

Freed to Love

Unit Topic: Liberating Letters

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Lesson Text: Galatians 5:1-15

Background Scripture: Galatians 5

Gal 5:1-15 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (2) Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. (3) For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. (4) Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. (5) For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. (6) For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. (7) Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? (8) This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. (9) A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. (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. (12) I would they were even cut off which trouble you. (13) For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. (14) For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (15) But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed of one another.

Objective:

The student will learn that love is God's secret ingredient and He wants to infuse each of His children with this quality, as it has the power to transform hearts and minds.

Teaching Tools:

Word puzzles may be developed from the following site: www.puzzlemaker.com. Also, www.dtlk.com has several visual aids that may be beneficial, as well as www.kidssundayschool.com which provide other helps for teaching.

Bible Journaling may be an interesting way to involve older teens in self-expression of the lessons they are

taught. Visit www.lifeway.com/Articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps to find ways to use this valuable tool to learn and reinforce Scripture.

Movie Clips are a wonderful teaching tool to further explain or create topics of discussion for a variety of age groups; www.wingclips.com provides clips divided by movie title, category, scripture, or theme. Clips may be accessed on any electronic device.

Questions:

1. What are the side effects of trying to be saved by keeping the Law?
2. What unnecessary rules and regulations do Christians tend to impose on one another?
3. How do some Christians abuse their freedom in Christ?
4. In what ways are you hindered from loving others?
5. Why should you serve the family of God in love

The Lesson:

As I pen this week's lesson, I am reminded of a verse from one of my favorites by Donnie McClurkin *Stand!* He sings 'Stand and endure, stand and be sure, **BE NOT ENTANGLED IN THAT BONDAGE AGAIN!**'

Paul continues to stress to the Gentile Christians, as well as the Judiazers, that their method of achieving salvation was unachievable. Circumcision of the foreskin was not even necessary to ensure salvation, a gift that God bestows on all who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.

He first admonishes them to avoid entanglement with the yoke of bondage. Thayer's Greek Dictionary offers the following definition for 'yoke':

of *troublesome laws imposed on one*, especially of the Mosaic law, hence the name is so transferred to the commands of Christ as to contrast them with the commands of the Pharisees which were a veritable

‘yoke’; yet even Christ’s commands must be submitted to, though easier to be kept.

Another word for yoke is slavery. The Mosaic Law was imposed on the Israelites to indicate the depravity of man. It is certainly reflective of how low the state of man is without Christ. If we look into the Law, we’ll see nothing but condemnation. No human being is able to conduct himself according to such a rigid set of standards, rules, and regulations. The only Man who could satisfy the demands of the law is Christ, which He did on the Cross. The law is complete or fulfilled in Him; hence, we look to Him for freedom from having to *remember* and *follow* those rules. Instead, we can follow the **Leader** and He will lead us to all truth, for He is Truth.

Paul taught that any effort to return to that yoke of bondage was profitless. Ultimately, why would anyone waste any bit of energy in a project that would prove fruitless in the end? Surely at the end of toil, one would expect a payoff, large or small. However, any attempt to secure righteousness on one’s own merit is pointless, without value. We can be good, but without Christ, we’ll never be good (righteous) enough.

In this lesson, the 4th verse (Amplified Version) is where the rubber meets the road – “*If you seek to be justified and declared righteous and to be given a right standing with God through the Law, you are brought to nothing and separated (severed) from Christ. You have fallen away from grace—from God’s gracious favor and unmerited blessing.*” If one were to submit to circumcision, he would be obligated to obey the entire Law, which was impossible and results in the loss of grace. Grace is God withholding what we rightfully deserve as a result of our disobedience (sin). I love Thayer’s definition:

good will, loving-kindness, favour

2a) of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues.

Grace is all on God and He chose to extend it to every believer based on Christ’ finished work on the Cross. Since, God is in control, we have to come to Him, His way (John 14:6) or no way at all!

The Church in Galatia, comprised of Jews and Gentiles, knew the truth, had been taught the truth; however, there were some teacher wanna-be’s who continued to teach against the Truth and maintain chaos/disarray by adding little measures they felt everyone should adhere to in order to be saved. Either Christ completed the job or He

didn’t. One thing’s sure, He never would have uttered “It is finished,” if there was work, yet to be done. Christ is complete and perfect in every way and only He could utter ‘finished!’

