

- I. Walls go down...walls go up
 - A. This church certainly knows this experience
 - B. The physical presence of a wall can evoke deep feelings.
 - 1. Reagan's demand "Tear down this wall Mr. Gorbachev."
 - a. The tearing down of a wall becomes a symbol for freedom
 - 2. Not long afterwards, a wall went up which became a symbol of security in Israel.
- II. We are fighting about walls in our nation even today.
 - A. America as a bastion for freedom – the statue of liberty
 - B. America as a bastion of prosperity and promise.
 - C. Freedom has its limits, but establishing those limits is a difficult task.
- III. Paul's task for the fledgling Christian church is just as difficult, even 2000 years ago establish the boundaries of the church's spiritual freedom.
 - A. Gentile world view vs. the Jewish world view
 - 1. The freedom of paganism – Christianity as a movement
 - 2. The wall of legalism – Christianity as a Jewish sect
 - B. Practical examples of these two views in Paul's churches
 - 1. Corinthian confusion vs. Galatian oppression
 - 2. Modern parallels – the megachurch (Joel Osteen) v. the fundamentalists
- IV. Paul knows that the Christ gave the church as a spiritual bastion for the world.
 - A. "Bastion" – "a fortified area or position...a stronghold"
 - 1. Christianity as a bastion "for"/Christianity as a bastion "against"
 - a. The risk of not finding a spiritual balance – anarchy or oppression
 - b. Anarchy – the surrendering of our distinctive Christian values (compromise)
 - c. Are we a church or a club?
 - d. Oppression – Extreme self-righteousness and judgment (Southern Baptist teenager)
 - B. Paul reveals the foundation of that delicate balance in his letter to the Colossians- the bastion of the Christian church is the love of God through God's son, Jesus.
 - 1. The unique situation of the Colossians
 - a. Syncretists tore down the wall of Christ's uniqueness, built a wall of legalism and perfectionism
 - 2. Paul's solution – the love of Christ is liberates, but it liberates us for the responsibility of discipleship
- V. Colossians 3 – that perfect balance between freedom and responsibility
 - A. V.12 – "Clothe yourselves"- not a coat of armor
 - B. V.13 – "bear with one another/forgive"
 - C. V.14 – "Clothe yourselves with BINDING love"- spiritual freedom and responsibility dwell in harmony – a reconciliation of opposites
- VI. On this father's day, we think about family and the defining role of parent
 - A. But within that definition, love demands flexibility and adaptation, finding the balance between freedom and discipline

- VII. The church of Jesus Christ – a bastion, but a bastion of love
 - A. We build ethical boundaries between ourselves and the world
 - B. We break down barriers between each other and those whom we serve
 - 1. Ethnic barriers
 - 2. Generational barriers
 - 3. Economic and political barriers
 - C. Are we bastions of faith?