

**Galatians #13****October 27, 2024****Series: Galatians: Treasuring the Gospel of Grace****Today's Message: Guard your Freedom Like it Means Something, pt 1; Galatians 5:1-6**

It is good to reflect on the founders of our country. They cherished the idea of freedom. They fought for freedom. They sacrificed their wealth and comfort for freedom. They died for freedom. It was valuable!

On the subject of freedom, I spent some time looking at and appreciating many quotes by notable people. I wanted to hear the lofty thoughts of brilliant minds to bolster my appreciation for the value of freedom and how important it is to guard it carefully. Here are some samples of quotes:

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same." --Ronald Reagan

"Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it." – Thomas Paine

"We will not waver; we will not tire; we will not falter, and we will not fail. Peace and Freedom will prevail." – George W Bush

"The liberties of a people never were, nor ever will be, secure, when the transactions of their rulers may be concealed from them." –Patrick Henry

"It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either of them." --Mark Twain

"If you want total security, go to prison. There you're fed, clothed, given medical care and so on. The only thing lacking... is freedom." –Dwight D Eisenhower

"I would like to be remembered as a person who wanted to be free... so other people would also be free." –Rosa Parks

"There is no such thing as a little freedom. Either you are all free, or you are not free." -Walter Cronkite

But none of these compare to this quote from Galatians 5:1, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

This commanding statement is the truest, most lofty, most comprehensive, most timeless, and most unshakeable on the matter of freedom. It commands a freedom divinely authored and shaped and accomplished for the subjects of God's kingdom by the very King of the kingdom, the Lord Jesus Christ! He is the Eternal Emancipator of everyone who has faith in Him. Those who have been justified by God have been glorified and transferred into the kingdom of the Son He loves, never to be removed. (see Col. 1:13)

Our outline for today has three parts: 1) Freedom in Christ is both Positional and Experiential (5:1). 2) The Perils of letting go of the freedom we have in Christ (5:2-4). And 3) Walking in Freedom: Its hope and expression. (5:5-6)

**I) (5:1) Freedom in Christ is both Positional and Experiential.****A) Positional statement:**

- 1) It is for freedom that Christ has set us free [from legalism].
  - (a) We are free. Not *will be* free but *are* free in Christ.
- 2) Positionally free.
  - (a) Free from condemnation (Rom. 8:1). (A broken law brings condemnation.)
  - (b) Free from the burden "by a yoke of slavery" to the law and from legalism.

- (i) The burden was the burden of trying to perfectly live up to the demands of the law.
    - 3) Permanently positionally in Christ.
      - (a) Gal. 5:13 says we were “called to freedom.”
        - (i) We are free. This is not an option. It is done for us in Christ by faith.
  - B) Freedom in Christ is also experiential (We are sanctified. Growing up in Christ’s likeness).
    - 1) We experience the effort of faith put to work by:
      - (a) Standing firm in the Truth, by faith, of Christ and the reality of His righteous perfection.
      - (b) And allowing faith, not the burdens of the demands of law or legalistic practices, to direct us.
        - (i) Galatians 2:4: When Paul was reporting that the Judaizers were trying to capture the freedmen in Christ and pull them back into the slavery of legalistic righteousness.
      - (c) Standing in faith takes work (not for salvation, but for our sanctification.)
        - (i) We are commanded in Scripture to *experientially cooperate* with the Spirit. For example, 1 Corinthians 16:13-14, “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love.” (see also Gal. 5:16; Eph. 4:29-32; Col. 3; 1 Pet.2:1-3)
          - (a) A wise Christian understands that *experiential cooperation* is both,
            - 1. Dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit to produce evidence of Christ’s righteousness working in and through us; (Romans 8:4-5)
            - 2. And dependent on the Word of God to teach, rebuke, correct and train us in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16)
- II) **(5:2-4) The Perils of letting go of the freedom we have in Christ. (The Dangers of legalism.)**
  - A) Paul gets serious with them, warning them not to waste their lives depending on legalistic practices.
  - B) (2-3) A dire warning of loss and of future obligation.
    - 1) The loss of the value of Christ and His saving work.
      - (a) If they feel it necessary to practice the *ritual* of circumcision as a means of salvation, or even sanctification, then, *why even talk about Christ? Why talk about Him if you are able to attain righteousness yourself?*
    - 2) The future obligation of ongoing obedience to every law and practice they claim as necessary.
      - (a) He is warning them of certain *failure* if this is the course they choose to take.
        - (i) Example: Today, choose 5 laws of Moses, or make up 5 laws of your own. Determine to keep them, all of them, without fail, or failure for 5 days.
          - (a) How do you think you would do? No doubt you would stumble at some point, which makes you a failure.
            - 1. Is your acceptance based on say, keeping a daily quiet time. Did you miss a day? Was your heart fully committed to it all the time? No? Failure!
            - 2. If you determine that you must keep a law, ritual, or self-made demand for righteousness, do you not understand that you have to keep it ALL the time?
              - a. Paul: *Why would you exchange the grace of God for law or ritual keeping for righteousness?*
  - C) (5:4) Law and grace cannot peacefully co-exist! You can’t mix the two. It’s either all of one or all of the other. Truth: Acceptance is found through faith in Christ alone, not by law! (**see Rom. 5:1:** “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ!”)
    - 1) A sobering warning to all who are “trying to be justified by law”: (saved or unsaved: failure)
      - (a) Severed/ alienated from Christ:
        - (i) Not talking about loss of salvation or being kicked out or cut-off from God.
        - (ii) But if you are trying to be justified by law or ritual keeping you are *living in a sphere in which Christ can be of no benefit to you.*
          - (a) Law and grace cannot co-exist.
            - 1. You may pray for grace, but you are living in a sphere of “self-reliance.”
              - a. Repent from self-reliance and return to the sphere of grace!

