

Ga 5:1 (ESV) For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Review

1. Delivered from the guilt of sin

Is 43:25 (ESV) “I am he who *blots out* your transgressions for my own sake, and I *will not remember* your sins.

- A. The guilt of sin that would send us to hell is gone because Jesus bore it all
 - 1). The record is wiped clean – not one sin on it – it is now stamped “righteous”
 - 2). God says I choose not to remember those sins again – never bring them up against you

2. Delivered from the wrath of God

1 Jn 4:10 (ESV) In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the *propitiation* for our sins.

- A. Propitiation = Jesus *exhausted* God’s wrath that was aimed at us
 - 1). He drank the cup until there was absolutely nothing left

3. Delivered from the tyranny of Satan

Job 1:10 (NIV) “Have you not put a *hedge* (GWT “a protective fence) around him and his household and everything he has?”

- A. We saw that the devil cannot do anything he wants – anytime he wants
God must grant him permission first – when He does He always puts limits upon it

4. Delivered from the law

- A. The law was external – placing demands upon us but supplying no power to obey – motivation was fear
New Covenant is internal – God working in our hearts – new nature – new desires – new power
 - 1). Now we are motivated by love to obey Him

Transition: Let’s look at our outline

- A. We’ve seen what freedom delivers us from – let’s turn to what this freedom delivers us too

1. Outline

- A. We are free to live and walk in a new kind of power
- B. We are free to take chances and be creative serving God
- C. We are free to relax in God’s presence
- D. We are free to obey God from the proper motivation

I. WE ARE FREE TO LIVE AND WALK IN A NEW KIND OF POWER

1. A concept that is unique to Christianity

- A. Only Christianity gives you the power to live the life it calls you too
- B. Only in Christianity does God Himself take up residence in you to provide that power!
Eze 36:27 (ESV) And *I will put my Spirit within you*, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Transition: So God has made this power we need available to us

2. What kind of power?

- A. The same kind of power that raised Jesus from the dead – that is huge!
 - 1). When the Bible speaks of power it uses *creation* in the OT and *resurrection* in the new
Listen to Paul’s prayer: Eph 1:18-20 (NIV) I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, (19) *and his incomparably great power for us who believe.*

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, (20) which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

- 2). Why did God have to exert power to resurrect Jesus?
I believe all of hell was trying to hold Him in that grave
They knew if the resurrection takes place they are finished!

Point: If God could handle that – the combined power of hell – and He did! NO CONTEST

- A. Then He can certainly handle whatever is bothering you
- B. He can certainly enable you to live the life He’s called you too
 - 1). We just need to learn to walk in a daily dependence upon Him – trusting Him for the power
“God I look to you today to help me to live in a way that brings you glory. By faith I depend upon your enabling power to meet me at every point of need.”
 - a). Every situation we must look away from self to Him! His abilities
 - b). Reminding ourselves as Paul did *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”*
 - 2). Listen to Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians
Eph 3:14-16 (NIV) For this reason I kneel before the Father, (15) from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. (16) *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,*
 - a). The potential power of Almighty God dwelling in you is amazing

Question: Think about who this God you pray to is. How powerful. How mighty.

- A. The God who made it all – who easily controls combined power of hell - who rules over all of history
- B. Be encouraged by the words of Micah

Mic 7:7 (ESV) But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; *my God will hear me.*

1 Jn 5:14–15 (ESV) And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ⁽¹⁵⁾ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, *we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.*

- 1). My God will hear me! When I am troubled I will look to Him and He will hear me!
- 2). This God who created the universe bends down and listens to me!
 - a). When I pray my words connect to His Father’s heart
He hears my cry for help – my cry for rescue and relief
 - b). To neglect prayer is to neglect such a source of comfort and power
1 Pet 5:7 (NIV) Cast *all your anxiety* on him because he cares for you.

