

May 22, 2022



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Lesson Leaders:

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Class Leaders:

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

Love isn't self-serving or manipulative, but compassionate and self-giving. Love is not a fear-driven need for control but a joyful commitment to each other's well-being

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Loving God, help me to learn the difference between real and counterfeit love and to share Christ's love with those around me

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law

(Rom 13:10 NKJV)

From "Our Daily Bread", June 20, 2022)

Series: God Frees and Redeems

UNIT 3: Liberating Letters

NEXT WEEK

NO CLASS

Freedom, Love, and Faith **Galatians 5:1-15**

Lesson Background and Introduction

Today's Scripture text marks a transition in Paul's teaching to the Galatian Christians. To this point, Paul defended the nature of his ministry (Galatians 1:9-11) and offered a new understanding on the nature of the law (3:21-22), especially for God's children (3:26-29). Among the Galatians were individuals who required Gentile believers' adherence to Jewish religious customs and practices. Paul called out these Judaizers for compelling "Gentiles to follow Jewish customs" (Galatians 2:14). What resulted among the Galatians was a tension between the works of the law and expressions of faith (Galatians 3:1-14). Judaizers emphasized faithfulness to the old covenant, the Law of Moses, for salvation. They taught that Gentiles should show faithfulness to the works of the law to find salvation (1:6; see Acts 15:1-5). The most visible way such faithfulness could be shown was by the act of circumcision (see Genesis 17:7-14). While believers might be free from the demands of the law, Paul taught the Galatians that such freedom requires active love for others. Showing this love is the litmus test for a believer's love for God. Self-examination regarding love is prudent for followers of Jesus. Does anything prevent or distract from our expression of love to God and others? Might our own definition of freedom stand in the way of love?

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Freedom in Christ - Paul challenged the Galatian church to continue to walk in their liberty in Christ. He called this group of believers to minister to the unbelievers with humility and compassion. God offers this freedom as a gift to His children. Unbelievers may say, "I'm free to do anything I want/" but that is not genuine freedom, only more bondage to sin. Paul encouraged the Galatian church to keep sharing their newfound faith. Do not go back to trying to follow rules and regulations. This kind of living leads to anger and frustration. And most of all, don't attempt to put this burden of keeping the Jewish law on others. The Judaizers and the legalists wanted adherence to the law in addition to believing in Christ. Paul said, "No!" He said God has generously given favor and grace, not because of human behavior. By grace we are saved through faith. Only because of what Christ did on the Cross can anyone come into the presence of God. Nothing must be added to faith. What is most important is walking in love, combined with faith.

Keep Walking - Paul said the Galatians were off to a good start but then turned away from the truth. Those with legalism and false doctrines came into the church and challenged those talking about freedom in Christ. The religious leaders insisted on following the old way, the old rules, and rituals. On the other hand, Paul said to get back on the road of truth and keep walking there. Paul concluded that trying to stick to Jewish rules and rituals, along with following Christ, is no little thing. The apostle wished the false teachers preaching erroneous doctrine would be cut off from the people. The confusion hindered the believers from growing and being all God intended them to be. Knowingly spreading untruths about the Gospel is a grave offense in the eyes of God—and it won't go unpunished.

Freedom to Love - Freedom in Christ is a call to love one another and serve one another. Loving God and loving each other sums up the law in one phrase.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Maintaining Freedom (Gal 5:1-6)

By standing firm (1)

- Standing firm and giving ourselves 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 (2-4)

- Grace over law because God's promises come by grace (Rom 4:16)
- Grace over law because we are under grace not the law (Rom 6:13-18)
- Grace over law because God's grace is sufficient in all things (2 Cor 12:9)
- Grace over law because we are saved by grace (Eph 2:8-9)

By expressing faith through love (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 us to pursue this (1 Tim 6:11)
- Faith through love because God knows our deeds (Rev 2:19)

Freedom is Threatened by False Teachers (Gal 5:7-12)

Through hindering believers (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 (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 (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 (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 (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 (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)