practical Application:

- Use speech to express love:
 - Encourage and build each other up.
 - Share positive thoughts with others.
 - Words can be a balm, soothing wounds and mending spirits.

- **Examples:**
 - Personal stories of affirmation and encouragement.
 - How words have been a blessing to me.

Conclusion: This is not only about being polite; it's about being God's instrument as He builds His church, through life-giving speech.