

Gal 12 – True Freedom In Christ - Gal 5:13-15

Today – we look at True Freedom In Christ really means

Our msg last wk started with a great statement re: our Freedom . . .

Gal 5:1 (NASB)

I It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Last wk we saw - Freedom in Christ set us free from the bondage of trying to make ourselves “Right” with God – by Keeping the Law

& in Gal 5:4 we found out what a serious mistake that is . . .

Gal 5:4

4 For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God’s grace.

& so Paul made it very clear – we’ve been Set Free from the Bondage of Legalism (making ourselves ‘Right’ with God)

Now today – that pendulum is going to swing all the way to the other side

& Paul’s going to show us that;

just as we are Set Free from the bondage of Legalism – we are also Set Free from the bondage of License (???)

Let’s Pray

Let me give you Websters definition: (as used here)

License : a freedom that allows irresponsibility , or is used with irresponsibility - - - a disregard for standards of personal conduct

So - imagine a great pendulum;

on one side – is the bondage of **Legalism**

on the other side – is the bondage of **License**

& “In Christ” – we’re **Set Free** from *Both Extremes* of this pendulum

Legalism - & - **License** . . .

Now – you might say “**License**” is *not bondage* – but you’d be sadly mistaken

We live in a culture that cries out for *Self-Centered Freedom* (License)

We want to **do** what WE want - & **live** how WE want –

Freedom of Choice; is a “Battle Cry” for our Culture – *we want it . . .*

What . . . **When** . . . **Where** . . . & **How** . . . *we want it*

In fact – **our culture** actually *associates sin* with **freedom** doesn’t it?

freedom do what feels good regardless of what God says . . .

But - what we *refuse to admit* – is that what we call **Freedom** is actually

the most *destructive form* of **bondage** that there is

have you ever **heard** of someone who is in **bondage to sin** ??

Have you ever **known** someone who is in **bondage to sin**?

Have you ever **been** someone who is . . . (*you get the picture*)

You **don’t** have to *look very hard* to see that what the world calls **License** –

in about **2-shakes** becomes **Bondage** . . . *Right*

Jn 8:34-36

34 Jesus answered them [Jews], “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever *commits sin* is a *slave* of sin. [**commits** = continually, actively, chooses sin]

35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.

36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be **free indeed**.

The truth is **the more** we **assert** our *Self-Centered Freedom* –

the more we become *enslaved to sin*

BUT – *If the Son makes you free – you shall be free indeed”*

The **opposite extremes** of the Pendulum of **Legalism** & **License** are both **attractive** to man – because they both *satisfy* man's **SELF-Desire**

Living in **legalism** satisfies our **SELF-Desire** –
by letting us think *we've earned something* from God . . .

Living in **License** satisfies our **SELF-Desire** by allowing us to *reject all restraints* - & serve our *own lusts*

But ON Either of those paths (*Legalism or License*)
it is impossible to Reach God . . .

We can only Reach God in the "**Liberty**" *by which Christ* has **made** us free
& that's **what we see** in *Galatians* today . . .

Gal 5:13A

13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; . . .

Paul starts the *same way* he started **last wk** –
by *making it clear* we've been **called** to Liberty (Freedom) . . .

HOWEVER – Not Freedom **TO** sin – but Freedom **FROM** sin

Again - Gal 5:13

13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty [freedom]; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, . . .

The word translated "**opportunity**" most often means a "**command base**"
or "**launching point**" for a *military campaign*

Paul says "**brethren**" (*meaning he's talking to fellow Christians*) –
we've been **called** into the *greatest freedom* "in Christ" . . .

but *God forbid* we use it as a **launching point** for the *sin-nature* (flesh)

This is *exactly* what we've been studying in **Rom 6** on Wed nights –
Jesus Christ has given us Freedom **FROM** sin – not freedom **TO** sin

That may sound obvious – but Christians **convince themselves**
it's ok to live in sin . . . because they're Under Grace

Listen – that is an **extreme misunderstanding** of Grace –
Grace is best described as God's Riches At Christ's Expense . . .

