

- Prayer
 - Let's pray.
 - Heavenly Father, your servant Paul pronounced harsh judgment on anyone who would seek to distort the Gospel of Your Son.
 - Such a person deserves to be accursed; indeed, they bring a curse upon themselves.
 - Yet, Lord, I don't want to preach a gospel contrary to Paul's.
 - Rather, I ask for your help to faithfully explain, defend, and apply this good news to North Center Church this morning.
 - Make my words faithful to the gospel, and make our hearts ready to sing and savor our freedom in Christ.
 - In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.
- Intro
 - Well, good morning North Center Church!
 - For those of you I haven't met yet, my name is Adam Physician.
 - My family and I have been attending here the last few months, and we have loved being a part of this church family.
 - We have felt very much welcomed and supported by you all.
 - I especially want to thank you for praying for us and providing us meals during Rachel's recent health issues.
 - It was not lost on us just how quickly you welcomed us in and treated us like family.
 - From all of us, we want to say, "thank you."
 - Now, onto today's message.
 - We're continuing our series on every book of the Bible.
 - This morning, we'll be getting an overview of Galatians from 30,000 feet.
 - So, if you haven't already, please turn your Bibles to the Book of Galatians. You can find it on page _____ in your pew Bibles.
 - To start, I want to ask you to think about what comes to mind when I say the word, "Freedom."
 - I would bet many of you think of the Fourth of July, fireworks, or an American flag.
 - Maybe you think of the Revolutionary War, the Civil Rights Movement, or some other fight for freedom in our nation's history.

- Maybe your family came to this country seeking freedom you couldn't find elsewhere.
 - Maybe you think of one of the many famous freedom slogans in our country:
 - "Let freedom ring!"
 - "Give me liberty or give me death!"
 - "Free at last, free at last! Thank God almighty, we're free at last!"
- Whatever comes to your mind, the list of things I just gave makes one thing very clear: our society is *obsessed* with freedom.
 - Whether people are fighting for the "right to bears arms" or the "right to an abortion," America is called the "Land of the Free" for a reason.
- Yet we talk about freedom so much because we're *worried* about it.
 - You might be concerned that you will lose freedoms you have, or maybe you feel like you currently aren't getting the freedom America promised you.
 - Either way, we talk about it so much because the freedom we already have *isn't enough*.
 - We're longing for a more perfect freedom, and we're worried we'll never get there.
- Now, what does all this have to do with the Book of Galatians?
 - For that, we're going to need to look at the message that Paul had for the Galatian church.
 - Let's turn there now to see what he has to say about how to be truly free.
- Context
 - Before we can do that, however, we have to ask and answer a few questions.
 - First, we need to know what the issue was in this church that Paul wanted to address.
 - The clearest place to see this is not in Galatians, however, but in the Book of Acts.
 - A few weeks ago, we looked at Acts, and a small part of that message was about chapter 15.
 - That chapter tells us about how all of these gentiles (that is, non-Jewish folk) were joining the church.
 - A group of Jewish believers was coming in and saying, "This is great and all, but something else needs to be done."

- In Acts 15:5, we read:
 - **But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses."**
- The Law of Moses, as mentioned here, was a key part of the life of Jews at this time.
 - And Christianity, after all, didn't spring up from nowhere; Jesus was Jewish, his followers were Jewish, their Scriptures were Jewish.
 - And the Law of Moses was given to the Jews, and they were expected to follow it.
- So the question was, now that non-Jewish people are following Jesus... do they need to keep the Law of Moses as well?
 - This group of Pharisees had one answer: of course!
- In the Book of Acts, we see how the church decided that Gentiles did *not* need to keep the Law of Moses.
 - The Book of Galatians, however, gives us the fullest explanation in the Bible of *why* they (and we) don't have to follow the Law.
 - More than this, in Galatians we're going to see the *danger* of insisting on following the Law.
- But before we get to this, we need to answer one more question: what does Paul mean when he says "the Law"?
 - When Paul uses the word *torah* (or its equivalent in Greek), he means something more comprehensive than a list of rules.
 - The "Law" was a way to refer to the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
 - We usually use the word Pentateuch in English to refer to these.
 - And it wasn't just the "rules" section of these books that Paul refers to, but the whole collection.
 - For instance, in Gal 4:21, Paul says,
 - **Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law?**
 - He then goes on to tell the story of Sarah and Hagar.
 - There are no rules in this section, just a story, but it's still "the Law of Moses."

