

GALATIANS

Galatians 5:1-12 | "Our Liberty In Christ Jesus"

I. THE LIBERTY THAT IS OURS IN CHRIST JESUS (v. 1-15)

STANDING FAST IN LIBERTY (v. 1)

(1) Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,"

- A. "Stand fast" - Gr. Present Imperative Active - "Be standing firm! Stay put!"
- B. "liberty" - Gr. noun - "freedom"
- C. "hath made free" - Gr. verb - "liberated (from bondage); set at liberty; delivered"
 - 1. **NOTE:** We are so blessed to live in a country where we have been given so many liberties and freedoms, and we need to stand firm in those freedoms that we've inherited. YET..
 - 2. **KEY:** More important than our Civil Liberties, or our Democratic Freedoms, as Christians, is that continue to "Be standing firm in the liberty **wherewith Christ** hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage!"
 - a. **KEY:** Spiritual Freedom from the Law and sin is way more important than temporal Democratic Freedom! Both are important, but Spiritual Freedom is way more important!
- D. Cf. **John 8:31-36** - "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and **the truth shall make you free**. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin**. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. **If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.**"

"and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

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- A. "yoke" — a wooden bar placed over the neck of a pair of animals so they can pull together
1. **KEY:** If you try to pair yourself with the Law, you will be *ensnared in slavery*.
 - a. Cf. **Matthew 11:28-30** - Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
- B. Paul is using the same term that Peter used while addressing the First Church Council in Jerusalem.
1. Cf. **Acts 15:10-11** "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put **a yoke upon the neck** of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."
- C. Martin Luther: "Like oxen that toil in the yoke all day, and in the evening are turned out to graze along the dusty road, and at last are marked for slaughter when they no longer can draw the burden, so those who seek to be justified by the Law are "entangled with the yoke of bondage," and when they have grown old and broken-down in the service of the Law they have earned for their perpetual reward God's wrath and everlasting torment."¹

FALLING FROM GRACE (v. 2-4)

(2) Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

- A. Paul is NOT completely against circumcision.
1. Paul didn't want any barriers to reaching the Jewish people, so he had Timothy circumcised so that the Jews would listen Timothy, who had a Jewish mother (**Acts 16:3**).

¹ <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mlg/view.cgi?bk=47&ch=5>

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2. However, Paul did not have Titus circumcised because he was a Gentile and Paul didn't want to confuse the Gospel message of Grace.
- B. Paul was AGAINST someone being circumcised for the purpose of adhering to the Law and TRYING TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD BY OUTWARD RITUALS.
1. **KEY:** If you try to mix your faith with adherence to certain rituals of the Law, then your faith in Jesus Christ is voided.
- C. The issue of circumcision was huge in the Early Church because there were a lot of Jews in the Church. If Paul were writing this to the Church today, I think he would have talked about BAPTISM.
1. It's tragic how many people today think that they are okay with God because they were baptized as an infant.
 - a. **Illust.** - I was baptized as a baby, and I don't remember it. I would have to take my mom's word that I was baptized, so that now I'm saved. I hope she didn't lie to me... I'm glad that I'm not saved because of some ritual.
 - b. Some trust in rituals to be right with God:
 - 1) Confession; taking communion; devotional reading of their Bible; lighting candles; wear a rosary; etc...
 2. I love the Jewish people, and I have a heart for Israel and Jewish believers. However, there is a REAL DANGER TODAY for many in the Messianic Fellowships.
 - a. Because many are learning of the Jewish roots of our faith, they are starting to drift into the same doctrines as the Judaizers (i.e. circumcision; keeping the Feasts; interpreting the Scriptures through the lens of Judaism and the Mishnah; etc.).
 - b. **NOTE:** There is nothing wrong with Gentile Christians wanting to celebrate the Jewish Feasts and learn about

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the Feasts (i.e. Passover Seder; Feast of Trumpets; etc.). The problem is when people think that they HAVE TO and that if they do, they are MORE SPIRITUAL AND CLOSER TO GOD.

