

Sunday, May 3, 2026

Set Free to Be Free

Galatians 5

Freedom is not the absence of responsibility.
Freedom is the ability to live the life you were created for.

Section 1: The Pint o' Bacon

Imagine this: You're sitting at a table. Someone brings out a giant plate of bacon. Now, if you're Jewish and you follow kosher law... you don't eat that.

But if you're a Gentile?

You're free to eat it.

And that's the whole argument of Galatians.

Not: "Should Jews follow the law?"
They would. That was never the question.

The real question was:

Should Gentiles have to become Jewish to belong?

Teaching Point

Paul's answer is clear:

No.

And not only "no"...
but if they *do*, they actually **damage the gospel**.

Discussion

Ask:

- Why do you think people still try to add requirements to belonging in Christianity?
- What are modern “versions” of the Pint o’ Bacon debate?

Section 2: Set Free... From What? (Galatians 5:1)

Paul says:

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.”

That sounds obvious... but Paul is being very specific.

We’ve been set free from the belief that:

“I earn my place with God by what I do.”

Teaching Point

Even a Torah-observant Jew (like Paul) is saying:

“I don’t follow the law to be justified.”

That’s huge.

Freedom doesn’t mean:

“No structure”

“No obedience”

“No truth”

It means:

You are no longer trying to earn your identity.

Discussion

Ask:

- What do people today think “freedom” means?
- How is biblical freedom different from that?

Section 3: Warning to Gentiles (Galatians 5:2–12)

Now Paul shifts.

He says:

“I tell YOU...”

Now he’s talking directly to Gentiles.

And he says:

If you let yourselves be circumcised...
you are choosing to live under the whole system.

This is not about one rule.

This is about choosing a system of identity.

If Gentiles take on the law as their identity marker...

They lose their role in the story.

Because their role is to show: Everyone is invited.

Key Insight

If Gentiles become Jewish...

The visual picture of inclusion disappears.

Discussion

Ask:

- Why does Paul say this would “destroy the gospel”?
- What happens when the church loses its picture of inclusion?

Section 4: Freedom Is Not Selfish (Galatians 5:13–15)

Now Paul addresses the pushback he knows is coming.

“Okay Paul... if we’re free... won’t people just sin?”

Paul says:

“You were called to be free... but don’t use your freedom to indulge the flesh.”

Teaching Point

Freedom is not for self.

Freedom is for love.

Paul says:

The whole law is fulfilled in this:

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Discussion

Ask:

- Why do people think freedom leads to chaos?
- What does it look like to use freedom to serve others?

Section 5: Flesh vs. Spirit (Galatians 5:16–18)

Paul now gives us a framework.

He says there are two ways to live:

- According to the flesh
- According to the Spirit

Now here's where we need to be careful.

“Flesh” does not mean “your body is bad.”

It means:

Living according to your animal instincts.

Your self-centered desires.

You are more than your impulses.

Discussion

Ask:

- What does it look like to live by impulse?
- Why is it hard to live by the Spirit instead?

Section 6: The Test Case — Fruit (Galatians 5:19–23)

Paul answers the big question:

“How do I know if I’m doing this right?”

His answer:

Look at the fruit.

Acts of the Flesh

- Anger
- Jealousy
- Division
- Selfishness

Fruit of the Spirit

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Self-control

Teaching Point

You don't measure your life by rules.

You measure it by what your life produces.

Discussion

Ask:

- Which list looks more like the world we live in?
- Which fruit do you struggle with most?
- What kind of fruit is your life producing right now?

Section 7: What Freedom Looks Like (Galatians 6:1–10)

Paul now gets very practical. If someone falls into sin: Restore them gently. Carry each other's burdens. But also... Carry your own load.

Teaching Point

Healthy community looks like this:

- You take responsibility for your life
- You help others with theirs

Paul is saying:

Don't focus on controlling others.
Focus on your own walk.

Discussion

Ask:

- Why is it easier to focus on other people's issues than our own?
- What does it look like to restore someone gently?

Section 8: Sowing and Reaping

Paul says:

"You reap what you sow."

If you sow into selfish living...

You will reap destruction.

If you sow into the Spirit...

You will reap life.

Teaching Point

Your daily choices shape your future.

Discussion

Ask:

- What are you “sowing” into your life right now?
- What kind of person are your habits forming you into?

Section 9: Final Summary (Galatians 6:14–15)

Paul ends with this:

“Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything.”

What matters?

New creation.

Teaching Point

The gospel is not about:

- Religious labels
- Identity markers
- External performance

It’s about:

Transformation.

Discussion

Ask:

- What does it mean to be a “new creation”?
- What are modern “identity markers” people rely on instead of Jesus?

Big Takeaway

Paul's message across Galatians is this:

You are free.

But not free to live for yourself.

Free to:

- Love
- Serve
- Reflect God

Application

Ask:

- Are you using your freedom for yourself or for others?
- What is one area where you need to walk more by the Spirit?
- What fruit is your life producing right now?

Weekly Challenge

- Pick one fruit of the Spirit to focus on this week
- Do one act of service for someone else
- Pay attention to moments where you react out of impulse vs Spirit

Closing

You were not set free to figure life out on your own. You were set free... to become who God created you to be. So don't go back to slavery. Walk in the Spirit. Live in freedom. And let your life show the world what God is like.