- A New Testament scholar puts it well. He says:
 - "The question is not *which bits* of the law Paul is referring to in a given instance of [the word], but the law *as what*"(Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 29).
- In particular, Paul talks about the Law in Galatians *as the covenant* that God made with Israel at Mt Sinai.
 - So, when we hear Paul talk about "the Law," we can hear him saying, "the Mosaic covenant."
 - That is, the system of rules—with blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience—that God gave to the nation of Israel.
- The question the Book of Galatians asks is,
 - "Do Gentiles need to join this covenant—obey its rules, follow its requirements—in order to be saved?"
- Question
 - So now, let's turn to how Paul answers this question in the Book of Galatians.
 - Paul says that the "Circumcision Party" was dead wrong to require circumcision and other rules of the covenant for Gentiles. Why?
- The Argument
 - In order to understand Paul's answer to this question, we're going to do something a bit unique today: we're going to go through the argument of the whole letter.
 - To do this, we're going to look at six sections of the letter, each connected to the theme of the Gospel.
 - First, we'll look at chapter 1 verses 1-9. Here we'll see the false gospel.
 - Second, we'll look at the authority of the gospel in chapter 1 verse 10 through 2 verse 14.
 - Third, we'll see the content of the gospel in 2:15 through 2:21.
 - Fourth, we will read Paul's defense of the gospel in chapter 3 verse 1 until chapter 5 verse 12.
 - Fifth, Paul will show us life in the gospel from 5:13 to 6:10.
 - And finally, we'll see the false gospel revisited in 6:11 through 18.
 - The False Gospel: 1:1-9
 - So, turn to Galatians one, where we'll start with "the false gospel," verses 1-9.

- Here, Paul presents the problem of the letter: the Galatians have rejected Christ for a false gospel.
 - 1:6
 - Let's read 1:6:
 - **I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel...**
 - See, the Galatians have been hearing those Jewish Christians (often called "Judaizers") telling them that they need to follow the Law of Moses and, as it turns out, they're into it.
 - They thought, "Why not add some law-keeping to our Christianity?"
 - "We'll get circumcised, keep the Sabbath day, give sacrifices at the temple. Just to be safe!"
 - Paul, however, is shocked at this.
 - He sees their decision to reject the gospel that he gave them and says, "Well, that was quick!"
 - 1:7
 - Look at verse 7:
 - **not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.**
 - Paul makes clear: this "good news" they have accepted is not good at all.
 - He calls their decision to add the law not a "mere triviality," but a "different gospel"!
 - This isn't an "agree-to-disagree" situation.
 - This isn't a "debatable matter." Paul addresses such issues elsewhere, but this one is essential to the gospel.
 - Adding the Law to the Gospel takes good news and turns it into bad news.
 - 1:8
 - And what does Paul think of those who call this message "good news"?

- Look at verse 8:
 - **But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.**
 - Paul is no exception, nor are angels; *anyone* who preaches a different gospel is condemned.
 - This is no light disagreement; life and death are at stake.
- The Authority of the Gospel: 1:10-2:14
 - So, let's look at the next section: 1:10 through 2:14, "the authority of the gospel."
 - Here, Paul argues that the Galatians have no need to doubt the good-news-message that they received from him.
 - 1:11
 - Look at verse 11 in chapter 1:
 - **For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.**
 - He didn't get his message from people. He's not dependent on any human being for this message.
 - 1:12
 - Rather, look at verse 12:
 - **For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**
 - Here, he reminds them how dedicated he used to be to Judaism; he used to persecute the church before he was a Christian.
 - The only thing that took him off this path was Jesus miraculously appearing to him on the road to Damascus.
 - He didn't leave the traditions of his ancestors behind for any reason other than that God himself showed up.
 - And if this message came from God himself, the Galatians don't need to worry about who to believe.
 - It's not "Paul vs. the Judaizers"; it's "The Judaizers vs. God"!

