

Small Group Guide: Freedom in Christ

Based on Galatians 5:1-15

Sermon Summary

This week's message explored the difference between living under legalism (trying to earn God's favor through our own efforts) and living in the freedom of God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Paul warns the Galatians not to return to the bondage of trying to keep the law for salvation, but instead to stand fast in the liberty Christ has given us—a freedom meant not for self-indulgence, but for loving and serving others.

Key Scripture

Galatians 5:1 - "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage."

Galatians 5:13-14 - "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Discussion Questions

Understanding Grace vs. Legalism

1. **What is the difference between living by grace through faith and living under legalism?** How does the sermon help clarify this distinction?
2. **Why do you think human nature gravitates toward a "merit system" in religion?** What makes grace so difficult for some people to accept?
3. **Read Galatians 5:4.** What does it mean to "fall from grace"?

The Freedom Christ Offers

4. **What are some of the benefits of salvation in Christ mentioned in the sermon?** (Examples: mercy, forgiveness, Holy Spirit, peace with God, new

identity, etc.) Which of these resonates most with you personally?

5. **How would you explain "standing fast" in your faith to someone new to Christianity?** What does this look like practically in daily life?
6. **In what ways might Christians today add "requirements" to the gospel of grace?** Have you experienced this in your own faith journey?

Living Out Our Freedom

7. **Read Galatians 5:13.** How can we use our freedom in Christ to serve others rather than indulge our flesh? What's the difference?
8. **The sermon emphasized that our motivation should be gratitude, not obligation.** How does this change the way we approach Christian living, service, and obedience?
9. **Paul warns against "biting and devouring one another" in verse 15.** What does this look like in a church context? How can we guard against this in our own community?

Personal Reflection

10. **Are there areas in your life where you're trying to earn God's favor rather than resting in His grace?** What would it look like to surrender those areas to Christ?
11. **How does understanding that "only Jesus kept the law perfectly" free you from the pressure to perform?**

Key Takeaways

1. **Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.** We cannot add anything to what Jesus has already accomplished.

2. **Freedom in Christ is not license to sin, but liberty to love and serve others** without the burden of trying to earn righteousness.
3. **Living "in Christ" means abiding in Him daily**—depending on His Word and His Spirit, not our own efforts.
4. **Our Christian life should flow from gratitude, not obligation.** When we truly experience Christ's love, our lives will naturally change.
5. **Love for others is the evidence of genuine faith.** If we're not growing in love, we need to examine our relationship with Christ.

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice:

Reflect on Your Foundation

- Set aside 15-20 minutes this week to journal or pray through this question: "Am I trusting in Christ's righteousness or trying to build my own?"
- List any "rules" or "requirements" you've been placing on yourself that aren't biblical.

Practice Grace-Motivated Living

- Identify one area where you've been serving out of obligation rather than love. Ask God to transform your heart and motivation.
- Each morning this week, begin your day thanking Jesus for what He's done for you rather than asking Him to help you do more for Him.

Love Your Neighbor

- Choose one person this week to serve sacrificially without expecting anything in return.
- Reach out to someone in your church or community who may be struggling and offer practical help or encouragement.

Stand Fast in Freedom

- If you've been feeling weighed down by religious performance, confess this to God and a trusted friend. Ask for prayer to experience the freedom Christ offers.

- Memorize Galatians 5:1 this week as a reminder of your identity in Christ.

Memory Verse

Galatians 5:1 - "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage."

Closing Reflection

Question for the Week: "Do I truly trust in Christ alone, or am I trying to add my accomplishments to His finished work?"

Reminder: Sanctification is a daily walk. We're not instantly perfected, but as we grow in grace and abide in Christ, He changes us to be more like Him—not through rules and regulations, but through His love working in and through us.