

OVERVIEW OF BOOK OF GALATIANS -- BORN FREE – LIVE FREE – STAY FREE

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we come to the most significant book in the New Testament regarding the heart of the true gospel message = Justification by faith in Jesus Christ alone – apart from the works of the law. Whenever you are sharing the gospel with someone who wants to add works to faith, take them to the book of Galatians. Martin Luther's commentary on Galatians was the Manifesto of the Reformation. Galatians proclaims our **Freedom** from the bondage of sin and the bondage of legalism – thinking that we can earn favor with God by keeping some set of rules of conduct.

The emotional impact of the epistle can best be communicated by one of my favorite songs from my high school days. I think it sums up the message of the Book of Galatians.

Born Free

(Words by Don Black and Music by John Barry)

Born free, as free as the wind blows
As free as the grass grows
Born free to follow your heart

Live free and beauty surrounds you
The world still astounds you
Each time you look at a star

Stay free, where no walls divide you
You're free as the roaring tide
So there's no need to hide

Born free, and life is worth living
But only worth living
'cause you're born free

(Stay free, where no walls divide you)
You're free as the roaring tide
So there's no need to hide

Born free, and life is worth living
But only worth living
'cause you're born free

Galatians reminds us that we entered into salvation by grace thru faith apart from the works of the law. So having been **Born Free**, why would we want to turn back to legalism to try to grow in our Christian life. No ... our sanctification comes as we walk by faith apart from a works orientation. We must **Live Free** and **Stay Free** in our spiritual journey.

The imagery of the song and the corresponding movie focused on the majestic freedom of the king of the jungle = the **lion**. The image of Jesus Christ as the **Lion of Judah** communicates this key aspect of the Christian's freedom. It emphasizes Christ's victorious authority, protection, kingship and power over every enslaving enemy. Christian freedom is not fragile, passive or uncertain – it is secured by a conquering King.

Rev. 5:5 “Behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome”

In Scripture, lions represent strength, royalty and conquest. “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law” (**Gal. 3:13**)

Legalism produces anxiety:

- Have I done enough?
- Will God reject me?

But the Lion of Judah communicates security and fearless confidence. We have no fear of condemnation, no fear of Satan, no fear of death, no fear of rejection. We live in the freedom of submission to the conquering lion.

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.” (5:1)

Fear nothing. Return to no chains. Your Lion reigns.

Let's look at some **Background information** about the epistle to the Galatians. Interesting that this is not just a letter to an individual or to a single church but to a group of churches -- “to the churches of Galatia” -- We must identify the **readers** in order to help us with some of the other background details.

Two main views:

- 1) **North Galatia View** – Using term “Galatia” in **ethnic (Celtic) geographic sense** – 3 tribes of Gauls; took over 3 cities in N. Galatia in 3rd century BC – Ancyra (capital city), Pessimus (an important religious center) and Tavium (a commercial center in eastern Galatia; Late date of writing – 53-56 AD – Paul could not have visited this region until after the Jerusalem Council in 49 AD (Is **Chap. 2** visit a reference to Jerusalem Council?))
- 2) **South Galatia View** – Using term in **political sense** – cities in the south visited on Paul's first missionary journey included in the Roman province of Galatia – Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe; Early date of writing: 48-49 AD – before the Council at Jerusalem; first epistle; Barnabas mentioned 3 times in chap. 2 would have been far more familiar to the south Galatian churches



Philip Ryken: So where does Galatians fit in the chronology of Acts? At first glance, **Galatians 2** seems to describe the events surrounding Paul's third visit to Jerusalem—his attendance at the Jerusalem Council in **Acts 15**. However, not all the facts seem to match. Furthermore, there are some important similarities between **Galatians 2** and **Acts 11**, Paul's second visit to Jerusalem.

There is one more thing to consider. Remember that the Jerusalem Council settled the Gentile question once and for all. At the end of the council, an official decree was issued about the status of Gentiles in the Christian church (**Acts 15:23–29**), a decree that was distributed to all the churches (**Acts 16:4**). If **Galatians 2** refers to **Acts 15**, then Paul wrote to the Galatians after the Jerusalem Council. But if that is so, why did he not mention the decision that was made there? This would have ended the argument and stopped the Judaizers from claiming that Jerusalem was on their side.