- To further illustrate the point that Paul's message doesn't depend on people, Paul talks about the independence of his gospel.
 - He especially focuses on how his gospel doesn't depend on those he calls the "pillar" apostles (that is, Peter, James, etc.)
 - Let's read verses 15-17:
 - **But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.**
 - It seems that the Judaizers, whom he calls "agitators," have been undermining Paul's authority.
 - Somehow, they connected this to the fact that he is not one of the "pillars."
 - So, to remove any reason they might have for doubting his message, he makes clear that his message never depended on the other apostles; it comes straight from God.
 - Let's skip ahead to chapter 2 verse 7:
 - **On the contrary, when they [the Jerusalem apostles] saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised... [skip ahead to verse 9] and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.**
 - In other words, Paul says, "These apostles agreed with our message and blessed our ministry to the Gentiles."
 - Far from being in conflict with or under the authority of the "pillars," Paul is in agreement with them about the message he preaches.

- Then, let's look at verse 11:
 - **But when Cephas [that is, Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”**
 - Paul will even stand up to the other apostles if they contradict this message.
 - To refuse to eat with Gentiles suggested that they were not really part of God's people.
 - This contradicted not only Peter's former actions, but the gospel itself!
 - How did it contradict the gospel?
Now, we must turn to the next section.
- The Content of the Gospel: 2:15-21
 - In 2:15-21, we see the content of the gospel.
 - In this section, Paul positively describes this message: God justifies sinners through faith and not by works of the law.
 - Let's see verses 15 through 16:
 - **We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.**

- Refusing to eat with Gentiles contradicted the gospel because it communicated that faith in Jesus was not enough
 - They needed to add what the Jews had (that is, the "works of the law") to be saved.
- This is the distortion that the "agitators" added to the gospel: "You can be justified by works of the Law."
 - That is, by doing the things the law commands (circumcision, sabbath, sacrifices, etc.), you can be "declared righteous."
- The truth, however, as Paul puts it, is that people can only be declared righteous through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - Then, in verse 21, Paul gives us the bottom line:
 - **I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.**
 - Accepting the agitators' "gospel" nullifies God's grace.
 - If they're right, then Jesus died for nothing.
 - You can't add "works of the law" as an insurance policy.
 - It's not a "better safe than sorry" scenario; it's an either/or!
 - If you try to add law to grace, then you only get law, and Jesus's death means nothing for you.
- The Defense of the Gospel: 3:1-5:12
 - Then, in chapter 3 through chapter 5 verse 12, we get Paul's defense of the gospel.
 - Here, Paul defends his claim that God makes sinners righteous by faith alone.
 - He does this by appealing to *several different reasons* why they should not be convinced by the agitators.
 - First, he appeals to *their experience*.
 - Specifically, he talks about their experience of the Holy Spirit in their conversion.

- Look at chapter 3 verse 2:
 - **² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?**
- Paul considers the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church as proof of justification before God.
 - This is because God's messengers, the prophets, promised that God's Spirit would be the sign of the coming of a new and better covenant.
 - "When you see God's Spirit poured out on his people, then you know that the promises to Abraham are coming true."
 - And Paul draws on this promise to point out to the Galatians that this has already happened.
 - They experienced God's Spirit when they first came to Christ.
 - And they weren't circumcised then; they didn't follow the Law of Moses.
 - Essentially, he says to them, "If you didn't need the law in the beginning, why would you need it now?"
 - "Is what God has done for (and in) you so far not good enough?"
- But he does more than appeal to their own experience; he goes on to appeal to *the Law itself*.
 - That is, he goes to the Pentateuch.
 - Look at Galatians 3:6:
 - **... just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?**
 - **7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”**

