

**Sermon Series: Galatians**  
**VGroup Sermon Study Guide for: Freedom, Galatians 2: 11-21**

April 28, 2024

**Helpful Tips**

1. Randomly assign the scripture readings to different people in the group. This gets them into God's Word.
2. Generate conversation through questions. Let the group know you will be randomly asking people questions if someone does not immediately respond. Make this lighthearted and read the room. Some people could get very uncomfortable, and others just need a kind nudge to start talking.
3. It is ok if you do not finish the lesson. If people are reading God's Word and conversing, then do not rush through the end. If conversation is getting off track, then bring them back in and go to the next step.
4. Watch the sermon before you prepare and look at any of the background notes provided for you.

**Scripture Passages:** Galatians 2: 11-21 (break these verses up among the group), Ephesians 2: 8-9 / Acts 13: 1 / Acts 10: 13-15 / Galatians 3: 8 / James 2: 10 / Romans 3: 10-12 / 2 Corinthians 5: 21/ Romans 5: 1 Titus 2: 11

As the leader, watch the sermon in addition to the reading the above scripture list.

**Starting the Conversation: (use the following questions to get people talking)**

Compare the United States freedom in 1776 to 2023. Any differences?

Have someone read Galatians 2: 11-21

**Central Point:**

Today in our passage of Scripture Paul pointed out the beauty of the Christian faith: *freedom*. Unfortunately, the people he was writing to were rejecting that freedom. In our text he mentioned it was like they were turning away from their freedom and putting themselves back in slavery. We still must safeguard from the same thing. And Paul showed in our text how to do that.

**Background:**

The background of our text was the church in Antioch. Antioch was in what is now Syria about 300 miles from Jerusalem. A Gentile church was established there and it was the place where followers of Jesus were first called Christians. Unfortunately, there were some Jewish Christians who still placed a lot of emphasis on the Mosaic law. They infiltrated the church and began teaching them they did not just need Jesus for salvation but they needed to perform what the Law prescribed as well. Then they would have salvation. Faith alone was not enough. You needed to also do your part to gain salvation. This was totally contrary to everything Paul taught. Paul clearly taught in

*Ephesians 2: 8-9, "For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast."*

**Discuss the snowflake analogy.**

We do not get a lot of snow around here, but you do not have far to drive if you want to see it. At least you see it every year on TV. But the fact is people are so used to seeing snow, but not many ever take a more in depth look at it. And because of that they don't know the beauty of snow. The same idea applies to the Christian faith. Most of us have grown up hearing about Jesus in some capacity. But because very few people take a closer look into Jesus they miss out on His beauty and what He offers and provides His followers.

1. **Protection – Have someone read Galatians 2: 11-14**

*Acts 13: 1, It says, "In the church that was at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius the Cyrenian, Manaen, a close friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul."*

Paul and Barnabas were leaders of the church in Antioch. Peter was visiting the church in Antioch. Antioch was the leading Gentile church at this time. It was like the Jerusalem for Gentiles, so it would have made sense that Peter would have dropped in for a visit. While Peter was there, he enjoyed the company of the Gentile Christians. Peter was living in freedom from the Mosaic law as he was eating with the Gentiles. They had food laws for the purpose of demonstrating how Jews were distinct in their living from Gentiles. It's a way to show that a person who belongs to God lives differently than someone who doesn't. For Christians, these food laws were deemed no longer necessary after a message Peter received from God in.

*Acts 10: 13-15, "a voice said to him, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat!' 'No, Lord!' Peter said. 'For I have never eaten anything common and ritually unclean!' Again, a second time, a voice said to him, 'What God has made clean, you must not call common.'*

There was no longer a distinction needed between Jewish and non-Jewish Christians with food laws. They were now part of the same family because of Christ.

*Galatians. 3: 28, "There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*

But that freedom was wrecked when Peter separated himself from the Gentile Christians. When certain men from James came, he quit eating with the Gentiles. He abandoned the Gentile Christians so he could score a few points the Jewish Christians from the Jewish church in Jerusalem. It is understandable on one level. The Jerusalem church was led by James. James was the half-brother of Jesus. Who wouldn't want to be on good terms with Jesus' brother? But the church in Jerusalem was made up mainly of Jewish converts. Many of them still adhered to Jewish customs, like circumcision and food laws. There was nothing wrong with those things but those things didn't make them right with God. Then why did Peter start acting like them? Why did he abandon his fellowship with the Gentile church? It appeared his desire was to please the big church from back home as opposed to the newer church. His actions were confusing other Christians. They thought they were made right with God because of Jesus. Now it seemed like they were being excluded because they were not Jewish. Peter was sending mixed messages. It even confused the seasoned Christian Barnabas. He quit eating with the Gentiles as well. The same thing still happens today.

Question to ask:

1. Do you see this similar behavior in the Church today? What? When? Where?
2. How would you respond to witnessing Peter change his behavior?
3. How would you respond today to a leader changing their behavior?