Occasion of Writing:

Almost 20 years have passed since the founding of the church in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. The church had begun as almost entirely Jewish and now was predominantly Gentile. A lot of friction between Jews and Gentiles. Some false teachers called Judaizers had corrupted the true gospel with demands that Gentiles must obey the Mosaic law as well as trust in Christ –

adding works to faith. Their legalistic views impacted sanctification as well as justification. As a result, they were also attacking Paul's apostolic authority. This early NT book written by the Apostle Paul is more of a polemic to defend the doctrine of justification by faith rather than a personal letter to the church. That is why Paul does not include any words of commendation as he does in all of his other epistles. The integrity of the gospel message meant everything to Paul.

Here he exposes the error of the Judaizing teachers who were seeking to bring the Christians back under the bondage of legalism. They were demanding strict adherence to various legalistic and ritualistic practices – thus perverting the simplicity of the gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith alone. In addition, the believers needed to be reminded that their sanctification also had to be pursued within the framework of freedom by virtue of the grace of God – not by works or personal merit. These are major theological issues and demand our attention. Paul goes on to contrast the difference between walking by the Spirit rather than by the flesh. *“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit” (5:25)*. As well he needs to defend his apostleship.

So he introduces the letter in **1:1-10** with two key themes:

- 1) an assertion of his apostleship and
- 2) advocacy for the exclusivity of the true gospel message.

1:1 *Paul, an apostle (not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),*

Responding to the attacks by the false teachers, Paul rests on his **divine credentials**

Thomas Schreiner: What is the **significance of the resurrection** here? The resurrection signifies that the **new age** has dawned (cf. **Isa 26:19; Ezek 37:1–14; Dan 12:1–3**), in which God will fulfill all his saving promises to Israel and to the entire world. One of the major themes of the letter emerges here. The Galatians were turning the clock back in salvation history by submitting to circumcision and the Mosaic law. Since Jesus has been raised from the dead, **believers are no longer under the Mosaic covenant**. Once again Paul anticipates one of the central themes of the letter (the fulfillment of God's eschatological promises).

He then moves quickly to **condemn the gospel perverters** who are trying to entice the believers to abandon the true gospel message that Paul had preached to them in founding the churches there

The Susceptibility to Fundamental Error is Shocking

"I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you"

David Platt: The Galatians were in the process of switching teams. **John Stott** notes that the word turning means *“to transfer one's allegiance.”* It was used of soldiers in the army who would go fight for the other side, or of politicians who would transfer to the other political party. [Can you imagine a Ravens fan wearing a Steelers jersey?] That is serious turning. It is an amazing thing for Paul to think that the Galatians, who had heard the truth of the gospel, were putting on a different jersey. The Galatians had come to Christ and put on the robes of righteousness and were now trying to turn back to the trash can to retrieve their old clothes of **works-based religion**.

The Defining Characteristic of the True Gospel = The Grace of Christ

"by the grace of Christ"

"The grace of Christ" is the touchstone of Paul's argument against the agitators.

5:4 *"You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from **grace**"*

There is Really Only One True Gospel

NEB comes closest to the original sense: *"I am astonished to find you . . . following a different gospel. Not that it is in fact another gospel."*

(1:6-9) Two Implications: (Mark Dever)

- The Christian message has specific propositional content that is essential
- These Galatian Christians are competent to judge error – message should be recognizable by common Christians – they are equipped to judge their teachers; this gospel is not complex; not just for smart people; in fact they are responsible to judge false teaching; doctrine of the perspicuity of the gospel

Two Serious Problems Caused by Gospel Perverters:

1. Disturbing the Brethren

"only there are some who are disturbing you" – spreading confusion

The Greek word means *"to shake back and forth"* meaning to agitate or stir up. So these false teachers are causing these young believers to be

Eph 4:14 *"we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;"*

2. Distorting the Gospel

"and want to distort the gospel of Christ"

When you add works to the gospel of grace by faith you have completely corrupted the message

Key Principle: Adding works to grace destroys grace.

Illustration: If someone hands you a glass of pure water and adds one drop of poison, the whole glass becomes corrupted.

The Judaizers added "just a little law."

Paul says: You have poisoned the gospel.

Application: Modern legalism often says you need:

- Jesus + baptism
- Jesus + church membership
- Jesus + morality
- Jesus + performance
- Jesus + spiritual achievements

[Transition] 1:10 – Denies the charge that he is just a man-pleaser

Paul set forth a vindication of his true motive for ministry: he sought to please God and not any human beings.