- c. **KEY:** Sadly, many Gentile Christians think they are discovering a new depth of spirituality and that if they can become Jewish in their thinking and practice, that then they will be more complete as a Christian. Not so!

(3) For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

- D. **NOTE:** You can't just try and keep one ritual. You have to keep them all!
 - 1. Cf. **Galatians 3:10** - Paul already quoted Deut. 27:26, where he said, "*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*"
- E. **KEY:** If you embrace the Law as your rule of walking with God, you must embrace the whole Law! And if you do, read verse 4...

(4) Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

"ye are fallen from grace."

- A. "*ye are fallen from*" - Gr. "*forfeited; fell out from; cast ashore*"
 - 1. If you are trying to be justified by the Law, you are *jumping out of the boat of Grace!*

EAGERLY WAITING IN CHRIST (v. 5-6)

(5) For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

- A. "*wait for*" - Gr. "*eagerly await; expectantly look for*"

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- B. "hope" - Gr. "expectation of what is certain; trust; confidence; confident expectation"
1. This is NOT an uncertain "I hope so, but I'm not sure."
 - a. Not "I hope the Dolphins win the Super Bowl."
 - b. Not "I hope the Padres have a good season."
- C. **Q** = How do we eagerly await for righteousness by faith with a confident expectation?... "through the Spirit"

(6) For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision;"

- A. "availeth" - Gr. "has power; can do; has force for"
1. In other words, the outward ritual has no spiritual *power* or *force* to *do* anything for your righteousness.
- B. **KEY:** Paul was NOT against circumcision. HE WAS AGAINST THE THEOLOGY OF THE LEGALISTS!
1. **NOTE:** External things (no matter how "spiritual" they seem to be) mean absolutely nothing in regard to true spirituality and do not please God.
 2. **KEY:** Any outward ritual or ceremony has no value if done AS A MEANS TO EARN SALVATION OR SPIRITUALITY. Outward rituals are of no value if it is done to earn favor with God.
 - a. You're BAPTISM means nothing if you're doing it to be right with God. It has no power to make you righteous.
 - b. You're taking of COMMUNION has no power to make you right with God.

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- c. You're going forward at an ALTER CALL has no power to make you saved. You're only saved if it is only an outward reflection of the faith in your heart!
- C. **KEY:** As a believer in Christ, NOTHING is needed for you to improve your standing before Christ!

"but faith which worketh by love."

- A. "faith" - Gr. "trust; believing"
- B. "worketh" - Gr. from root *energeó* - "energizes; brought about; performs"
 - 1. **NOTE:** Love is the CONTINUAL ACTIVITY of a living faith!
 - a. Salvation is by faith apart from works, but genuine faith has works such as supernatural love.
 - b. Cf. **Ephesians 2:8-10** - "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*"
 - 2. **KEY:** The one who lives by faith is internally motivated by love for Jesus and others!
 - a. **Illust.** - When you turn the light switch on, the power is released to your lamp or fan, but when the switch is off, the power is cut off... The light switch is like our faith. When our faith is activated, the power of God's love will work through us and be a light to the world!
- C. The issue is not external rituals, but internal faith in the heart.

THE PERVASIVE DANGER OF SPIRITUAL LEAVEN (v. 7-9)

(7) Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

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"Ye did run well;"

- A. (NKJV) - "You ran well..."
- B. (ESV) - "You were running well..."
 - 1. **Illust.** - Here at Orange Glen High School, I was part of the track team (of course, I didn't run. I did shot put and discus, though I did do the "fat man's" relay!). I would watch these runners run in their lanes, but sometimes the runners would collide and they would fall down and scrape their knees and get off track... It was always awesome to see them get back up and finish the race!
 - 2. **Illust.** - I remember one rainy Friday night at one of our football games my senior year, and my team was running out on the field to go through the big banner. The students and cheerleaders were lined up on either side of the muddy field and we were running through... SO EXCITED..., but then there was a sharp turn... and I ate it right in the mud and had to bounce back up! I guess it was just one of those early lessons on how to handle embarrassment! 🤦

"who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"

- A. "who" - Gr. noun singular; there was a certain man of the Judaizers that was hindering the Galatians from obeying the truth of the gospel of grace!

