

June 1, 2008



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas



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CHRISTIAN FREEDOM

GAL 5:1-15

Thoughts From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Over and over in Galatians, Paul points out the crazy, illogical thinking involved in trying to add a doctrine of works to the perfect New Covenant of grace. Today's lesson hits on an area where the Judaizers came the closest to making a rational point. Without all our rules to live by, don't these new Christians have license to live like the devil? Christian freedom in action isn't unruly or self-centered. Rather, it resembles the church in Acts 2, a group of people known by their selfless giving, unity, and community. Such a community still lives by a code, a better code written on the heart rather than on scrolls of parchment. It's the love code. Today's lesson shows us how and why. Freedom is a word almost universally treasured. We desire freedom, not only for the society where we live, but also for our personal lives. To many, freedom is not a concept readily associated with the church and the Christian life. Often unbelievers see freedom as incompatible with any kind of Christian experience. They view Christian faith as a kind of "ball and chain" that limits one's freedom, or as a "crutch" that one uses only in time of great need. However, we have seen quite clearly in our studies this quarter that Paul regards the Christian life as a life of wonderful *freedom*, from sin, from law-keeping as a way of salvation, and from death. Paul has spent a major portion of his letter to the Galatians trying to help the Galatians understand their freedom in Christ and avoid returning to the slavery of the law. With today's lesson we come to another series of issues relating to Christian freedom: What does our freedom in Christ allow us to do? How do we best exercise this freedom? Many countries in our world have desired freedom for a long time. Often they have failed to learn from the examples of other countries that gained freedom, yet didn't quite know what to do with it. These countries were not prepared for what living in freedom is like. They did not anticipate the adjustments in thinking and acting that accompany possessing freedom. The same thing can happen to Christians. Never forget that freedom in Christ carries with it certain responsibilities. Even though a Christian living in the age of grace does not look to the law for salvation, this does not mean that a person is under no authority at all. He or she has changed masters, is now under the authority of Jesus, and seeks to please him. Love for God and love for others is meant to be the natural (or perhaps more accurately, *supernatural*) outgrowth of being saved and possessing the Holy Spirit. One commentator has observed that in Christ we are not free to sin, but we have become free to not sin. Our study last week concluded with Paul's statement of our special status in Christ. We are no longer servants, but sons and heirs (Galatians 4:7). In the remaining verses of chapter 4, Paul addresses some personal issues concerning his relationship with the Galatians. His words deal with how warmly they accepted him when he came and worked among them. Paul also includes some allusions to a physical problem, possibly involving his eyes, with which he apparently struggled (verses 13-15). Paul expresses his fervent love for the Galatians (he calls them "my dear children" in verse 19) and his concern for their spiritual welfare. Later in the chapter, Paul uses an allegory concerning Hagar and Sarah to reinforce his teaching concerning the superiority of the New Covenant. With chapter 5, Paul moves from the theological to the practical (as he usually does in his letters to churches). This section includes several personal exhortations to the Galatians to remain faithful to Christ.

God's Project: Effective Christians Who have been Set Free Studies in Galatians

Date	Lesson	Text
4/27	No Other Gospel	1:1-12
5/04	Salvation by Faith	2:15-3:5
5/11	Mother's Day Special	
5/18	Purpose of the Law	3:19-4:7
5/25	Purpose of Law Pt 2	3:19-4:7
6/01	Christian Freedom	5:1-15
6/08	Walking in the Spirit	5:22-6:10

VBS 2008

Outrigger Island

Living God's
Unspeakable Truth

June 16th thru June 20th
6:pm—8:30pm

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

MAINTAINING FREEDOM (GAL 5:1-6)

By standing firm (vs 1)

Standing firm and giving myself fully to the work of the Lord (1 Cor 15:58)

Standing firm in the faith (1 Cor 16:13)

Standing firm using the full armor of God (Eph 6:13-18)

Standing firm by contending for the faith of the gospel (Phil 1:27)

Standing firm in faith because of having a great high priest in Jesus (Heb 4:14)

By choosing grace over law (vs 2-4)

Grace over law because God's promises come by grace (Rom 4:16)

Grace over law because grace reigns over the law (Rom 5:20-21)

Grace over law because I am under grace not the law (Rom 6:13-18)

Grace over law because God has chosen His remnant by grace (Rom 11:5-6)

Grace over law because God makes grace abound in me (2 Cor 9:8)

Grace over law because God's grace is sufficient in all things (2 Cor 12:9)

Grace over law because I am saved by grace (Eph 2:8-9)

By expressing faith through love (vs 5-6)

Faith through love because without love there is nothing (1 Cor 13:1-3)

Faith through love because of hope (Col 1:3-5)

Faith through love because godly labor is always accomplished through love (1 Thess 1:3)

Faith through love because it is a command (1 Tim 1:5)

Faith through love because God commands me to pursue this (1 Tim 6:11)

Faith through love because God knows my deeds (Rev 2:19)

FREEDOM THREATENED BY FALSE TEACHERS (GAL 5:7-12)

Through hindering believers (vs 7-8)

Hindering through a different gospel (Gal 1:6-7)

Hindrances that should be thrown off (Heb 12:1)

Hindrances through hypocritical teachers (Matt 23:13-15)

Hindrances through rebellious deceivers (Titus 1:10-11)

Hindering by not acknowledging that Jesus is God in the flesh (2 John 7-11)

Through exerting great influence (vs 9)

Influence through peer pressure (Ex 32:21-24)

Influence through false prophets that come as wolf in sheep's clothing (Matt 7:15)

Influence to turn away from the faith (Matt 24:10-13)

Influence through introducing destructive heresies (2 Peter 2:1-2)

Influence through performing signs and wonders (Matt 24:24)

Through confusing the Church (vs 10-12)

Confusion through perverting the gospel (Gal 1:7-9)

Confusion through alienation (Gal 4:17-18)

Confusion through disputes (1 Cor 6:3-7)

Confusion through false doctrines (1 Tim 6:3-5)

Confusion through arguments over useless issues (Titus 3:9-11)

DEMONSTRATING FREEDOM (GAL 5:13-15)

By serving one another (vs 13)

Serve by bearing with the failings of others (Rom 15:1-2)

Serve by sharing and protecting others (1 John 3:16-18)

Serve as serving God (Eph 6:7)

Serve by using the gifts God has provided (1 Peter 4:10)

By fulfilling the law (vs 14)

Fulfill by loving others (Rom 13:8)

Love is the fulfillment of the law (Rom 13:10)

Fulfill by being obedient to God (John 14:15)

By avoiding destructive behavior (vs 15)

Avoid all evil (1 Thess 5:22)

Avoid wickedness (Prov 4:14-15)

Avoid evil desires (1 Peter 1:14-16)

Avoid godless chatter (2 Tim 2:16)

Avoid sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:18)

Avoid idolatry (1 Cor 10:14)

Avoid Satan (James 4:7)