- (b) Fallen from grace (Paul is talking to the saved person.)
  - (i) He's not talking about losing salvation but losing the blessing of the *cooperative work of the Holy Spirit* to produce true sanctification in the life of a believer.
  - (ii) It's a loss of the blessing of grace.
  - (iii) To reiterate: Not the loss of salvation. When Jesus came to you and saved you, **He promised**, "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you." And "I am with you."
    - (a) You were born from above! You can't be unborn from above!
    - (b) When Christ comes to you His Spirit and your spirit are permanently united!
  - (iv) Bottom line: The Lord will not bless any works dependent upon "self-reliance."
    - (a) **Gal. 5:16** "Live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature."

### III) (5:5-6) Walking in Freedom: Its hope and its expression.

- A) Every believer who walks by faith will more and more live according to **Galatians 2:20!**
- B) Every believer who walks by faith will live in dependence upon the Holy Spirit in hope that He is producing righteousness as we humbly submit to Him! (the righteous results He is producing.)
  - 1) A life that yields to Him, depending on the Spirit for God-pleasing results from our works produced by faith.
    - (a) Philippians 2:13: "For it is God who works in you both to will and to act according to His good pleasure." **You work by faith, leaving the results to Him, and to His good pleasure.**
      - (i) Often, we put so much pressure on ourselves to accomplish great things for God. If it is "Church Growth" we are after we often measure success by "numbers and noses" and by the size of the bank account. But God is looking for works produced by faith!
      - (ii) But if we live by faith, yielding ourselves to Him, trusting Him we can be confident in the Spirit that "righteousness" is being accomplished. **He judges the fruit! If it is by faith and through trusting in Him, it will be acceptable work. If it is by "self-reliance" and of the flesh, no matter how it may look, it will not be acceptable to Him.**
        - (a) **This "eagerly awaiting" Paul is talking about looks to God for the results!!**
    - (b) 1 Cor. 3:13 says, "his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light."
      - (i) Here is a good saying, "What it was will be shown for what it is on that Great Day!"
        - (a) If your work, no matter what we see, if it by faith, will show forth His righteousness on that great Day when God will judge every person's work! (1 Cor. 3:10-15)
- C) Every believer is commanded to walk by faith (This is true freedom!)
  - 1) He's talking about trusting God. God doesn't need our efforts (Circumcision or uncircumcision).
  - 2) The only thing that matters to God is "faith expressing itself through love."
    - (a) Faith in Christ will express the love of Christ.
  - 3) How do we know we are acting in a God-pleasing way?
    - (a) By love! John 13:35, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, that you love one another!" Jesus didn't say by producing record numbers of people or money. But by LOVE!
- D) Application:
  - 1) Guard your freedom. Refuse to fall for the performance-for-righteousness trap!
  - 2) Faith says "yes" to God and no to "self-reliance".
  - 3) The only thing that counts (to God) is faith expressing itself in love! Love for God and one another!