

Faith Fueled Fervency

5.13-26

Paul's understanding of freedom.

Theological - through Jesus a relationship with God is restored (love incarnate).

Human - personal and social transformation (love incarnate - When clothed in Christ there is no Jew or Gentile, Slave or free, male and female). God's family becomes a counter cultural reality.

We are no longer slaves to sin, but slaves to righteousness (Romans 6:15-23)

17-18 But thank God that, although you used to be slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching to which you were handed over, **18** and having been set free from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness.

Freedom = Wholeness

Galatians 1:4 who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.

We are incapable of embracing our need for freedom or even understanding it is something to be desired unless we understand the gospel. Is Jesus better, greater, enough, worth it, and compelling?

Set free from what?

To **serve** God, **follow** Jesus, and **live** by the Spirit. Learning to will what God wills.

vs. 13, you were called to be free, brothers and sisters

You are free to accomplish / participate in the mission of Jesus.

You will know and understand the mission of Jesus because you are being led by the Spirit.

If I don't have my list how will I know how to live and act?

Opportunity -> Paul is using military language / imagery. This word is used as the starting point or base of operations.

Flesh -> It is **not** simply the physical body. It is **not** a lower sinful nature. It is **not** the whole person.

- It is the influence of an era (a realm / system of time) and its human traditions and assumptions.
- It easily invades human thought establishing a command center close to the human will. It seeks to manipulate the powers of this age.
- It is the sum total of impulses, urges, and desire. All of which lead to self-promotion and self-gratification. The consequences are often at the expense of others, the harmony of community, and the accomplishment of God's will in our lives.
- It is the passions of the world which easily infect our thoughts, words, and deeds.
- This era and realm generates inner yearnings of the mind, soul, and body.

If we don't have rules and regulations what will keep us tethered?

Paul's answer -> The Spirit (**vs. 16**)

Yielding to the Spirit enables us to live righteously.

Serve one another through love.

Radically simple!

Love incarnate - putting the needs of others before our own. This type of living is opposite of self-centered, self-serving, and self-gratifying.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Galatians 4:19 My children, I am again suffering labor pains for you until Christ is formed in you.

This is communal which involves individuals.
Love incarnate is a community that serves!

vs. 14, God's standard for human behavior.
Love your neighbor as yourself. Put others in the center of your existence.

Romans 13:8-10 Do not owe anyone anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. **9** The commandments, **Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not covet;** and any other commandment, are summed up by this commandment: **Love your neighbor as yourself.** **10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law.

Matthew 5:17 "Don't think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Torah is not something to be done by Christians, it is to be fulfilled by Christians.

Those who walk in the Spirit fulfill the whole law in the everyday practice of love.

vs. 6, what matters is faith working through love.

vs. 15, It is a dog eat dog world.

vs. 16, Walk by the Spirit
You will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh.

Receiving the Spirit by believing what you heard (3:2-5)
God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts (4:6)

Where the Spirit is there is discernment!

Flesh

Fear / Pain = cowardice Anger / Envy = injustice Sexual urge = misplaced release

A faith that is maturing will grasp the adequacy of the Spirit as a safeguard against sin.

vs. 17-18, They are opposing but not equal forces.

Ephesians 4:20-24 But that is not how you came to know Christ, **21** assuming you heard about him and were taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, **22** to take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, **23** to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, **24** and to put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.

The Spirit is not a tool to be used in the fight against sin.
The Spirit is the commanding officer and we have been drafted to fight in the spiritual battle.
We are on the winning team.
We can't lose if we surrender to the leadership of the Spirit.

vs. 19-21, The works of the flesh
Absent of love.

vs. 22-23, The fruit of the Spirit
Love takes the lead.

vs. 24-26, You are no longer mastered by the flesh. It has been crucified!

Question: Who is in control of your life? You or the Spirit? Do you view the Spirit as cholesterol medicine or as a heart transplant? Have you given up because you are convinced the flesh is too strong? Does your life display the fruit of the Spirit?