

G R O W T H N O T E S
TODAY'S SCRIPTURE: Galatians 5:1

TODAY'S MESSAGE

“Freedom, Justice, and the Fourth of July”

Galatians 5:1: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

LT: So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.

Message: Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you.

The Passion Translation: "At last we have freedom, for Christ has set us free! We must

always cherish this truth and firmly refuse to go back into the bondage of our past."

"Let me be clear, the Anointed One has set us free—not partially, but completely and wonderfully free!"

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MESSAGE BACKGROUND

When it comes to the 4th of July—The freedom Christ gives is deeper than national independence. When it comes to Juneteenth—The freedom Christ gives is stronger than delayed emancipation. When it comes to spiritual—physical—financial—mental—psychological freedom—The freedom Christ gives is powerful enough to help God's people stand firm in dignity, faith, and holy purpose.

In the United States, the Fourth of July celebrates the nation's declaration of independence in 1776. It remembers a people

who said they would no longer live under the rule of a distant king. Fireworks fill the sky, flags wave in the wind, and american citizens who feel nationalistic and patriotic—celebrate the language of liberty. Yet for many African Americans—immigrants—foreigners—and global citizens—the Fourth of July has always carried a complicated truth—BECAUSE—when the nation declared freedom—millions of Black bodies remained enslaved. The promise was written before the promise was shared.

Then there's the newest Federal Holiday that many had recognized and celebrated for decades—Juneteenth, remembered on June 19, points us to another freedom story. On that day in 1865, word of emancipation reached Galveston, Texas, announcing to enslaved people there that they had been set free—AND—finally received news—they were indeed free.

T H E B I G I D E A?

Juneteenth reminds us that freedom can be declared in one place, delayed in another;

*Freedom can be signed into law—YET—
still not enforced in life*

For African Americans, Juneteenth was—
AND—is not merely a date on the calendar—
it’s a sacred testimony that God hears the cries
of the oppressed—moves through history—
AND—brings liberation in the Kairos moments
of God’s timing;

*This tension was powerfully named by
Frederick Douglass in his 1852 address,
commonly known as “What to the Slave Is the
Fourth of July?”* Speaking on July 5 in
Rochester, New York, Frederick Douglass

honored the courage and ideals of the nation's founders—BUT—he also exposed the painful contradiction between America's celebration of liberty and the continued bondage of enslaved African Americans. His central question pressed the conscience of the nation—How can a people rejoice in independence while millions are denied the very freedom being celebrated? Frederick Douglass argued that the Fourth of July, for the enslaved, was not a festival of freedom—BUT—a reminder of exclusion—justice for some—and not all—hypocrisy—AND—unfinished justice. Yet his speech was not only condemnation—it was a prophetic call for America to live up to the high principles it claimed—AND—for the church to reject any religion that blesses oppression while ignoring righteousness, justice—mercy, and truth.

Frederick Douglass helps us hear the difference between freedom announced—and

freedom applied. The Fourth of July declared a national ideal—BUT—Juneteenth reveals the long struggle for that ideal to reach those still waiting under the yoke of bondage—enslavement—and oppression.

In the same way, Galatians 5:1—reminds believers that Christ’s freedom must not remain a slogan—ceremony—or distant promise. Galatians 5 and 1—teaches—declares—and proclaims that Christ’s freedom must become a lived reality. Galatians 5 and 1 is an essential—critical—and absolutely necessary calling for every one of us to stand firm until liberty touches the soul—the spirit—the body—the community—the nation—the world—the church—AND—the structures that shape human life.

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What Can We Learn From “Freedom, Justice, and the Fourth of July”

1st—Anniversaries are never neutral; they reveal what a people choose to remember and what they’re tempted to forget.

2nd—Race has shadowed America’s freedom story from the beginning, because the nation’s language of liberty moved faster than its practice of equality—especially when it comes to America’s original sin of brutal, chattel enslavement.

3rd—Honest remembrance can become a moral and spiritual turning point—when it pushes a people beyond nostalgia and into responsibility.

***TAKEAWAY LESSONS FROM
GALATIANS 5:1***

- 1. “Before freedom is fully experienced—
freedom must be faithfully declared.”***
- 2. “Freedom Must Be Received!”***
- 3. “Freedom Must Be Defended!”***
- 4. “Freedom Must Be Lived for God’s
Purpose!”***