- The agitators want to suggest that the Law is necessary to be a part of God's People.
- So, Paul goes to the Patriarch of those people: Abraham.
 - Paul quotes two places in Genesis to show that, even though Abraham was the father of the Jewish people, he was not justified by the Law, but by his faith.
- Let's look at Galatians 3:17-18:
 - **This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.**
- In other words, God made a covenant of promise to bless the whole world through Abraham, but that was well before the Law came.
 - Obedience to the Law can't be a requirement for the blessing because God promised it before there was even a law to obey!
 - It's not like God had one plan, scrapped it, and then decided to forgive people through faith.
 - Faith is not God's "Plan B"
 - It's not just that people are *now* saved by faith alone; they always have been.
- Bound up in this is the fact that, not only does God *not* save people through the Law; it *cannot* save.
 - Let's read starting at verse 10:
 - **For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather**

“The one who does them shall live by them.”

- Why can't the Law save? Because it brings a curse.
 - It works from a "principle of doing," rather than from trust.
 - He quotes Leviticus 18:5 here.
 - Whoever does the law (that is, keeps its commands), will live because he has done so.
 - The Law promises blessing to those who keep it, but a curse to those who don't.
 - It requires what sinful humans cannot give: perfect obedience.
 - It holds forth a (good) standard, but gives no power to live up to that standard.
 - So, whoever is "under" the Law is guaranteed to be cursed.
 - It's an ironic twist.
 - Hypothetically, the law could bring blessing; in reality, it brings the opposite.
- Following this, Paul goes on to appeal to the Galatians' *status in Christ*.
 - That is, he points to their status as God's "children" and takes the analogy to its conclusion.
 - Look at verse 25:
 - **But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.**
 - Paul describes the law as a "guardian."
 - It was like a babysitter or a schoolteacher.

- But now, in Christ, the age of being under a babysitter is done.
 - Now the Galatians are God's "heirs." The time has come for them to be the "man of the house."
- Let's look at chapter 4 verse 1:
 - **I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything,² but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.³ In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.**
 - Now that the Galatians are adults, they don't need to be under "managers" and "stewards."
 - Being under the Law again would be like a full-grown man putting himself under the authority of his parents' babysitter.
 - The sons are supposed to run the household, not go backwards!
- But that is exactly what the Galatians are doing.
 - They're going back to childhood; more than that, back to slavery!
- Lastly in this section, Paul appeals to *their self-interest*.
 - Look at chapter 5, verse 1:
 - **For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.² Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.³ I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.⁴ You are severed from**

Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.

- He urges them to think about themselves.
 - "Don't become slaves again!"
 - "You used to try to work for God's approval; don't go back there!"
 - But even if they're okay with being slaves, they need to see that there's no upside to doing so.
 - He says, "Doing this means Jesus' death and resurrection did nothing for you!" (2)
 - "If you go through with this (taking the final step of circumcision), you're on your own!" (3-4)
 - You will have to obey the whole law (which you can't do) (3)
 - AND, you will literally be on your own—cut off from Christ and from his people. (4)
 - This is why Paul is so concerned about them; accepting the law means rejecting *Christ*—and everything he died for.
- Life in the Gospel: 5:13-6:10
 - Alright, now in this next section—5:13-6:10—we see what life in the gospel looks like.
 - Paul gives us the alternative to being under the law: fulfilling the law of Christ.
 - This is what some might call the "ethical" section of the letter.
 - That is, Paul seems to move from trying to convince them not to follow the Law, to giving them generic moral instructions.
 - However, the so-called "ethical" section of Galatians is not an unrelated endnote; it connects to the argument of the whole letter.
 - The point here is to show the Galatians—who have been so concerned with keeping God's law—that the actual way to fulfill the Law comes through obeying *the gospel*, not the law code.
 - So, let's see how you *actually* fulfill the law.

