

Title: Christian Liberty: It's All About Jesus

Text: Romans 15:1–6

Introduction

1. “A Journey of Selflessness”
2. “More about You Than Me”
3. “It’s All about Jesus”

Nate Bargatze - a comedian, talked about his upbringing in the 90’s

“My parents became Christian when I was born, and everyone is still Christian. But I got them when they were the most Christian. I had 80’s - 90’s Christian parents. That’s the most Christian you can get of the Christian. I think Jesus had more fun than I did.”

The Christian life is all about rules and regulations.

The Christian life is so restrictive.

The Christian life is no fun!

No, the Christian life is all about Jesus!

And we have the privilege as followers of Christ to think, act, and love like the Lord.

The Christian life isn’t about what one gives up, the Christian life is ALL ABOUT JESUS!

Main Idea: You Have The Christian Liberty to be Like Jesus !

How so?

Three powerful truths about your Christian Liberty...

1. Your Christian Liberty Empowers You to Bear the Burdens of Others (vs. 1-2)

Romans 15:1–2 ESV

¹ We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ² Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

Those of us in this congregation who fancy ourselves to be STRONG IN THE FAITH demonstrate their strength in a very strategic way. A way that is antithetical to the ways of the world.

Darwin, in his work, “The Origin of the Species” chapter 4 (1869) makes an argument for “The survival of the fittest.”

This means the strongest dominate over the weakest and it is through this process that the community gets stronger because the weak are eliminated.

But in Christ’s economy, it is the strongest that are “obligated” to not destroy the weak but to lift them up!

Isn't this what God does with us?

*Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong;
They are **weak**, but He is **strong**.*

Who are the weak? You and me!

In comparison to the omnipotent God of the universe, we are so profoundly weak and insignificant - even comparing an ant to us isn't a remote comparison.

But, remember what Paul says...

2 Corinthians 12:10 ESV

¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul's weakness showcased God's strength and thus Paul was "strong."

And, just like God, we are to bear up those in our church family who are weak.

We don't avoid the weak.

We don't become irritated and frustrated with the weak.

We don't shun the weak.

We don't judge the weak!

We lift them up!

And we don't just bear with the weak. Notice what the text says...

*"We who are strong have an **OBLIGATION** to bear with the **FAILINGS** of the weak, and not to please ourselves."*

What does this mean?

It means that Christians will fail. Especially weaker Christians. The job of the stronger Christian is to bear with and help the weaker Christian, not judge them and cast them out.

The only ones Christians are allowed and encouraged to cast out are the unrepentant - those determined to live in sin.

But for those who are weak and failing, the strong must have grace upon grace with them.

This is on Paul's To Do list for the Christian. Check out [Galatians 6:1-2](#)

Galatians 6:1-2 ESV

¹ Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

The mark of a true Christian is their willingness to get messy with other Christians who are struggling and help bear their burden, whatever that burden might be.

And I want you to notice one more important aspect of bearing someone's burden.

Romans 15:2 ESV

² Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

The NLT sheds some more light on this verse for us...

Romans 15:2 NLT

² We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord.

That weak brother or sister does something that is not helpful what should we do? According to Paul we should come alongside them and help them do right.

Can I help you on how you should do this?

Do this with gentleness, kindness, and grace. Help them know you are for them, not against them. Truth is hard and can be wielded in such a way that is harsh and abrasive. At the very least communicating truth can be perceived as cold and indifferent.

DON'T be like that! The truth must always be coupled with LOVE!

Ephesians 4:15 ESV

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

Our beautiful and glorious responsibility as a follower of Jesus is to build our fellow followers of Christ up in the Lord.

So, what are you free to do with the life that God has entrusted to you?

You are free to be like Jesus Christ by bearing the burdens of others.

Remember Jesus' mission?

Matthew 20:28 ESV

²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

You have a responsibility to others - The text explicitly states that those who are "strong" have an "obligation" to bear the weaknesses of those who are not. This isn't presented as an option, but as a duty. It reflects the scriptural emphasis on caring for the less fortunate, the marginalized, and those who are struggling.

You must live selflessly - The verse admonishes believers not to "please ourselves," advocating a selfless attitude. In a world that often promotes individualism and self-centeredness, this message serves as a counter-narrative that encourages us to consider the needs of others.

You must build up, not tear down - The ultimate aim, according to verse 2, is to "build him up." This implies a constructive, rather than destructive, form of interaction. It encourages us to engage in actions and speech that will have a positive impact on others, particularly those who are weaker in the faith.

When a woman is in labor, she's hurting. In this situation, no one ever really knows exactly how long the pain is going to last. The husband is there, holding her hand, wiping her forehead, and patting her back. That's all he can do. He's limited. Holding her hand doesn't change the pain. He's just there to comfort her.

God is birthing something in the life of every believer, and He wants believers to bear them up, while we go through the birthing process. Tony Evans, *Tony Evans' Book of Illustrations: Stories, Quotes, and Anecdotes from More than 30 Years of Preaching and Public Speaking* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009), 65.

