

Sermon Discussion - 12 June 2022

Read Galatians 5:1-15

Dig Deeper

Freedom is a topic of conversation that evokes a range of responses...what does it mean? How is it best expressed? What should be done to receive or protect it? For many, freedom is the same as autonomy; *the freedom of rejecting any authority but our own and ridding ourselves of restrictions we consider inconvenient or undesirable.*

However, when we explore the biblical definition of freedom, it contradicts this image many of us hold. In this passage of Galatians, Paul takes on a pastoral tone and provides a practical depiction of the type of life that is honouring to God and marked by freedom.

Paul contends that those who have been set free by Jesus, are to live lives of freedom characterized by self-control, obedience to God's Word, and loving service to their neighbours. The main idea is this: **Christ has set us free to live a life of love and service.**

In many ways, v. 1 summarizes all of Chapter 4, where the theme is bondage and freedom. Paul declared that Christ was the great Liberator who set believers free from bondage. In the original Greek, the phrase "**has set us free**" refers to a single, past tense action that is now complete. Our complete freedom was secured once and for all by Jesus' death on the cross.

In v. 1 Paul spoke of the Christian's freedom and warned against the danger of lapsing into slavery. In v. 13-14, the Apostle again reminded believers of their freedom in Christ and warned against its being converted into **license**. Specifically, he charged the Galatians not to use their **liberty** as "*an opportunity*" for sin to gain a foothold. Rather than liberty being used for lust, the real goal should be love. Rather than being in **bondage to the Law** or to the sinful nature, the Galatians were to be in **bondage to one another**.

1. What do you like to do in your free time?
2. What does it mean to be set free by Christ? When you read the words, "For freedom Christ has set us free," which area of freedom comes to mind for you first?
3. Does the phrase "fallen from grace" (v. 4) refer to losing your salvation? If not, then what does it mean?
4. Christians tend to think of freedom only in terms of being set free from sin, but Paul's understanding of freedom in Christ is SO much bigger: we have been set free from both sin and the Law (think works, or things we do to try to earn righteousness). Why is this distinction important?

5. Look at verses 13-15. Paul reminds the church what they are called to (freedom). What does he say our freedom is meant to be used for? Why do you think he stresses this so strongly (see John 13:34-35)?

Application & Prayer

- We all find ourselves “adding to” Christ’s work from time to time. Where do you struggle with this? Consider what you lay in bed at night replaying in your mind on repeat. What do you agonise over? What causes shame to wash over you? What do you wish you could just “get right?” Take some time to release these areas to God in prayer, thanking Him that the work is finished. Ask Him to help you remember He was enough next time you’re tempted to try to “fix” yourself on your own.
- Galatians 5:13 says, *“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”* (ESV).

“Flesh” here refers to our fallen, sinful nature. What are some examples of how Christians today may use this promised freedom as an opportunity to sin? Where might you need to reflect on how you use your freedom to sin?