P. T. Forsythe: The secret of the Lord is with those who have been broken by his cross and healed by his Spirit. Galatians exalts these two things: the cross of Christ as the only way a person can get right with God, and the Spirit of Christ as the only way a person can obey God. Anything that diminishes the beauty and all-sufficiency of what happened on the cross of Christ is anathema to Paul. Anything that puts our willing or running where the Holy Spirit belongs is witchery to Paul. And the reason we sense a kind of compassionate rage running beneath this letter is that someone had bewitched the Galatians to put themselves where the Spirit belonged and the works of law where faith in the cross belonged.

Big Idea:

Never Surrender the Liberty of Our New Life in Christ to the Bondage of Religious Legalism –

Our New Life in Christ:

- Entered Into by Faith (Apart from Any Works)
- Energized by the Holy Spirit
- Expressed in Loving Service to Others

Galatians 5:1 *“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”*

Ray Stedman: Galatians comes to grips with the question of what real Christian life is like. The answer can be characterized by one word, “**liberty.**” The Christian is called to liberty in Jesus Christ. The cry of this epistle is that Christians might discover the liberty of the sons of God in accordance with all that God has planned for man in the way of freedom and enjoyment. Its aim is freedom of our human spirits to the utmost extent, restrained only as necessary for us to exist in harmony with the design of God. Therefore, this letter has been called the “Bill of Rights of the Christian Life,” or the “Magna Carta of Christian Liberty,” the “Emancipation Proclamation” from all forms of legalism and bondage in the Christian experience.”

Outline: 3 sections of 2 chapters each with an Introduction and Conclusion

- I. **(1-2) Personal** -- Autobiographical – Loyalty to the true Gospel and Defense of Paul’s Apostolic Authority
- II. **(3-4) Polemic** – Argument Defending the Core of the Gospel = Justification by Faith in Jesus Christ Alone apart from any works of the law
- III. **(5-6) Practical** – Applying the Truth of the Gospel and the Principle of Liberty in Christ – serve one another in love by walking in the Spirit

Gospel of Grace Defended / Explained / Applied

**I. (1:11 - 2:21) PERSONAL:
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DEFENSE OF PAUL’S APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY**

A. (1:11-24)

**PAUL’S AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED BY DIVINE REVELATION --
PAUL’S PERSONAL TESTIMONY CONFIRMS THE DIVINE SOURCE OF
HIS MESSAGE AND AUTHORITY**

Paul understood that people had to accept his apostleship before they would accept his gospel.

Nijay Gupta: In this first major section of his letter to the Galatians, Paul carefully recounts some key events in his personal story, from persecutor to apostle to the gentiles. He states his primary concern right away: “*the gospel I preached is not of human origin*” (1:11). Paul needed to make it clear that he has consistently preached the same gospel from the beginning, and this is not his own personal interpretation of the gospel of Christ but rather a message and ministry that came directly from above. Throughout these fourteen verses, Paul is insistent that he received no formal instruction in the faith or any official commissioning from human leaders.

His work has been consistent, his ministry independent, and his story legendary. He provides here particular events, specific time periods, the names of those involved, and a renowned reputation. He has been transparent and consistent. It is crucial from the beginning of this letter that Paul demonstrates himself trustworthy and genuine. And time and time again he challenges the Galatians to test him, to check his story, and to ask around. He has nothing to hide and stands firm in his gospel. The autobiography and self-defense is crucial for Paul’s wider concern to convince the Galatians they were right all along to trust him and to find the “*truth of the gospel*” in his teachings (Gal 2:5, 14).

1. (1:11-12) Thesis Statement: The Divine Source of His Gospel Message
Attacks against Paul:
 - He made up this gospel message of faith alone
 - Maybe he was influenced by a couple of apostles who were a little off base
2. (1:13-17) Personal Testimony of his conversion experience and sovereign calling to his apostolic ministry
 - Pre-conversion persecution of the church (:13)
 - Pre-conversion loyalty to Jewish traditions (:14)
 - Sovereign conversion (:15-16a)
 - Sovereign appointment to his apostolic ministry to the Gentiles (:16b)
 - Initial isolation from church tutelage (:16c-17)
3. (1:18-24) Personal Testimony of His Formative Years – almost no contact with church leaders

Proving Paul was not a man-pleaser and his gospel was independent of the other apostles