- Look at verse 13:
 - **For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”**
 - Despite everything we said before about the Law, it is actually the *actions of Christians* that fulfill it.
 - Specifically, it's self-giving love of neighbor that fulfills the Law.
 - Now, this word "fulfill" needs a bit of explanation.
 - When we hear the word "fulfill" used about the Law, we tend to replace it with something like "do," "keep" or "obey."
 - But, importantly, doing, keeping, and obeying were common ways to refer to what Jews needed to do with the Law.
 - Paul, however, never uses these words for what Christians must do with the Law.
 - But he *does* use the word "fulfill."
 - This is a word that actually explains itself: it literally means to "fill up" something.
 - To fulfill the Law is to "make it full."
 - Another way to say this is that fulfilling the Law is bringing it to its intended destination.
 - Love summarizes the whole Law; it's what all of those rules and regulations were really getting at.
 - By *being* the sort of people the Law called for and *doing* the summary of the Law (love), we bring the Law to its intended climax.
 - Ironically, by looking to Christ to make us righteous, we become the sort of people who actually obey the Law in its truest sense.
- Now, this brings up a possible problem: isn't this just replacing the Law—with its "principle of doing"—with love?
 - Either way, doesn't this make it all about what we *do* and not about what Christ has done?
 - Not according to Paul!

- Look at 5:18
 - **But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**
 - The Spirit-led people are still not "under" the Law, even as they fill it up.
- Paul uses the analogy of a fruit tree to explain this tension.
 - Look at 5:22:
 - **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.**
 - Good fruit does not make a good apple tree; a good apple tree makes good fruit.
 - These characteristics that Paul lists are what the Spirit *produces*. It makes the sort of people who look like this.
 - Paul shows us what it looks like to live under the "law of Christ" so that we can test whether we really are the sort of trees we claim to be.
- So, when we look at the "ethical" section of Galatians, we see what sort of people the Gospel produces.
 - We are called to "keep in step" with the Spirit, and in this way, we fill up the Law of Christ.
- The False Gospel Revisited: 6:11-18
 - Okay, final section: in 6:11-18 we see the false gospel revisited.
 - Here, Paul makes one last appeal to the Galatians to reject the false gospel of the agitators.
 - Look at 6:12:
 - ¹² **It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.**
 - Paul questions the motives of the Judaizers.
 - They want to "make a good showing in the flesh." They wanna look good!
 - But Paul reminds the Galatians that the way of Jesus is the way of the cross, not a way to make a good impression.

- In verse 14, he says:
 - **But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**
 - These guys want to look good, and they want to use the Galatians to do so.
 - But none of that matters; Paul only wants to brag about Jesus, and he calls the Galatians to look to him and not to their own law-keeping.
- Takeaways
 - Alright, now we've got what Paul was saying to the Galatians; what about us?
 - How should we respond to this book?
 - To answer that, I have three takeaways for us from Galatians.
 - First, we need to think hard about how we relate to the Old Testament.
 - Have you ever wondered why we, as Christians, don't do everything that the Jews were commanded to do by Moses?
 - Why can we trim the corners of our beards, but they couldn't? Or wear mixed fabrics?
 - Of course, we have just answered this question by looking at Galatians.
 - But a question remains: how do we relate to all those rules now?
 - Do we ignore them? Look at them as outdated relics?
 - Do we need to just obey the really important ones?
 - "Don't murder, don't steal, don't cheat on your spouse."
 - But the "ceremonial laws," the ones about holidays and sacrifices and who gets to go in the temple...
 - Those, we can ignore now... Right?
 - Paul in Galatians doesn't talk about the Law that way.
 - It's not just certain parts of it that we're not under.
 - As New Covenant Christians, we are absolutely *not* under the Old Covenant.
 - Paul has just laid out just how dangerous it is for us to try to obey those laws as if they'll save us.
 - There are many good reasons to read your Old Testament, including the rules and commands, and think of how they relate to you now.

