

## Galatians, Chapter Five, Lesson One

FREEDOM IN CHRIST Galatians 5:1

### STIMULATE

\*\* At the close of chapter four, we saw that the new covenant "in Christ's blood" had a profound impact on our lives in two areas. They were:

- 1) Being thankful always (An attitude of gratitude)
- 2) Being eager to share the gospel with others

How has the Lord touched your heart over this past week in either of these areas?

My own heart has been encouraged by remembering the gratitude I need to put on display before others, no matter what the circumstances might be in each new day that the Lord allows me to live for His name sake.

### MOTIVATE

\*\* As Paul's letter to the Galatians has been slowly unfolding before us, we have seen the devastating impact of legalism. That begs the question, "What is Christian liberty and how does it impact our past, present and future joy of living for Jesus Christ?" For the marvelous answer, please join me now in Galatians 5:1 as Paul addresses all three aspects of our joy in a single verse.

Read Passage (V. 1)

Opening Prayer

### *Freedom in Christ*

### INVESTIGATE

**V. 1** \*\* Our verse for today says "that Christ set us free". From the perspective of looking back to our past life without Christ, from what kind of things have we been set free?

We have been set free from:

Sin - Romans 6:16-18

Guilt - Hebrews 10:19-22

The wrath of God - Romans 5:1, Hebrews 10:26-27

The dominance of Satan - 2Timothy 2:24-26, Hebrews 2:14

\*\* In addition to that list and thinking contextually in this letter, what do you think is foremost on Paul's heart regarding our freedom?

We have been set free from the law and the curse of trying to produce our own righteousness.

cf. Galatians 3:13 - Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law

Galatians 3:22 - Every man is a sinner needing to be set free from the Law

Galatians 4:7 - We are no longer a slave, but a son and heir of the Kingdom

\*\* Before we continue on in our verse for today, what path must a sinner take in order to be set free?

Paul best illustrated that path with his own life in Philippians 3:7-9, would you look at it with me?  
This is the path of complete devotion to Jesus Christ! It can be seen in three steps, they are:

**1) Confess your sin** - Paul recognized that all of his religious effort was a sinful, self-centered lifestyle which he confesses to be "loss for the sake of Christ". (V. 7)

**2) Confess Christ as Lord** - Paul's personal relationship to Jesus Christ is valued over every other element of his life. He not only calls Jesus his Lord, he says that everything else in life is rubbish [skubalon] lit. "dung or refuse" that which is to be thrown to the dogs! (V. 8)

**3) Remember your total dependance on God** - Paul says that he is no longer depending on his own ability to produce righteousness, but is taking God at His word to give the gift of Christ's righteousness through faith. (V. 9)

\*\* OK, now back in Galatians 5:1, what was Christ's motive for freeing us from the curse of the Law?

Why did He do it?

"It was for freedom..." Jesus wants us to live every day in the freedom that He has provided. We are no longer under the Law of Moses, but rather the provision of Christ!

cf. Romans 8:1-4 - The law of the Spirit (the gospel)

Galatians 6:2 - "...the law of Christ..."

James 1:25 - "...the law of liberty..."

\*\* As those who have been set free by grace through faith, how should we feel about obeying God?

It is our greatest joy and passion. cf. Romans 7:22

\*\* Is there a fear of judgement or wrath when we fail?

Absolutely not! cf. John 3:18, "...he who believes in Him is not judged..." Instead, we obey to bring glory to God (John 3:21). We don't obey to become saved, but rather we are saved, so we want to obey!

\*\* OK, we have seen the past for the Christian in that Christ has set us free. What about the present? What command does Paul give to the Galatian believers (and us as well) to be applied to their present lives?

"...keep standing firm..."

\*\* Firm on what truth?

Firm in living your life by grace through faith in the freedom of Jesus Christ.

\*\* Let's put some practical labels on Christian liberty, what are Christians free to do?

Free to go to church, or not go to church

Free to obey Christ out of a heart of love

Free to eat meat on Fridays

Free to get married, or stay single

Free to drink alcohol, or not

Free to go to the movies  
Free to dance, read or spend money  
Free to have friends and associates

\*\* With all these freedoms (and many more) how do we know where to draw the line? How do we set Christ honoring standards for our own life?

Paul gives us three steps to do just that! Let's look at them together.

1) **Do not sin!** cf. Romans 5:20-6:2

2) **Do not cause a weaker brother to stumble!** cf. 1Corinthians 8:1-13

3) **Do all to the glory of God!** cf. 1Cor. 10:23-31

\*\* Well, back in Galatians 5:1, we have seen the Christian's past in that Christ has set him free. We have seen their present in that they stand firm in that freedom. What command does Paul now give us regarding our future?

"..do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.."

\*\* By now you would think that Paul's reader would get the point! Why would anyone want to return to the bondage of keeping the Law for salvation?

We should despise any thought of the notion that man can work his own way into the approval of God. Peter knew this was true. cf. Acts 15:10-11, Peter goes so far as to say that our hearts are cleansed by Jesus Christ through faith (V.9) and not because we earned God's approval.

\*\* What do you suppose would be the draw that enticed the Galatians to return to legalism?

Peer pressure! cf. Galatians 4:17, It was the same when Jesus ministered!  
cf. John 9:22-23, 12:42-43

\*\* As you look at this last section of verse one, what two words should have shaken the Galatian readers, down to the very core of their being?

**subject** [enecho], lit. to hold in, to ensnare, the idea of being completely confined

**slavery** [douleia], means to be a slave, under the yoke without freedom to act independently, to be controlled.

Paul is saying that while you presently keep standing firm in the freedom of Christ, do not ever consider returning to the bondage of legalism in the future.

\*\* When Paul used the phrase "yoke of slavery", did it bring to your mind anything that our Lord said that was in direct opposition to the heavy oppression of legalism?

Jesus said, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."  
(Matthew 11:29-30)

## **EXTRICATE**

\*\* What is Christian freedom?

It is deliverance, by Jesus Christ, from keeping the Mosaic Law and the traditions of men for salvation (for by grace you have been saved).

It is the knowledge that we cannot make ourselves more pleasing to God by our good works, but only through faith in Jesus Christ.

It is the privilege of joyfully obeying God out of a heart of gratitude for the wonderful gift of His Son.

### **DELINEATE**

**\*\* How does Christian liberty impact our past, present and future joy of living for Jesus Christ?**

- 1) In the past He set us free, by His grace.
- 2) In the present He helps us stand firm in truth.
- 3) In the future He prevents us from being subject again to a yoke of slavery.

### **EVALUATE**

**\*\* With all of our freedom in Christ, how do we know where to draw the line? How do we set Christ honoring standards for our own life?**

- 1) **Do not sin!** cf. Romans 5:20-6:2
- 2) **Do not cause a weaker brother to stumble!** cf. 1Corinthians 8:1-13
- 3) **Do all to the glory of God!** cf. 1Corinthians 10:23-31

### **ACTIVATE**

**\*\* Are you truly thankful for the freedom that the death of Jesus Christ provided for you? If so, you will aggressively apply these three principles to your daily life. We ought to be a people who joyfully obey our risen Savior by avoiding obvious sin, not causing our weaker brother to stumble and by doing all to the glory of God! Let's ask Him for the grace to do all three!**

Closing prayer