John MacArthur: Paul’s point through all of this detailed autobiography was that the charges of the Judaizers were absurd on the surface. The church in Jerusalem, which was still overseen by the other apostles and James, the Lord’s half brother, had long since recognized his apostolic office and authority and glorified God because of him. James, Peter, and John—the three leading apostles among the Twelve—had specifically acknowledged that the grace of God had been given to Paul and they enthusiastically gave him “*and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship*” (Gal. 2:9). In his second letter

Peter not only acknowledges Paul's divine authority but asserts that his epistles even at that early date were already recognized as scriptural (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

B. (2:1-10)

PAUL'S AUTHORITY RECOGNIZED --
PAUL'S INDEPENDENT MESSAGE AND AUTHORITY WERE STILL
VALIDATED BY THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

C. (2:11-21)

PAUL'S AUTHORITY DEMONSTRATED IN REBUKING PETER'S ERROR --
JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH LEAVES NO ROOM FOR HYPOCRISY OR LEGALISM

1. (2:11-13) Peter's Hypocrisy Deserved Paul's Strong Opposition

Peter stopped eating with Gentile believers when Jewish leaders arrived.

His behavior communicated: "Gentiles are second-class Christians unless they also adopt Jewish customs." He was more concerned with the approval of the respected Jewish leaders.

Paul publicly rebukes him. Why?

Because the issue was not merely behavior. The **integrity of the gospel** was at stake.

2. (2:14) Peter's Hypocrisy Compromised the Truth of the Gospel

But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

3. (2:15-21) Justification by Faith Unites us All (Jews and Gentile) to Christ so that We Can Walk by Faith

2:16 – *nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.*

The pathway to maturity in the Christian life is not to try harder but to **trust in Christ** for His power and righteousness to be lived out in and through us. Yes, this involves the means of applying ourselves to spiritual disciplines. But our faith and confidence is in the life of Christ flowing thru us. We want to learn to Abide in Christ and see the Holy Spirit produce the fruit in our lives.

II. (3:1 - 4:31) POLEMIC:
ARGUMENT DEFENDING THE CORE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY
FAITH (WHICH HAS SET US FREE AND MADE US HEIRS) —
JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH EXCLUDES ANY DEPENDENCE ON RELIGIOUS
LEGALISM FOR SALVATION OR SANCTIFICATION

A. (3:1-14) JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH PROVES THAT WE SHOULD
CONTINUE TO LIVE BY FAITH

Three pairs of themes are examined in Chap. 3 – each with a good and bad side:

- **Law vs. Promise**, two modes of divine communication with man.
- **Works vs. Faith**, the responses appropriate to each of them.
- **Flesh vs. Spirit**, the source of the strength for the appropriate response.

1. (3:1-5) Argument from Personal Experience

Many believers begin trusting Christ but drift into performance based Christianity

Stinging rebuke: *You foolish Galatians!* How can you be denying the sufficiency of Christ and now think that you have something positive to add to the salvation and sanctification equation. Paul had preached Christ crucified – this is the image that should dominate their thinking.

How did you initially receive the Spirit?

3:2 *This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?*

Even so, progress in the Christian life must be by the Spirit as you respond in faith.

David deSilva: If the Galatian Christians can attest from their own religious experience that they had received God's Holy Spirit and experienced God's presence in their midst as a result of trusting in Jesus and in what his death secured for human beings, they will come to see that

- (1) they have received the blessing that was promised to Abraham concerning "all the nations" (3:14),
- (2) they have enjoyed God's complete acceptance and are already sons and daughters of the living God and thereby also heirs of God's promise (4:6–7), and
- (3) they have received from God all that they need to live beyond the power of the flesh and to conform to God's righteous standards, thus enjoying God's approval at the end (5:13–25; 6:7–10), all on the basis of having trusted in Jesus and relying upon the favor God is showing to the world through Jesus.

3:3 *"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit are you now being perfected by the flesh?"*

2. (3:6-9) Argument from the OT Example of Abraham

Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

Vs. 9 -- *So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.*

Salvation has always been by faith. Not:

- By keeping the Mosaic Law
- By practicing spiritual Rituals
- By Circumcision

3. (3:10-14) Argument from Freedom from the Curse of the Law

Key Principle: *The righteous man shall live by faith* – **vs. 11**

Such freedom only comes about because Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law.

4 Propositions – each supported by Scripture

(1) those who rely on observing the law are under a curse. Why so? The Law demands complete obedience (**Deut 27:26**).