& for a Christian to **insinuate** that Jesus Christ suffered and died
so they could **indulge** their **sinful desires** - is a horrible blaspheme

Jesus Christ died to give you Freedom **FROM** sin – not Freedom **TO** sin

Now – does that mean a true believer **never sins** – of course not . . .

The Difference is This;

One **justifies** their sin – they **protect** it - & they **continue** in it -
The Other is **appalled** by their sin – **repentant** & **eager** to crucify it

THAT IS the Difference . . . because a person who's truly been Freed
from being a **Slave to Sin** – has **become** a **Slave to God** . . .
& you cannot be both – you must pick one or the other

In **Rom 6** Paul makes this very clear;

to the one whom you obey - you are that one's slaves – whom you obey

Rom 6:16

16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

Rom 6:20-22

*20 For when you were **slaves of sin**, you were free in regard to righteousness.*

21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

*22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become **slaves of God**, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.*

You are **either** a Slave of Sin – the end of which is **death** – OR . . .
You are **Freed** from Slavery to Sin – by becoming a **Slave of God**,
the end of which is everlasting life . . .

(Back in Gal) – **if** we are **NOT** to use our Freedom in Christ to Serve the Flesh
What **ARE** we to use it **FOR** . . ??

Gal 5:13 - [entire vs]

13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty [freedom]; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Your Freedom in Christ it's **not** to Serve your Flesh –
it's to **Serve One Another In Love**

But that statement – “Freedom to Serve” doesn't sound right, does it . . .
to our flesh – “servicing one another” doesn't like Freedom at all - does it ?

let me say it again – Serving Yourself is **Bondage** (it's not Freedom) –
it's Bondage to the Sin Nature - & it's end is destruction . . .

True Freedom in Christ – is Freedom to Serve as Christ Served –
& what did Jesus **say** that He came here to do . . . ??

Mat 20:28

28 . . . the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Contrary to our Self-Centered, Sin Nature . . .

True Freedom “In Christ” is the Freedom to Serve
& in some way – to give your life as **a ransom** for others . . .

& if you **ask anyone** who's truly living that way –
they'll tell you it's the most **Freedom** you can have in this life . . .

But our Sin Nature Kicks against that doesn't it ?

NO WHERE in the Bible – is living for Your **SELF** ever portrayed as Freedom
– It is always portrayed as Bondage

So - **Gal 5:13** says **WHAT** to do with your “True Freedom In Christ” –
(*serve one another thru love . . .*)

& **V.14** – says **WHY** we are to do that . . .

Gal 5:14

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

God’s **nature** & **standards** have *never changed* –

Jesus Christ didn’t **CHANGE** the Law – He **FULFILLED** the Law
& the only way we can fulfill the law is **“In Christ”**

& it says all the law can be fulfilled – if we will simply love one another

Rom 13:8-10

8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

9 For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

God’s law can be summed up in Two Commandments –

both of which are possible – ONLY as Christ Lives in Us . . .

We find these Two commandments in **Mat 22** (*turn there*)

Mat 22:35-40

35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying,

36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”

*37 Jesus said to him, ‘You shall **love the LORD** your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’*

38 This is the first and great commandment.

*39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself.’*

40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

These are some of the greatest **Words of Freedom** in the N.T.

all Vertical commands are fulfilled by **Loving God** completely

all Horizontal commands are fulfilled by **Loving your Neighbor** completely

& I promise you - that is True Freedom "In Christ"

In Christ we are no longer under the Bondage of the Sin nature –
because Christ has Freed us to **Love God**

In Christ we are no longer under Bondage of the Law –
because Christ has Freed us to **Love One Another**

AND - as we truly "Love One Another" In Christ – we actually **fulfill the Law**

Now - It's important to remember – Paul's directing these words to **Believers**

So let's look at how the Bible says we are to **Love One Another** in the church
– because that's who Paul's talking to here

1Cor 13:4-8 NIV - - **(IN THE CHURCH)**

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails. . . .

