**Christ Has Made Us Free**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Galatians 5:1-9**

**Wednesday Evening**

**August 31, 2022**

**Galatians 5:1-10**

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. 2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.

3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. 4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. 5 For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. 7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you. 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

**1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.**

Saints, we have freedom from slavery to our sinful desires and to the Jewish law. But the freedom came at great price. In order for us to enjoy ultimate freedom, someone had to set us free, and that someone was Christ Jesus.

**John 8:30-36**

30 As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. 31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free'?" 34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Saints, because Christ has really set us free, we should stay free. Christ has set us free from legalistic formulas, from God’s judgment upon sin, from all man-made rules, and from the subjective experiences of fear and guilt.

We are to live it out, practice it, and rejoice in it! To turn back to the law and try to earn what Christ has already given mocks his sacrifice.

**2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.**

Saints, Paul gave a serious warning, and he didn’t want any of his hearers to miss it. If the Galatian believers were to follow the Judaizers’ teaching,

counting on circumcision to make them right with God (the tense of the verb reveals that the Galatians had not yet taken the step, but were considering it), then Christ would not be able to help them. How could this be?

What could be the harm in circumcision? Obviously, only men could be circumcised, but more than circumcision was at stake. Paul was confronting the Galatians because they were trying to fulfill the Jewish law.

Insistence on circumcision had become the most prominent feature of the Judaizers’ thinking. They taught that the gospel needed the Jewish law system to make it perfect. But God’s way was different—salvation through Christ by grace alone.

We can’t mix and match works and grace. God has an exclusive arrangement. The Galatians were about to be circumcised as a requirement to “complete” their salvation.

But Paul explained that by that very act they would be saying that Christ’s sacrifice by his death had not been enough to save them.

**3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.**

Saints, choosing circumcision would cause them to lose the value of the free gift of salvation given through Christ. It also would have another devastating effect.

Choosing circumcision would mean choosing law keeping (legalism). To choose law keeping meant that one must obey all of the regulations in the whole law of Moses.

Paul might well have repeated his question. Did the Galatians have any idea what their choice to obey all the Jewish laws would entail? Chances are, the Judaizers had not spelled that out—yet.

They may have told the Galatians about some of the food laws and about the festivals and holy days. But to any Jew, circumcision was the first act of obedience to a law that would, from then on, rule every detail of his life.

Did the Galatians understand that “the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as the person who has broken all of God’s laws”

**James 2:10**

“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all”

**Deuteronomy 27:26**

“Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

By becoming circumcised, the Galatians were submitting themselves to an entire system—one that doomed them to failure.

**4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.**

Saints, those who try to make themselves right with God by keeping the law are, in fact, cut off from Christ. God allows no middle ground—it is Christ or law, not both.

Anyone deciding to be justified by law has fallen away from God’s grace. Christ cannot save those who persist in saving themselves. Paul’s words should not be taken out of context to mean that salvation can be lost. Grace did not mean salvation, but refers to the means of salvation.

To decide on legalism as the way of salvation is to “fall away” from grace. It’s like throwing away the life preserver when lost at sea.

**5 For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.**

Saints, in this short verse Paul gave his doctrine of justification by faith:

we all believers, even the wavering Galatians who live by the Spirit not through anything we can do or have done, and not through the law eagerly wait to receive we don’t work for righteousness;

We wait for God to grow his righteousness in us everything promised to us a certain event that has not yet occurred who are right with God Christian perfection that God helps us reach in our lives

And then Saints, grants completely in glory through faith in Christ and his faithfulness, and not in works or even the strength of our believing.

The words “faith” and “Spirit” provide the keys to this verse, for these words separate the Judaizers’ approach to God from the Christian approach to God. The Judaizers’ emphasis on circumcision showed that they were trying to gain salvation “in the flesh.”

But Paul pointed out that Christian faith comes “by the Spirit.” The Judaizers’ emphasis on the law contrasted sharply with Christianity’s emphasis on faith. Christianity’s basic doctrine showed the Judaizers to be wrong—dead wrong.

**6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.**

Saints, if Paul clearly told the Gentile Galatian believers not to be circumcised, what would he say to the Jews, who were already circumcised? Paul made the point that it makes no difference to God whether we are circumcised or not circumcised.

**Colossians 3:11**

**“**where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all”

**Galatians 3:28-29**

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

**Galatians 6:15**

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation”

Saints, Paul’s conviction rested on the importance of all it means to place our faith in Christ Jesus. Each aspect of salvation and every component of the life we live after conversion are rooted in Christ.

So what does matter? Paul didn’t hesitate: What is important is faith expressing itself in love. To the faith discussed in chapter 4, Paul added the clarification that it must be faith expressed in love.

We are saved by faith alone; but for these Galatian believers who seemed to want so desperately to work, Paul was saying, “OK, work, but don’t try to earn your salvation.

Instead, let your salvation by faith result in loving and kind works done to serve others.” Genuine faith in Christ is expressed in love for others.

**7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?**

Saints, the Galatian believers had accepted the gospel of salvation and were living out their faith—they were getting along so well.

But despite their good start, someone had interfered, holding them back from following the truth. Although Paul asked who had done this, he already knew the answer.

Paul knew that the problem was the Judaizers. Paul warned the Galatians that the Judaizers, instead of helping them along, were actually hindering their faith. Instead of opening up new truths to the Galatians, they kept the Galatians from following the truth.

The Judaizers represented the interests of Satan. They wanted to keep the Galatians enslaved to the law and derail the new believers.

**8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.**

Saints, the Galatians needed to realize that it was not God who was holding them back, for he had called them to freedom in the first place. God had called the Galatians, but he had called them to salvation by his grace, not by their works.

**Romans 9:11**

“(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls)”

**1 Thessalonians 2:12**

“that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory”

**1 Thessalonians 5:24**

“He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it”

**9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.**

Saints, Yeast is put into bread to make it rise, and it takes only a little to affect the whole batch of dough. Jesus used yeast as an example of how a small amount of evil can affect a large group of people.

**Matthew 16:5-12**

5 Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. 6 Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." 7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread."

8 But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? 9 Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? 10 Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?

11 How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?--but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12 Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Saints, even one wrong person among the Galatian believers could infect all the others, putting the entire Galatian church at risk.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**