(2) No one can be justified by means of the law anyway. Why not? The Scripture declares that the righteous ones live by faith (**Hab 2:4**).

(3) Law and faith are not mutually compatible ways to God. How can you be so sure? Because the law itself says that those who keep the commandments will live by them (**Lev 18:5**).

(4) Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. How did this happen? He became a curse for us by hanging on a tree (**Deut 21:23**).

B. (3:15-22) THE BLESSING OF JUSTIFICATION COULD ONLY COME VIA GOD'S UNCHANGING PROMISES RATHER THAN BY THE LAW

What is the relationship then between God's Promises and the Law?

1. (3:15-18) God's Unchanging Promises Cannot be Superseded by the Law

Superiority of the covenant of promise – it was confirmed as irrevocable and unchangeable

Vs. 18 -- an inheritance . . . based on law depends on man's performance, whereas the one granted . . . to Abraham by means of a promise depends on God's grace and power. Man cannot possibly keep the law completely; God cannot possibly fail to keep His promise.

2. (3:19-22) The Purpose of God's Law Was Never to Provide Justification -- But rather to Prepare for Promise

The Law was a tutor or guardian. It exposes sin. It drives us to Christ.

The Law is like an X-ray. An X-ray reveals the break. It cannot heal it.

The Law reveals sin. Only Christ heals sinners.

C. (3:23 - 4:7) THE COMING OF CHRIST ELEVATED OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD TO THAT OF PRIVILEGED SONS AND HEIRS – BEFORE AND AFTER FAMILY SNAPSHOTS

1. (3:23-29) Privilege of Sonship Through Faith in Christ

3:23-26 – *But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.* ²⁴ *Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.* ²⁵ *But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.* ²⁶ *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

These two illustrations—the prison and the pedagogue—show that the law had the legitimate purpose of **keeping us safe until Christ came to save us**. God used the law to

shut us up in prison until Christ should set us free, or to put us under tutors until Christ should make us sons.

2. (4:1-7) What's the Big Deal? Adoption as Sons

4:3-6 – *So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.* ⁴ *But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,* ⁵ *in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the **adoption as sons**.* ⁶ *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"*

Illustration:

A slave obeys out of fear; a son obeys out of love.

When you know God as "Abba," obedience becomes a joy, not a burden.

D. (4:8-20) JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH MUST BE HELD ON TO DESPITE THE SEDUCTIVE DECEPTIONS OF ZEALOUS FALSE TEACHERS

1. (4:8-11) Exhortation: Don't Turn Back to a Lifestyle of Legalistic Bondage = Futility

Verses 8–11 are an exhortation in which Paul reminded his Galatian converts of their former way of life, the great transformation that had happened to them through their adoption into God's family, and his deep concern that they were about to exchange their spiritual heritage for a mess of pottage.

Cf. running on a treadmill; you exert a lot of effort; but at the end of the day you have not arrived anywhere; the futility of performance-based efforts at salvation and sanctification

Paul did not want his ministry among them to be nullified and rendered futile:

4:11 -- *"I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain."*

2. (4:12-16) Emotional Plea: Don't Reject the Loving Instruction of Your Original Discipler

He recalled the endearing bonds of friendship and love he and the Galatians had enjoyed in days past

3 Appeals to Love and Affection:

- (:12-14) Based on how they initially received Paul
- (:15) Based on their willingness to love Paul sacrificially
- (:16) Based Paul's consistent proclamation to them of the truth

3. (4:17-20) Don't Be Deceived by Zealous False Teachers

Pleaded with them to remain faithful to the one and only gospel he had first preached among them.

- (:17-18) Beware of the ulterior motives of the false teachers
- (:19-20) Be loyal to the one who established you in the faith and continues to seek your spiritual health

E. (4:21-31) THE OT ANALOGY OF ISHMAEL AND ISAAC PICTURES OUR FREEDOM – [SPIRITUAL SLAVERY VS SONSHIP] ACCOMPLISHED BY THE SPIRIT ACCORDING TO GOD'S PROMISE

(4:21) Attention Grabber – Key Question

Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?

1. (4:22-27) The Key Distinctions in the OT Analogy

Paul contrasts:

- Hagar = slavery under law
- Sarah = freedom through promise

Two systems:

- Religious Performance:
 - “I must earn acceptance.”
- Free Gift of Salvation:
 - “I receive acceptance by grace.”