True Freedom In Christ – Is Loving One Another to that Extent –
Anything Else Is **Bondage** To The Sin Nature !!

Back in Gal 5:15 – Paul shows the "Reverse Side" of this truth –
. . . **Let's read** both **Vs.14-15** in order to see both sides . . .

Gal 5:14-15

*14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall **love** your neighbor as yourself.”*

*15 But if you bite and devour **one another**, beware lest you be consumed by **one another!***

Vs.15 is the ‘Reverse Side’ of **Vs.14** – & it is a **shocking warning** directed at **Christians** in the **Church**

Paul’s not saying – “**be careful out there in the world**”
because those **ungodly people** can really bite & devour one another . . .

This is proof Paul isn’t writing from an “**Ivory Tower**” –
He **knew exactly** what would **happen** – **inside the church** –
If we fail to apply the **2nd Great commandment** – **at all times**

in the next Vs. in Gal 5 - Paul begins **Works of the Flesh/Fruit of the Spirit** –
& he **leads into** that section – w/ this **shocking warning**

In **the Greek** – these words are used for **wild animals** –
it’s **a picture** of two animals **locked in a struggle** to the death –
like something you’d see on National Geographic . . .

but **wait a minute** – Paul’s **NOT** talking about **wild animals** . . .
he’s talking about **believers** **in the church** !!!

We must **HEAR** & **UNDERSTAND** that **we have** (in our sin nature) the **ability**,
& even the **tendency**, to **bite & devour** one another – **in the church**

& guys . . . we **ALWAYS** think it’s **THEM** who are biting and devouring –
but look how **broad** Paul’s statement is - *if you bite and devour **one another***

The best thing we can be saying right now is . . .
“this isn’t about them . . . this is about ME !!!”

We must be – **constantly** – **at all times** – checking **OURSELVES** –
to make sure that our **natural tendency** to “**bite and devour**” –
is not “**oozing out**” on **one another** in the church

We must **come to grips** w/ the fact - our **sin nature** tends to “*bite & devour*”
We must be **constantly crucifying** that *Sin nature* – &
We must be **constantly being filled** with the *New Nature* of Christ . . .

Which is Unconditional, Sacrificial Love, “emptied” of **SELF-CONCERN**
for more on this - study **Phil 2:5-8**

John Phillips – re: Vs.15: *The Galatian churches seem to have been not only facing a seductive error from without, but also were being torn apart from within. Even if the majority was delivered from the delusion [of the Judaizers], the squabbles this teaching engendered threatened to destroy the fellowship altogether. The enemy would triumph if the churches split into warring factions, even if he never succeeded in snaring the believers in error.*

Gal 5:15 is a *warning* about *One of the oldest tricks* in the **Devil’s book** . . .

Gal 5:15

*15 But if you bite and devour **one another**, beware lest you be consumed by **one another**!*

. . . which is **exactly** what the **enemy** would **love to see** happen . . .

Does *True Freedom in Christ* allow us to *serve our Sin Nature* – **NO** !
because serving our *sin nature* is **NOT** Freedom – it’s **Bondage**

Does *True Freedom in Christ* allow us to *judge and devour one another* – **NO**!
because *judging & devouring* is **NOT** Freedom – It’s **Bondage**

True Freedom in Christ – Is simply allowing **Christ to Live in You** –

Gal 2:20

*20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live **by faith** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

Living BY FAITH in the Son of God means Two Things;

1) That you will **LOVE the Lord your God** with all your Heart – Soul - & Mind

2) That you will LOVE your Neighbor as yourself

In Christ we are **Truly Free** from the bondage of the Law -
& from the bondage of our sin nature

All we have to do – is **let Christ live in us** . . . Give Him Reign in our Lives

& When Jesus Christ **has Full Reign** in our Lives . . .

When it comes to Vertical things:

We will Love the Lord with all our Heart - Soul - & Mind

When it comes to Horizontal things:

We will Love our neighbor (& fellow church member) as ourselves

True Freedom In Christ is actually Crucifying Your **SELF** –

& letting **Christ live in you** to Love God - & Love one another

Let's Pray