Thought: These are tough days – man can’t help you – Donald Trump won’t save you

- A. Micah says the one who made all we see – He will hear and He will answer
 - 1). He says “He is the one I will go too – I will ask Him and wait expectantly for His answer”
- B. Listen – He also hears wants – not all but some – ex. Rose Bowl USC – bucket list
 - 1). I’m not afraid to ask – “Father I would like too – your will be done – I will be happy with whatever you choose but I’m just letting you know” He’s my Father! He loves me!
 - 2). He is so wonderful, amazing, gracious and generous

Transition: So we are free to live and to walk in a new power – divine power

II. WE ARE FREE TO TAKE CHANCES AND BE CREATIVE IN SERVING GOD

1. One reason people cling to legalism is they feel it protects them

- A. I’m hemmed in by a bunch of rules – laws – they keep me on track
 - 1). I stay on track because I’m afraid not too – God might hurt me
- B. Hopefully you know by now – spiritual discipline is necessary to be healthy – I must read, pray, obey...

But a discipline that is driven by legalism is harmful

- 1). It causes people to serve out of guilt and fear
- 2). If you fail at all you feel God is mad – disappointed – you’ll be in that divine dog house
 - a). Carri’s grandmother – plaque – little dogs with the kid’s names on it hanging on hooks
There was also a little doghouse painted on the plaque with a hook in it
You knew you were in trouble if your little dog was moved into the doghouse
 - b). I think some of us think God has one of those plaques up in heaven

Problem: When we are afraid to fail because our boss at work or the God we serve is going to get mad

- A. We stay in the comfort zone – where we know we can do things successfully
 - 1). We won’t do anything risky or creative because to fail has too great a cost
 - 2). So fear steals our creativity in serving man or God – just stay safe – away from risk
- B. But those who do things that count are usually willing to take some risks in life
 - 1). What frees you to do that in God’s kingdom is grace
When you understand how unconditionally accepted you are in Christ
 - 2). When you understand if you fail in your attempt to serve Him – He is not upset
You’re still absolutely loved and unconditionally accepted because of what Christ did
 - 3). That if you fail you fall into that safety net of grace
 - a). Now you’re not afraid to step out and try something new – to take a chance

Thought: Brothers and sisters - You need to see the heart of God towards you

- A. He is a loving Father who is *delighted in our attempts to serve and please Him*
- B. Imagine if your child tried something new – just because they loved you
 - 1). They draw a picture of a dog – it’s not very good
They come to you “I did this for you daddy” – what would you say?
“You call that a dog! Really? It looks more like a stain or something! Pitiful!”
 - a). It would take a long time for them to work up the courage to do anything for you again
 - b). They were judged by a law that demands perfection
And their dog wasn’t perfect – so it was rejected
 - 2). But God is a loving Father – *He delights in the effort and the heart behind it* – even when messy
 - a). God takes you – hugs you – and says “That’s great – I love it” = *that’s grace!*
- C. It’s interesting how much more work can be done when we feel secure
During the first part of the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, no safety devices were used, and 23 men fell to their deaths. For the last part of the project, however, a large net which cost \$100,000 was employed. At least 10 men fell into it and were saved. *But an interesting sidelight is the fact that 25 percent more work was accomplished when the men were assured of their safety!*
 - 1). They knew if they failed they fell into the safety net – so they could work without fear
 - a). I know when I serve God – I can take risks – If I fail I fall into the safety net of grace
 - 1a). God is not upset – He is not angry – He is my Father and sees the heart

Transition: What we have seen so far

- A. We are free to live and to walk in a new power – divine power
- B. We are free to take chances and be creative in serving God

III. WE HAVE THE FREEDOM TO GO INTO GOD’S PRESENCE TO ENJOY HIM

1. If Jesus can go into God’s presence so can I – I’m united to Him – In Him

- A. Grace gives us the freedom to run to Him immediately when there is a crisis

To cry help without going through the checklist first

- 1). Did I pray today – read my Bible – did I say anything harsh – did I...I...I...I

Thought: Here is the problem with that – I can *always* find a reason to shut myself out from God’s help

- A. When I scan my life I can always find something I could have or should have done better

Something I should be more consistent at – some area I should have more victory in

- B. What we’ve been seeing is that grace frees us from that! It allows us to run into God’s presence

- 1). God sees me in Christ – clothed in the robes of His righteousness

Christ work on my behalf gained access to God for me

Ro 5:1–2 (ESV) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁽²⁾ *Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Eph 2:18 (NIV) For *through him* we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

- 2). The result of understanding grace when times of crisis hit

Heb 4:14-16 (NLT) That is why we have a great High Priest who has gone to heaven, Jesus the Son of God. Let us cling to him and never stop trusting him. (15) This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin. (16) So **(because that is true)** *let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it.*

- a). It is a throne of grace – not law – based on what Christ has done – so come boldly

- b). It is a throne of acceptance and help – don’t neglect this resource Christ made available

- 3). “So Father, right now I come to you for help on the basis of what Christ did ...”