2. (4:28-30) The Key Applications of the OT Analogy

a. (:28) Privilege of Promise

“And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.”

b. (:29) Pattern of Persecution

“But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.”

c. (:30) Priority of Purification (Putting Away the Old Vestiges of Legalism)

“But what does the Scripture say? ‘Cast out the bondwoman and her son, For the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.’”

(4:31) Conclusion – Key Principle:

We Have Been Born to Freedom, Not Bondage

John MacArthur: In one sweep Paul sets forth the common factor of divine power in behalf of Sarah, the captive Jews, and the church. The common element of all three is divine power granting freedom and fruitfulness. Everything in this trilogy is the result of regenerating grace, not human effort.

III. (5:1 - 6:10) PRACTICAL: APPLICATION OF LIBERTY = TO WALK IN LOVE BY THE SPIRIT

Although I have not taught works as the basis for either salvation or sanctification, I am not saying you have the freedom to live however you please; Freedom in Christ is the freedom to do what is right; the freedom to serve one another in love. This is the portrait of the Spirit-filled life

A. (5:1-12) STAND FIRM IN THE LIBERTY TO WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED

1. (5:1) Thesis of the Epistle: Stand Firm in the Liberty to Which You Have Been Called

You are free; therefore do not get caught up in trying to obey the Mosaic law.

John Piper: If you want God's favor, there are two ways to relate to him. You can relate to him as an **heir**, or you can relate to him as a **slave**. The difference is that a slave tries to become acceptable to his master by presenting him valuable service; but the heir trusts that the inheritance of his father is his by virtue of a will that was drawn up without his earning it at all. A slave is never quite sure he has done enough to please his master and win an honorable standing in the house. A son rests in the standing he has by virtue of his birth and the covenant his father made in his will to bless his children.

Bill McRae: Tremendous implications in terms of **legalism** in our daily life

- Sanctification – why do we want to go back under works – setting up rigid laws; legalism is not the presence of laws; instead we think that the keeping of these laws brings us some type of favor with God; instead the motivation for keeping these standards is because we love Jesus not trying to earn favor; thinking that doing all types of religious deeds will somehow earn us points with God
- Amazing how legalistic we are at heart – we want everything spelled out in rules because that is a security blanket; we don't like to live by faith; we hang on to the rules; if the bible won't make up the rules, let's have the church make the rules

What chains am I returning to?

- guilt?
- legalism?
- fear?
- people-pleasing?

2. (5:2-6) Faith in the Law Cannot be Harmonized with Faith in Christ

5:6 *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.”*

3. (5:7-12) Standing Firm Requires Rejecting the Destructive Teachings of Those Opposed to the Message of the Cross of Christ

The fact that you have not yet been judged for your sin is not a good argument to support that you will never be judged for your sin

What is the role of the law in life NT believer?

B. (5:13-26) USE FREEDOM AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO WALK IN LOVE BY WALKING IN THE SPIRIT – (NOT AN OPPORTUNITY TO FULFILL THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH)

(5:13) Thesis

1. (5:14-15) Walk in Love
2. (5:16-26) Walk by the Spirit

C. (6:1-10) DO GOOD -- 2 PRACTICAL WAYS TO WALK IN LOVE BY THE SPIRIT

Some brothers are big on arguing for the clarity of doctrine but short on the demonstration of practical love.

1. (6:1-5) Humbly Help Your Brother in Need
2. (6:6-10) Consistently Keep on Giving to Meet the Needs of Others

Application: Healthy churches are places of:

- restoration
- humility
- burden-bearing
- generosity

(6:11-18) CLOSING SUMMARY / BENEDICTION — THE BRANDMARKS OF LOYALTY TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST

**BOAST ONLY IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST
- AND THE CORRESPONDING SCARS OF PERSECUTION**

A. (6:11-16) The Motive of Liberty: The Cross

B. (6:17) The Price of Liberty: Suffering

C. (6:18) The Benediction of Liberty

Closing Challenge: Ask yourself:

- Am I living like a slave—or a son?
- Am I trusting performance—or grace?
- Am I walking in the flesh—or in the Spirit?

Because the gospel of Galatians still proclaims:

Salvation is free, grace is sufficient, and **freedom in Christ** changes everything.

Final Illustration:

A butterfly doesn't go back to being a caterpillar.

When you are made new in Christ, you are free — not to crawl in bondage again, but to soar in the Spirit's power.

The Lion of the Tribe of Judah reminds us that we have been Born Free – so Live Free and Stay Free