Review - You Have The Christian Liberty to be Like Jesus!

- Your Christian Liberty Empowers You to Bear the Burdens of Others

2. Your Christian Liberty is Rooted in Christ's Example and Confirmed Through Scripture (vs. 3-4)

Romans 15:3-4 ESV

³ For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." ⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

What a profound statement - *"For Christ did not please himself.."*

Think about the implication of such a statement.

Jesus is the all-powerful God of the Universe.

Jesus is the creator of all that is.

Jesus is the Alpha and Omega.

Jesus is the great I AM!

And it is this Jesus that chose not to put himself first. This Jesus did not please himself, but instead, He was insulted - that's what reproach means. *"to harshly criticize."*

Paul is quoting [Psalm 69:9](#)

Psalm 69:9 ESV

⁹ For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

I mean, this is the life of Christ, isn't it?

Isaiah 53:1–5 ESV

¹ Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

This omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, creator God bore your burden. Bore your every reproach. Bore every insult. Bore your every sin so you could go free and enjoy a clear and pleasant relationship with God himself.

He was pleased to do the will of the Father regardless of the cost to him personally.

John 4:34 ESV

³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

John 5:30 ESV

³⁰ "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

John 8:29 ESV

²⁹ And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him."

This, by the way, is why Jesus was insulted. His association with the Father and His unbending desire to do the will of the Father made him odious to the religious because it consistently pointed out their hypocrisy.

Are you like Christ in this way? Unbendingly determined to do the will of the Father?

Christ's example is powerful. But that is not all we have. Look at verse 4...

Romans 15:4 ESV

⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

What does this mean? It means that we have the Holy Scriptures to guide us and help us navigate through this life. It is a map for our souls.

Specifically, Paul refers to the Old Testament in this verse.

It was written for our instruction -

It was written that we might be encouraged -

It was written that we might have hope.

What does all of this have to do with Christian Liberty?

Well, you have the Christian Liberty to follow Christ's example and the Scripture's instruction.

Think about this. Prior to your salvation, you were not free to do anything that would please God.

Isaiah 64:6 NLT

⁶ We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind.

The writer of Hebrews makes this clear.

Hebrews 11:6 ESV

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Prior to coming to saving faith in Christ we are marked solely on our sinfulness. In other words we not only sin, but at our core we are sinful. AKA The depravity of man.

But, when we cross the line of faith and become born again, we now are given the capacity or FREEDOM to do right. How do we know what right is? How can we understand what truly is pleasing to God? Exactly what verse 3-4 says...

Romans 15:3-4 ESV

³ For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." ⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Prior to salvation you were not free, but you are now free to follow Christ's example and to obey the instructions written to us in the Word of God.

And through these two avenues, we will stick with the Faith, and find hope - the hope that only the Scriptures contain.

Angsty - my anxiety friend shows up in my life every so often.

Well he dropped by for the weekend. Friday night he kept me awake for quite a while and I didn't care for this. I went into the living room to pray. Later that morning, I pulled out my prayer journal and began to pray [Psalm 145](#). A praise Psalm of David.

Did you know that God gave me that Psalm that was written a long time ago for my instruction and encouragement. And do you know what happened as I prayed through that Psalm, my friend Angsty decided to leave. The praise for my God quelled the anxiety in my heart and head.

Psalm 145:1-2 ESV

¹ I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. ² Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

Praying this Psalm gave me hope.

Before I was saved, this Psalm would never have given me hope and encouragement. But because I am a Christian, I have the Spirit of God dwelling within coupled with the beautiful Word of God, I can have FREEDOM.

You are free to have the Lordship of Christ in your life: Acknowledge Christ's lordship by actively seeking His guidance in all aspects of your life. This isn't a limitation but the true expression of Christian liberty—freely choosing to submit your will to His in daily decisions and actions.

You are free to use Scripture as your confirmation: Always return to the Bible as the confirming guide for your conduct. It serves not as a set of restrictions, but as an affirming source of freedom that validates your ability to act in Christ-like love and enduring hope.

Review - You Have The Christian Liberty to be Like Jesus!

- Your Christian Liberty Empowers You to Bear the Burdens of Others
- Your Christian Liberty is Rooted in Christ's Example and Confirmed Through Scripture

3. Your Christian Liberty Culminates in Harmonious Worship (vs. 5-6)

Romans 15:5–6 ESV

⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, the endurance and encouragement that Paul mentions in verse 4 is sourced in God Himself.

This is, by the way, why it is impossible to enjoy these qualities apart from God - because they are from God. Your endurance in the faith is only possible through God. This is true of authentic and sometimes unexplainable encouragement as well.

But notice what this God of endurance and encouragement does for His children?

Two things...

1. **Grants harmony with one another** - The NLT says *“May God...help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus.”* The world longs for such harmony. But this harmony is sourced in God alone, and only possible through Him. Why? Because it is only through Christ that genuine forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration is possible. And because these are available through God in order to have a right relationship with Him, so we can also have a right relationship with one another.

