

Freedom In Christ – Teaching Notes

(Galatians 5:1-17; 2/19/17)

Introduction: A key idea in today's Sunday School material is that believers should use their freedom to obey God's will, not be used by the things of this world. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to use our freedom to obey God, not follow after the things of this world.

Body:

Read Galatians 5:1

I. Charter of Freedom. Paul notes that Christ set us free, so that we can have freedom. He urges his readers to stand firm. The readers are not to be burdened by a yoke of slavery.

Applications –

- **Forward progress.** Notice in vs. 1 that Christ died for His people to go forward, not backwards. As we look over our lives, we should see how we are being more loving towards God, others, and ourselves. The chief commandments are to love God with all that we have and to love others, as we love ourselves (see Mk. 12:29-31). It is not of God for us to be at the same level of maturity five years after joining the church. It is surely not of God for us to be less mature after five years of being in church. A failure to study, serve, and give is a sign of immaturity. *Let's work on forward progress in Christ.*

Read Galatians 5:2-6

II. Threat to Freedom. Paul speaks with great energy about circumcision. He reminds the readers that if they give into circumcision then they will have to live by the entire law. Faith expressing itself in love is the only thing that really counts.

Applications –

- **Saved by Jesus only.** Notice in vss. 2-3 that it is an "either/or" situation with circumcision and Christ. You cannot have both as your means of salvation. First, if circumcision and the law could save then Jesus did not have to come and die for us. Jesus came because of humanity's inability to be right with God in any other way. Second, to meet the requirement of circumcision in order to be saved opens the door to living by the entire law. It is similar to a person who says they want to be governed by Robert's rules of order. The person may want to be able to simply make a motion, but the Robert's rules of order is about an 800 page book. *Let's make sure that are salvation is based 100% on Jesus.* The most religious person and most wicked person both need a salvation that is based 100% on Jesus. Nothing else can save us.

- **Faith that moves us to love.** Notice in vs. 6 that those who have faith in Christ should express it through loving others. The person who says that they have accepted Jesus as their savior by faith but have no love for people is not telling the truth. A fruit of being saved is loving people, especially fellow believers. *Let's make sure that our faith in Christ is demonstrated through our loving people.* That is why our churches should be so busy trying to help both their members and the less fortunate in their communities.

Read Galatians 5:7-12

III. Commitment to Freedom. Paul talks about how agitators are causing confusion. His readers were doing well before the agitators did their dirt. He talks about how he wished that agitators emasculate themselves.

Applications –

- **Church agitators.** Notice in vss. 8-12 that agitators were causing trouble. First, there are still agitators in our churches today. These are people who have a form of godliness, but their impact is that of wickedness. Whenever you are more concerned with your way than God's way, you are on the wrong road going the road way. Second, don't let the agitators influence you. There are too many people in our churches who put relational influence above obeying biblical principles (see Jn. 12:42-43.). Third, it is so dangerous to be a part of confusing or misleading God's people (see Mk. 9:42). That is why James 3:1 teaches us to be careful about being teachers. Fourth, mature churches ought to have systems and discipline in place to restrict the trouble that agitators are allowed to cause. *Let's avoid being influenced by agitators.*

Read Galatians 5:13-17

IV. Responsibility of Freedom. Paul talks about how the believers' freedom is not to be used for the flesh. The freedom is so the believers can serve one another. The flesh and Spirit are in constant conflict with one another.

Applications –

- **Free to love.** Notice in vss. 13-14 that the freedom provided by Christ is freedom from sin, so we can be free to love and serve. As noted above, we are supposed to love one another. Love responds to needs. It should not be so difficult to get saved people to be courteous, to give some time and resources to helping the less fortunate, and to be involved in evangelism. Even if you are not a stand on the corner or knock on the door type of evangelism worker, you can still work on inviting and bringing people with you to worship and growth groups, so we can grow together. Whatever else we lovingly help people obtain, if they are not saved, they are still doomed. *Let's use our freedom from sin to love one another.*

- **Walking in the Spirit.** Notice in vss. 15-17 that we have the Spirit of God and our own flesh warring within us. We are to walk in the Spirit, not in the flesh. The best way to know where the Spirit wants you to walk is to prayerfully study and strive to obey the Bible with the support of other disciples. We know that whenever we are biting and/or trying to devour one another, we are in the flesh, not in the Spirit. We are not free to do whatever we want to do. *Let's work on walking in the Spirit, not in our flesh.*

Conclusion: Let's work on using our freedom to obey God, not follow after the things of this world. God has much for those who obey His will.