Point: Legalism will never produce the freedom to run to God boldly for help

- A. The law demands the picture of the dog be perfect – it shuts a failure like me out

- B. But I can run to God because Jesus was perfect – It allows a failure like me in

- 1). I have access to God at any time because He was perfect

- 2). When I need to go boldly I must remind myself of the Gospel – why I can

If I don’t – I’ll scan my life and find those reasons I can’t go

Transition: So we’ve seen

- A. We are free to live and to walk in a new power – Divine power

- B. We’re free to take chances and be creative in serving God – He loves the effort – grace covers the mistakes

- C. We have the freedom to relax in God’s presence – to run to Him – to enjoy Him

IV. WE HAVE THE FREEDOM TO OBEY GOD FROM THE RIGHT MOTIVES

1. Teaching grace never eliminates the necessity of obedience

- A. The commands of scripture are still commands given by God

- B. The difference is why we obey (a reminder)

- 1). Under law we obey them to earn God's approval and blessing

Under grace we obey because we have God's approval

- 2). Under law we obey through our own efforts our own strength - can't be done

Under grace we obey through God's power - divine enabling

- C. Helpless on my own – Apart from Him I can do nothing (John 15)

But amazingly powerful through Him! I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me (Phil 4)

- 1). Why Scripture exhorts us

Eph 6:10 (ESV) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

- a). Learn to face life appropriating – trusting in His strength

Summary: Legalism steals all your enjoyment from God**1. You want to live for God but you do it in your own power**

A. Grace links you to resurrection power

2. You want to serve God but are afraid to be creative – what if I fail

A. But grace frees you – when you make a mistake you fall into the safety net of unconditional acceptance

3. You want to run to God but you can't – your failures stop you

A. Grace tells you that you're accepted in Christ – His performance is imputed to you – He never failed

1). So go boldly to the throne of grace

4. We have the freedom to obey God from the right motives

A. Legalism causes you to obey out of fear – to appease a God who is always disappointed

Grace causes us to obey out of love – we desire to please this God who accepts us so unconditionally

Transition: Now we come to the command – how we are to treat legalism

V. THE COMMAND: GET TOUGH WITH LEGALISM

Ga 5:1 (ESV) For freedom Christ has set us free...

1. He set us free so we would live that freedom out

A. Not so we would just talk about it

B. What would you think of somebody who was in prison - but got pardoned

1). Then sat around IN prison all day saying - Isn't that governor a wonderful guy

I can't believe he did that for me

I've even written a song about what he's done - let's sing it together and lift our hands

2). You'd say to him - If he set you free - walk out of this prison and live like a free man

Point: That is what Paul is saying! Your free now so act like it!

A. Paul says walk out of the prison legalism has put you into – where everything depends upon you

1). Begin to relate to God as one who accepts you in His Son because of what He did

B. Christ has gained access for you to the Father – who loves you – enjoys being with you

1). Who is not angry with you

Transition: Look at what Paul tells us to do with legalism at the end of the verse

Ga 5:1 (ESV) For freedom Christ has set us free; *stand firm therefore*, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

1. We must get tough and say NO to legalism

A. Paul knew the danger that comes from the life robbing power legalism has

1). He says two things – ENJOY the freedom that Christ's has gained for you

BY standing firm against the legalism that wants to steal that from you

2). Stand firm against the people who want to steal that from you

a). Who want to put their extra-biblical lists upon you

Who try to control you through guilt and condemnation when you don't comply

b). Who try to intimidate you by making you feel like your carnal

Because you don't act just like them

1a). I don't go see movies – you do? I don't own a TV how big is yours? Oh!

