

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 24TH, 2024 // GALATIANS

## FREEDOM (GALATIANS 5:1-6) FREEDOM

In Chapter 4, Paul explained the amazing truth that we are adopted as children of God. This freedom was given to us through the blood of Jesus. We cannot earn it through works; it is a gift. Living in freedom takes courage.

- **Christ set us free. Do we live the courageous life Jesus gave us?**

## SELF-SABOTAGE

By embracing the false gospel of the Judaizers, the Galatians were trying to be justified or made right with God by their own effort. Paul describes this thinking as going back into slavery when you have your freedom.

- **Our minds are powerful—we must remember who set us free!**

## STAND FIRM

It is easy to confuse freedom for comfort. The Galatians were being persuaded back to self-righteousness, thereby nullifying Christ's sacrifice. It was easier to "do" the requirements of the law than to trust in Jesus' sacrifice and His righteousness (vs. 5).

- **In what ways do we nullify the cross?**

## CIRCUMCISION

The Judaizers were persuading the Galatians they needed Jesus plus the law, thus falling from grace. He argued that neither the acts of circumcision nor uncircumcision accomplished anything.

- **Today, it is easy to add Jesus on to anything we determine as "spiritual enough."**

## FAITH WORKING THROUGH LOVE

Jesus lived a life that was perfect. His life on earth satisfied the requirements of the Law. His death paid the penalty of sin. His resurrection proved His lordship over death. Life through Him is freely offered to those who would believe.

- **His grace allows us to love others freely without a selfish agenda.**

## COMPROMISE (GALATIANS 5:7-15) PERSUASION

We all must face the reality that we will be persuaded. Paul says that he was persuaded by Jesus. He questions who could persuade the Galatians, not what could persuade them. **Too many times we let others dictate who Jesus is instead of Jesus Himself.**

- **Whom do we let persuade us?**

## "LITTLE LEAVEN"

Paul is metaphorically describing what the Judaizers were doing as leaven in dough. **This should wake us up to the "leaven" in our lives.** They had twisted truth to fit their own agenda, and started sharing it as if it was the Truth to others.

- **In what ways have we manipulated the Truth in order to justify our actions?**

## "[I'M] STILL PERSECUTED"

Paul reminds the Galatians in verse 11 that he is still persecuted for what he teaches. The rumor was that Paul preached circumcision. If this is true why does he still receive persecution?

- **Our words and deeds should be able to stand in defense of what we believe about Jesus.**

## FREEDOM MISUSED

In their freedom, the Galatians tolerated a false gospel. They tolerated opportunities for the flesh as they devoured one another. Are we any better? We all have our tendencies, our fleshly desires. **Tolerating the flesh leads to complacency in our faith.**

- **In humility we live out freedom.**

## COURAGEOUS FREEDOM

We must allow our "flesh" to die. We choke out our flesh with obedience to the Spirit. We love our neighbor as ourselves. **We need one another.** Freedom can't become a breeding ground for our flesh.

- **This is why community is critical. It is hard to serve others by yourself.**

## SPIRIT VS FLESH (GALATIANS 5:16-26)

### THE FIGHT

The flesh and the Spirit are at odds with one another. The desires of the flesh are naturally against the leading of the Spirit. We are in the middle of this tension. The question becomes how do we live in the tension?

- **We walk by the Spirit. There is a dependency on the Spirit. Is that it?**

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

It's easy to get caught up in "doing" for God instead of thanking Him for what He has done. We are justified by what Jesus did. We are sanctified by what He is doing in our lives. He commands us to walk with Him (vs. 16). This is how we grow as Christians.

- **Our "do" is turned into thanksgiving.**

### PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

This does not give us a license to be lazy. We have seen the Galatians misuse their freedom. We are responsible for how we walk. We also are encouraged to serve others not in order to be saved, but because we are saved. We freely serve, without obligation, but with joy.

- **Jesus matures us as we obey the Spirit.**

### LEGALISM

Performance based religion: the Bible says this view of Christianity has fallen away from grace (vs. 4). Paul is writing to those who struggle with legalism.

- **This list is not a measuring stick, or a test to get right or wrong. It is a warning sign. It should humble us and remind us of our need for Jesus. It should lead to worship and gratitude.**

### WORKS OF THE FLESH

- **Sexual sins:** sexual immorality, promiscuity, moral impurity.
- **Superstitions/religious sins:** idolatry, sorcery (witchcraft, crystals, horoscopes)

- **Social sins:** hatred, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy.

### MORE WORKS OF THE FLESH

- **Mind altering sins:** drunkenness, (intoxication or another mind-altering substance), and carousing (party lifestyle, chasing the high of the next party, wild living), and anything similar).
- **We must remember this list is not exhaustive but it is comprehensive. It is the practice of these things.**

### PRACTICING THE FLESH

Those who habitually, consistently practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (vs. 21). This is a warning to us, we must be aware of how we are walking; are we practicing such things?

- **Each of us have tendencies that we struggle with as humans.**

### FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

- **Love:** self-sacrifice, giving without expecting anything.
- **Joy:** more than a feeling; it is a heartbeat of your presence with others, out of freedom.
- **Peace:** the understanding that God is in control of all things.
- **Faithfulness:** resolute, trustworthy.
- **Patience:** walking with the Spirit and trusting His time is perfect.
- **Kindness:** to love your neighbor as yourself.
- **Goodness:** purity in our actions toward others.
- **Gentleness:** safe and easy to be with.
- **Self-control:** focused on holiness.

### WE RECEIVE JESUS' RIGHTEOUSNESS

Paul uses this list to point out the obvious point. Without the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to live a life pleasing to God's standard. It is through the Holy Spirit that we are able to live a holy life.

- **The fruit reveals the root, meaning the way we walk will be evident.**

### COURAGE

- Living in freedom takes courage and community. It's easy to confuse comfort for freedom. Comfort says I can do it on my own. Courage says, I know I need you even when it is uncomfortable.
- **Tolerating the flesh leads to complacency in our faith. Free people notice and understand bondage.**

### RECEIVE

- Trying to earn our maturity in the Lord and earning salvation are both legalistic thoughts.
- We are given salvation through faith in Jesus. We receive grace. **We must not misuse our freedom by manipulating truth for our own fleshly desires.**
- We receive freedom and serve in love.

### GRATITUDE

- The law works out of obligation. Walking in the Spirit means we **serve others through love, because it's not about me. We are thankful for our freedom and want others to have freedom too.**
- **The gospel is not only the starting point of faith, it is what sustains us through our entire walk with Jesus.**