(8) This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.

- A. "persuasion" - Gr. "self-produced conviction"
 - 1. This *self-produced conviction* does not come from God!
- B. The Judaizers were bring in a doctrinal *persuasion* that was leading the Galatians into serious error. Paul is saying that *this persuasion* is not from God!

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1. There are a lot of people who have some weird interpretations of the Scriptures, but they do not get those positions by just reading the Bible.
 - a. There are many groups today (JWs, Mormons, etc.) that have aberrant theological positions, but they are positions that have been taught to them. They are not the positions that they have come to by just reading the Scriptures.
 - b. **NOTE:** That is why they are always promoting their books! Because they know that if you would just read the Scripture, you won't come to that persuasion!
2. **KEY:** I encourage you to READ THE BIBLE. I'm not afraid of what you will come to believe by reading the Bible.

(9) A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

- A. The doctrine of the Judaizers was infecting the churches in Galatia, and if it continues, even a little bit, it will infect the whole body.
 1. Cf. **Matthew 16:5-12** - "And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? **Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.**"

THE OFFENSE OF THE CROSS (v. 10-12)

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(10) I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

(11) And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

"And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?"

- A. It seems that the Judaizers were saying, "Paul thinks you should get circumcised," but Paul is saying, "Why am I going through all this suffering of persecution if I'm preaching circumcision?! It doesn't make sense!"

"then is the offence of the cross ceased."

- B. THE CROSS IS AN OFFENSE to people because it says that there is only one way to be saved. That offends people.
 - 1. Some say, "All roads lead to heaven." NO, THEY DON'T! Most roads lead to HELL.
 - a. Cf. [Matthew 7:13-14](#) - Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
 - b. Cf. [John 14:6](#) - Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 2. Cf. [1 Corinthians 1:18, 23-24](#) - Paul, in writing to the church at Corinth, said, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ... But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

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- C. THE CROSS IS AN OFFENSE to people because it says that all your religious systems in the world cannot save you, and that only through Jesus Christ can you be saved from your sins!
1. Religion will never get you to heaven. Only Jesus Christ can bring you unto the Father.
- D. THE CROSS IS AN OFFENSE because it tells you that God will not accept your works, no matter how good they are.
1. You can be good and still not make it into heaven!
 2. Actually, many good people go to hell, and many bad people go to heaven!
 - a. **KEY:** Many bad people get to go to heaven because they realize that they'll never make it apart from the grace of God and the work of Jesus Christ.
- E. However, if someone tries to be right with God based on keeping the Law or by any religious ritual like circumcision or baptism, the THE OFFENSE OF THE CROSS IS ABOLISHED, WHICH RESULTS IN THEM BEING LOST!
- F. **KEY:** LEGALISM DISARMS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CROSS! IT ABOLISHES IT'S POWER!
1. **NOTE:** Legalism cannot handle THE OFFENSE OF THE CROSS.
 2. **KEY:** The whole point of the cross is that you cannot save yourself! Someone must die in my place, otherwise I have no hope at all!
 - a. Cf. **Luke 22:41-42** - Jesus prayed, "*Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*"
 - 1) **KEY:** THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY TO BRING SALVATION, AND THAT'S WHY JESUS WENT TO THE CROSS!

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(12) I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

- A. "cut off" - Gr. "castrate themselves; emasculate themselves; mutilate themselves"
 - 1. THAT'S PRETTY ROUGH!!! 😬
 - a. I call that Paul's CUTTING SARCASM! 😂
- B. **NOTE:** Paul is sarcastically pointing out that since the Judaizers are so insistent that the Galatians get circumcised to please God, maybe they should just go to the extreme of religious devotion and *mutilate themselves*.
 - 1. Paul is basically saying, "Those that are troubling you and telling you to get circumcised, *I wish they would castrate themselves!* They want you to cut off a little foreskin, but I wish they'd cut their whole thing completely off!"
- C. **KEY:** Paul wanted these false teachers to be "cut off" from the Church so that they couldn't infect the Church anymore with their damnable doctrine!