- The Law reveals God to us.
 - It points to Jesus, shows us our need for him, and makes us understand just what he did for us.
 - It shows us who God is and what he wants.
 - But we must be clear: we are not under it as a covenant.
 - We cannot be Old Testament Christians; we must not act like Jesus hasn't come, and we cannot try to add the Law to what he's done.
- And that leads to the second takeaway: we cannot substitute *anything* for faith.
 - Galatians shows us that it's not just that we shouldn't try to obey the Law to be justified; we can't *do* anything to be saved.
 - We can't justify ourselves through any kind of morality.
 - "Being a good person" isn't good enough.
 - If you try to replace the Law with morality, then you have the same problem: you'll need to be perfect.
 - That means we can't approach the Bible as a rulebook, or our faith as an ethical system.
 - North Center, don't let anyone try to convince you that your Christianity is about rules!
 - God hasn't given us a mountain to climb and a map for how to get to the top...
 - He climbed the mountain himself, and then he built a ski lift!
 - We just need to get on it and take a ride.
 - Look to Jesus for everything you need. Don't think for a second you can do it yourself.
- Third takeaway: We must fulfill the Law of Love.
 - Let's look at Galatians 6:10.
 - **So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.**
 - Through faith, by the grace of God, let's be a church that lives up to this calling.
 - May we be defined by our love for everyone and, particularly, our love of one another.
 - Yes, we are already God's children, but may we be a church that makes our Dad look great!

- Let's not coast! Living in light of God's grace does *not* mean living like everyone else!
 - We should want to be the sort of people who, when others look at us, and say about our Heavenly Father, "those apples didn't fall far from that tree"!
 - May we not contradict our savior who bought us; rather, let's fill up the law that pointed toward him and that he exemplified on our behalf.
- Conclusion
 - Now, to close, I want to bring us back to the idea of "freedom."
 - As I said before, we long for freedom.
 - And for most of our society, freedom means "being able to do whatever we want."
 - But not for the Christian.
 - True freedom is not like what we talk about so much in America.
 - It's not school choice, gun choice, pro choice, gender choice, neighborhood choice, any choice!
 - It not about choice at all.
 - Rather, true freedom comes not from choosing, but from *being chosen*.
 - The God of the universe, the Father of all, chose you, chose me, to be his sons and daughters!
 - Hear these words from Galatians 4:
 - **⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.**
 - Martin Luther wrote this about this passage:
 - "Especially in times of trials a Christian feels the power of sin, the infirmity of his flesh, the goading darts of the devil, the agues of death, the scowl and judgment of God. All these things cry out against us. The Law scolds us, sin screams at us, death thunders at us, the devil roars at us. In the midst of

the clamor the Spirit of Christ cries in our hearts: “Abba, Father.” And this little cry of the Spirit transcends the hullabaloo of the Law, sin, death, and the devil, and finds a hearing with God.”

- "Let the Law, sin, and the devil cry out against us until their outcry fills heaven and earth. The Spirit of God outcries them all. Our feeble groans, “Abba, Father,” will be heard of God sooner than the combined racket of hell, sin, and the Law.”
- True freedom comes not from making our own choices, but from security.
 - We are free to get off the hamster wheel of effort, of earning, of doing... And rest in the arms of our Dad in Heaven.
 - Slaves, servants, employees... they all have to work, run and earn.
 - Children get to live in the house—free of charge—be loved, and love in return.
- Let's end with a short poem, usually attributed to John Bunyan. It goes like this:
 - "Run, John, run!" The Law commands,
 - but gives us neither feet, nor hands.
 - But better news the gospel brings,
 - it bids us fly, and gives us wings."
- Let's pray.
 - Heavenly Father, give us the wings of the gospel.
 - Let us not work, run, strive, earn.
 - Let us rest in your grace, trusting you for all we need.
 - Go with us now, as we look to you for all that your holy character demands.
 - And with these wings, let us fly.
 - In the name of the Son Who Made Us Sons, we pray. Amen.