Paul was quick to call out the false prophets of his day. We must continue to expose them for the charlatans they are, going around using divisive techniques to pull the wool over the eyes of God’s people. These jackleg preachers give Christianity a bad name and their shenanigans need to be quickly halted. Some are still looking for signs and wonders, but we must be careful, as Christ teaches in Matthew 24 and 25. We have to know the Word of God and when teaching is not comparable to what thus says the Lord, we need to avoid it at all costs. The truth of the matter is that every man that stands behind the Sacred Desk is **not** sent from God. The laity must know the Word so they will be able to spiritually discern what they hear and believe in their hearts. We have to be more discriminating when it comes to the Word of God and those who promulgate it.

Paul reminds us that a little leaven, leaven’s the entire lump. A **crop of unfruitfulness** can grow from one small seed. Weeds easily get out of hand and choke out the good seed, as we see in the Parable of the Soil, Seed, and Sower-Matthew 13; hence, the necessity of constant surveillance. We must protect our hearts and minds, avoiding that which does not align itself with Scripture. Jesus said not to add to, nor take away, any of the words written in the Bible. All are good too thoroughly equip the man of God for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Paul maintained confidence in God that He would turn things around, making it plain to the believers. Those false teachers would be severely punished. Teaching is still a major deal. James 3:1 says “*My brethren, be not many masters, know that we shall receive the greater condemnation.*” Teaching is an admirable calling; however, those electing to respond, must fully understand the gravity of the occupation. People’s lives are, literally, in our hands and we well be held doubly accountable for how we teach **and live!**

Ultimately, Paul stated that if he were preaching circumcision, why was he being persecuted? His life was constantly in danger. His persecution was due to his going against the grain; he knew and preached the truth, according to the Word of Jesus Christ.

Paul wanted the false prophets circumcised from the body. They were tearing things up and wreaking havoc on innocent lives of those simply wanting to do the Master’s Will.

Again, Paul reiterates what he’s already been teaching. Nothing evil comes from God. He will not ever trip us

up. We can fully rely and be confident in His Word.

As this text comes to a close, Paul warns us to avoid using our freedom as an opportunity to impose selfishness. The basis of all relationships in the church is love (1 Corinthians 13). Scripture reminds us in several instances to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. I should treat you with the same love and respect I would treat myself. I won't lie to or steal from me; therefore, I should not do the same with others. My Mom used to always teach us to treat others how we wanted to be treated. There is no greater way to exhibit the love of Christ.

Man has a dual nature; one is wild and unreasonable. It is controlled by selfish attitudes and childish behavior; it always wants what it wants, when it wants it, and will clown when it doesn't receive what it believes is due it. It is sinful, proud, arrogant, and convinced that not even God can control it. It is rude, irreverent, unrepentant, unyielding, perverse, and insolent.

Our new nature is prevalent when we have been regenerated (a word coined by Pastor Throver) by the Spirit of God. Paul says *there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*-Romans 8:1. Once we come into the marvelous light, we should no longer live in darkness. Our new nature in Christ is submissive, humble; it yields, acquiesces, is amenable, Spirit-controlled, and **loves without limits**.

We are in a constant internal battle with our two natures; however, if we walk in the Spirit, we will not succumb to the demands/desires of the flesh.

Finally, Paul says that love will help to resolve issues and help the church to keep from devouring one another with partisan strife. Partisan means a strong supporter of a party, cause, or person. The Church at Galatia was in a battle for legalism and freedom in Christ. You can imagine that each sect felt themselves correct; however, any train of thought that deviated from Christ' finished work on the Cross is dead wrong. Faith in Christ will make one whole, period. Churches continue to disagree; however, they should stand behind the truth. Failure to quickly resolve issues result in churches being torn apart. Love is the key. I do not pose to imply that love is easy; it is NOT! Believer's must submit to God and He will place His love in them. During disputes, somebody will quickly realize the ineffectiveness of fighting and acquiesce to the opposing side; righteousness will prevail. We cannot afford the infighting and name calling that has happened at many churches in dispute. We should never resort to bringing weapons to resolve issues among the saints.

Christ calls us to freedom; let us walk in freedom. The

enemy is always going to do whatever he can, using whomever permits him, to get our dandruff up or cause us to second guess what we've been taught from the Word of God; however, Jesus taught that man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. As we position ourselves and pray without ceasing, God will strengthen our resolve and grant us grace for each day.

Our adversary hates us; however, greater is He in us, than he in the world.

Let us rely on Christ, who freed us to love!

Be Salt! Be Light! Be Blessed!