B. Please listen – you have the freedom to make choices between you and God in the grey areas

1). I don't have any right to try to make you conform to my opinion – what I like and don't like

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- 2). When we were in England there was a gentleman who claimed our church was from Satan
Because we didn't have a Sunday night service
"Fine – show me the "thou shalt have a Sunday night service passage"
a). If it's there will figure out how to do it – if it's not then we have freedom
 - C. Legalism produces a highly cultivated – obnoxious – critical spirit
 - 1). Everybody who is not in lock-step with your imposed standard is looked down upon
 - 2). You don't have the freedom to be yourself and make choices before God that He has given you the freedom to make
 - D. Legalism is NOT expecting obedience to clearly defined commands
 - 1). It is expecting you to comply with my opinion on the grey areas
Even though I'm the Pastor of the church I have no right to impose that upon you
- 2. Paul commands them to "Stand firm against that"**
- A. Don't let this joy stealing principle into your life
Don't be intimidated by those who try to impose it upon you
- 3. If you don't stand legalism will impose a burden upon you**
- Ga 5:1 (ESV)** For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and *do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*
- A. Picture of a beast loaded down with a burden! Heavy weight upon it crushing it
 - 1). Christ took that burden off at the cross - he set us free to stand upright
 - 2). How foolish to take that burden and put it back on your shoulders
 - B. It isn't God's will that we live our lives bowed down - feeling unworthy all the time
 - 1). Like we never live up to His standard – so we feel alienated from Him
Christ lived up to His standard so we could draw near AND enjoy Christianity!!!
- 4. If we don't stand up against this as a church we allow destruction**
- Ga 5:15 (ESV)** But if you *bite and devour one another*, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.
- A. Result of legalism – it produces a bunch of self-righteous hypocrites with hyper critical attitudes
 - B. It creates such a dishonest atmosphere – where we all have to act like we were always doing fine
 - 1). Where nobody feels they can be honest and say "I'm struggling in this area"
 - 2). The Apostle Paul was honest about his struggles in Romans 7
 - C. The church is the perfect place for imperfect people isn't it
 - 1). We are a bunch of people who understand that none of us has this thing wired
 - a). A group of people who understand were all broken because of the fall
We all struggle with that fallenness in us and we don't always win those battles
 - 2). But we also understand that as ugly as we can be we have been accepted by grace
 - a). Therefore we are willing to extend the same grace to others when they fail
 - 3). We understand the extent we've been forgiven by God
 - a). Therefore we are willing to forgive others like Christ has forgiven us
 - D. The church is not a place for perfect people – there are no perfect people
 - 1). The church is a place for broken, shattered people to come into and be healed
Healed by the compassion of other broken, shattered people who have found wholeness in Christ
- Point:** Legalism removes all of that!
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CONCLUSION

That ends our little 3 part series on freedom in Christ

1. I am not what legalism tells me I am – a failure who God struggles to love

- A. I am God's child accepted absolutely and unconditionally in Christ
- B. Paul says to the Galatians begin to live like that is really true of you

2. Freedom from (last two weeks)

- A. From walking around pounded by the guilt of sin
 - 1). Christ has paid for that sin – all of it – we are clean before God
- B. Freedom from fearing the wrath of God
 - 1). Christ exhausted that wrath there is nothing left for us
- C. Freedom from the tyranny of Satan
 - 1). He is not free to do whatever he wants – anytime he wants
 - a). He must get permission first – when God grants it – always with limits
Those limits will never be beyond what we can bear
- D. Freedom from the law
 - 1). We now serve God out of love NOT fear

3. Freedom to (This week)

- A. We are free to live and walk in a new kind of power
 - 1). We are loved by the Father - united to Christ – indwelt by the Holy Spirit
 - a). How much power is that! Start relying on that power to live in a daily fashion
- B. We are free to take chances and be creative serving God
 - 1). God delights in the effort of His child that serves Him – Grace covers the failures
- C. We are free to go into God's presence and enjoy Him
 - 1). He loves it when you come to Him – He enjoys being your Father
You are now free to enjoy being His child
- D. We are free to obey God from the right motives
 - 1). As a precious child – out of love - not as a slave out of fear
- E. Paul says “Don't let legalism steal this from you – stand firmly against it”