We are called to honor God in our living. But when we start making up certain rules outside of Jesus, then we are handcuffing ourselves and others.

Discuss the auto industry 1,400 microchips in your car story.

Questions to ask:

1. Are you protecting your car? Your phone? Your computer from data intrusion? What about protecting your faith? Are you protecting the truth?

Freedom must be protected! Because if it is not, there is always something out there that wants to eliminate it.

2. **Knowledge - Have someone read Galatians 2: 15-18**

You have heard people say things like “Knowledge empowers; knowledge is freedom.” The problem in our text was some people were not seeking knowledge. They were going with what they thought was right. They were going with what tradition had taught them.

Questions to ask:

1. What “church” traditions were you raised with?
2. What church traditions have a hold on you? Why?
3. Does your past influence your faith choices today? How? Why?

A lot of the Jewish Christians and Judaizers were saying that the Law was a major component in one’s salvation. Keep the law and you are good with God. Do not keep the law and you are not good with God. The issue was not the Law. The issue was and is that people cannot keep the law. That is why Jesus came. Most people think if they just do more good things than bad things that the scales of God’s justice are going to tip in their favor.

*James 2: 10, “For whoever keeps the entire law, yet fails in one point, is guilty of breaking it all.”*

*Romans. 3: 10-12, “There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away; all alike have become useless. There is no one who does what is good, not even one.”*

If you do not have this knowledge, you are going to waste a lot of time trying to do something that can’t be done. Notice in our verses Paul shared the knowledge of freedom. Those of Jewish descent believed they were in better shape than the Gentiles because they had the law of God and the Gentiles did not. Christ perfectly fulfilled the law. He came here to be a sin offering; to eliminate the debt of sin. He was able to do this because He lived a perfect life; He never sinned.

*2 Corinthians 5: 21, “He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

*Romans. 5: 1, “Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Questions to ask:

1. Why don’t Christians know this?

2. What have you done to inform other believers of this truth?

Discuss the Japanese soldier who thought that WWII was still going on.

That was the story of a man who was fighting a war that had already been finished. That was a man who was still fighting not knowing that he had the freedom to return home and live in peace.

Questions to ask:

1. Are you still fighting for Christians to know the truth?
2. Are you fighting for non-believers to know the truth? How?

3. **Appreciation – Have someone read Galatians 2: 19-21**

Some people find it difficult to be appreciative. I think one of the major reasons why is because we can't imagine someone selflessly doing something for us. We have a hard time accepting something being freely given to us. There's good reason for why we are jaded. It is because we've been jerked around too many times. So, when it comes to Christ going to the cross to be a sacrifice for our sin; to erase our debt, we are looking for the catch. And that approach simply leads to bondage. It leads to us not having freedom but living in doubt and fear.

This was why Paul was explaining exactly what happened with Christ's sacrifice and what happened to one who placed his faith in Christ paying our debt. We die to the enslavement of this world. When we believe in Christ, we transfer our debt to His account so that we are no longer on the hook for paying it.

In v. 20, Paul said it was no longer he who lived but it was now Christ living in him. Because Christ became the owner of his life, his past bills transferred over to the new owner, Jesus. And Jesus has the means to pay our debts.

Peter forgot this. He lost his appreciation for what Christ had done for him. Instead of appreciating Christ's work for him, he was looking to show his appreciation for the law. It was as though he (and the Judaizers) were trying to tell Jesus they were going to pay off some of the debt of sin on their own. That is incredibly wrong and arrogant.

Discuss the mask of the bank robber.

Paul was able to live in freedom and not in fear and doubt because he appreciated what Christ had done for him. He recognized and accepted that without Jesus he was doomed, he was helpless.

Now the question is, "Why would Jesus pay our debt? Why would He go to the cross and suffer and die for us?"

**Galatians 2: 20**, *"The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."*

**Titus 2: 14** backs this up. It says, *"He gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for Himself a people for His own possession, eager to do good works."*

Conclusion:

When you appreciate the work of Christ on your behalf, you recognize He is enough. You recognize He is all you need and when you are in Him, you are free. As people say they are seeking freedom what I often see is them enslaving themselves. People want freedom to do drugs, then they become addicted and will give up anything they have to get more. People want freedom to sleep with whomever they want, then they get enslaved by pornography or destroyed by disease.

People want freedom with God. But instead of submitting to Him, they submit themselves to rules and regulations and find they cannot keep them. And they become despondent and jaded towards God.

*True freedom requires protection.*

When you see anything encroaching on it, you combat it, you refute it.

*True freedom requires knowledge.*

Most people are not living in freedom because they do not know what it is or how to have it.

*True freedom requires appreciation.*

It is all on Jesus. He has done it all for us. Relax in that truth and be grateful.

And true gratefulness will be demonstrated in how you live.

You want knowledge? Read God's Word.

**Announcements:**

Baby Dedication – May 5

Village Open – May 13

Baptism – May 19

Graduation Recognition Sunday – May 26

Last Week Luau at Roy Lynch Park – May 29, Downtown Campus

WinShape Camp – June 3-7