Psalm 133:1–3 ESV

¹ Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! ² It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! ³ It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

Romans 12:16 ESV

¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

This kind of beautiful harmony only comes from God. But notice what else results from a God saturated unity...

2. **Grants you the privilege of glorifying God together** - Unity means we have one voice. In other words we are singing the same tune. We share the same message and we have the Christian freedom to sing it together!

The MacArthur Study Bible Chapter 15

with one mind and one mouth. Our unity should be both real (one mind) and apparent (one mouth). But the consummate purpose of unity is not to please other believers but to glorify God.

The idea is a unity of heart that leads to an outward expression.

The Greek tense of the word “glorify” is present tense, meaning Paul wanted them to “keep on glorifying” God.

That’s what unity in Christ will result in - a continual praise that exalts God and makes Him famous.

Who are we to glorify? *“The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Why does Paul phrase it this way?

“This expression emphasizes the deity of Christ. Jesus is not an adopted son of God; He is of the same essential being and nature as God.” - John MacArthur Jr., ed., The MacArthur Study Bible, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1721.

2 Corinthians 1:3 ESV

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

Ephesians 1:3 ESV

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

1 Peter 1:3 ESV

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

These verses focus on how exercising our Christian liberty for the sake of unity leads us to a communal expression of worship that glorifies God, just as Christ's sacrifice unified us to God.

So, we, when we glorify God in unity and a singularity of message, we are used by God to bring Him more Glory and draw people to him.

Friends, there is nothing I can think of that is better than when God's people gather together for the purpose of bringing honor, glory and blessing to God.

You and I have the Christian liberty to worship God well together!

Again, before salvation, this was not possible. But because we are saved from eternal hell and are now children of the most high God, we can actually worship God in Spirit and in Truth!

John 4:24 ESV

²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

And isn't it beautiful to gather every Sunday and mingle our voices together singing the glorious message of the gospel and hearing a Word from God?

"Word and worship belong indissolubly to each other. All worship is an intelligent and loving response to the revelation of God, because it is the adoration of His name. Therefore, acceptable worship is impossible without preaching. For preaching is making known the name of the Lord, and worship is praising the name of the Lord made known." - John Stott

You have the Christian Liberty to Worship God. You couldn't do that before you were a Christian, but now you are free to do so here corporately!

"Corporate worship is a regular gracious reminder that it's not about you. You've been born into a life that is a celebration of another." - Paul David Tripp

"The New Testament does not envisage solitary religion; regular assembly for worship is everywhere in the epistles." - C.S. Lewis

Listen to the wise words of D.A. Carson...

"You cannot find excellent corporate worship until you stop trying to find excellent corporate worship and pursue God himself."

And this is the point, isn't it? Worship, harmonious worship is a byproduct of a strong and growing relationship with God. When you have this, you have beautiful Worship!

Some people complain about a church's worship service. They don't play the music I like. I'm not fed by the preacher's sermons. They are too shallow. I need something deeper. The people at that church are not friendly enough.

But when someone is truly pursuing God, these things don't matter as much because their biggest concern isn't their preferences, but God Himself!

Review - You Have The Christian Liberty to be Like Jesus!

- Your Christian Liberty Empowers You to Bear the Burdens of Others
- Your Christian Liberty is Rooted in Christ's Example and Confirmed Through Scripture
- Your Christian Liberty Culminates in Harmonious Worship

Conclusion

I started this sermon off with Nate Bargatze's comments about Christianity not being any fun. And I understand he is a comedian who was just going for a laugh.

but many people have this attitude...

- The Christian life is all about rules and regulations.
- The Christian life is so restrictive.
- The Christian life is no fun!

NO, this is not the focus of the Christian's life. It's not about rules or regulations so you can be pleasing to God.

Instead, it's about the fact that you have the Christian Liberty to be like Jesus!

The question is, Are You?

Connection Group Reflection Questions

1. Bearing Burdens (Point 1)

What are some practical ways you can use your freedom in Christ to "bear the burdens" of others in your life or community? Have you experienced someone bearing your burdens? Share those experiences.

2. Sacrificial Love (Point 1)

How does the concept of sacrificial love challenge or reshape your understanding of Christian liberty? Do you find it easy or difficult to set aside your own desires for the good of others, and why?

3. Scriptural Foundation (Point 2)

Can you think of other Scripture passages that have encouraged you to act selflessly or bear others' burdens? How do those verses inform your understanding of what it means to be Christ-like?

4. Christ's Example (Point 2)

How does understanding Christ's selflessness influence your daily choices and interactions with others? Are there areas of your life where you find it challenging to emulate Christ?

5. Unified Worship (Point 3)

What does "harmonious worship" look like in your experience? How does our unity—or lack of it—influence our corporate worship and our witness to the outside world?

6. Who are you praying for daily?

7. Who are you engaging with weekly?

8. Who are you sharing the gospel with monthly?