

“Stand Firm In Freedom”

Use this guide as a tool to help you prepare to experience spiritual transformation in a practical way. It is a flexible guide that will help you discover, own, and apply the truths of God’s Word.

Message Summary

Shortly after Paul planted the churches in the southern region of Galatia false teachers came in and taught that a person must practice the Mosaic Law and believe in Jesus in order to have eternal life. In other words, these false teachers taught people their righteousness was based on their works rather than the righteousness of Jesus Christ alone. So Paul wrote to these confused Galatian believers in order to correct this false teaching and help the churches live in the freedom they found in Jesus.

Paul’s argument against these false teachers included the example of Abraham, who “believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.” He also compared the difference between the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants and the purpose of the Law and God’s eternal promise to redeem a people by faith. In chapter 4, Paul explained that their faith in Christ which liberated them from their slavery to sin now afforded them the promised blessing of the Holy Spirit, who would enable them to identify with Jesus, the True Son and Heir of God. Paul summarized his defense of salvation by faith alone by letting the Galatians know his great concern for their spiritual state. While he has called them “brothers” throughout this letter, there was still some question in his mind as to whether or not he labored in vain over them. After coming to faith in Christ, if they decided to begin practicing the Mosaic Law like the false teachers had encouraged them to do, then in Paul’s opinion, he had labored in vain.

Paul demonstrated his great concern for the Galatians by appealing to them to “*become as I am, for I also have become as you are.*” Paul who was a Jew, because of Christ, no longer was bound to Judaism and therefore appealed to the Galatians that there was no need for them to become Jews. They were free in Christ. Further, Paul’s words were an appeal for them to imitate him, rather than imitate the false teachers. Because they were new creatures in Christ, their lives were to be lived in response to who they were in Christ rather than what they hoped to gain from Christ. Because they were righteous in Christ they were to live as Christ lived.

In Galatians 4:21-5:1, after his call to imitate his walk with Christ, Paul returned to his argument of justification by faith. He delivered a shocking blow to the false teachers. Paul challenged their reading of the story of Sarah and Hagar, Abraham’s two wives. Commentators believe the false teachers were allegorizing the story of Sarah and Hagar by saying the Jews were the spiritual children of Sarah, the free woman, and the Galatians were the spiritual children of Hagar, the slave woman, and if the Galatians wanted to be saved, then they must become children of Sarah through circumcision. Both women had sons. However, Hagar’s son was born “according to the flesh” while Sarah’s son was born “through promise.” Paul illustrated through this story that just as Abraham and Sarah tried to fulfill God’s promise of children in their own strength by having a child through Hagar, the false teachers were trying to gain righteousness in their own strength. Further, just as God would miraculously provide a son through barren Sarah, He would miraculously save Galatian Gentiles and make them part of His family. So Paul turned their story on its head and said the false teachers were actually children of the slave woman and the Galatians were the children of the free woman!

Paul’s concluding words in this passage drove his point home. “*For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*” These words ring true today. We must stand firm in our freedom in Christ. However, what does it mean to be free in Christ? As you prepare to meet with your Missional Community examine the answers given in the sermon regarding Christian freedom. Are you standing firm in these truths? Or are you surrendering again to a yoke of slavery? Our prayer is that you stand firm in freedom!

Message Outline

Purpose: I want you live in the freedom given you in Christ!

What is Christian Freedom?

1. Your righteousness comes from the free promise given in Christ not the flesh. (21-23)
2. Your inheritance comes from the work of the Spirit not the work of the Law. (24-27)
3. You are free to obey Christ not be enslaved to sin. (28-5:1)

Therefore,

1. Let’s rest in Christ’s promise not our performance.
2. Let’s dwell on Christ’s purposes not our problems.
3. Let’s enjoy Christ’s provision not our preferences.

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Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help make application of God’s Word to your Head (What God wants me to know), to your Heart (What God wants me to desire/value), and to your Hands (What God wants me to do).

In regard to Galatians 4:21-5:1:

1. What does this passage teach about God? (God’s Identity; Theology)
2. What does this passage teach about what God has done? (God’s Action; Christology)
3. What does this passage teach about man/me? (Old & New Creation Identity; Ecclesiology)
4. What does this passage teach about what I should do? (Reveals what I really believe about Questions 1-3; Missional Ecclesiology)
5. What does this passage teach about how I do it uniquely in my context? (personal action steps of obedience)

Weekly Prayer Focus

- **Church:**

- Pray that all who have believed the Gospel will obey Jesus in believer’s baptism.
- Pray for new relationships that will lead to Gospel conversations.
- Pray for the elders as they lead us to accomplish the mission.
- Pray for the Missional Communities to impact their communities with the Gospel.
- Pray for Missional Communities to multiply into new neighborhoods.
- Pray for new DNA groups to start.

- **Local:**

- Pray that God would burden us with the lostness in our cities, neighborhoods, and at work.
- Pray that God will identify 5 people you can begin to invest in and engage with the Gospel.

- **Global:**

- Pray for the Haiti Mission Trip October 17-23. Will install water purifying system at Savane Carrie for the Shepherd Care Project.
- Pray for J & A and their children as they prepare for the mission field.
- Pray that God would give you a heart for the nations.
- Pray for the team working in SEA, the new believers, for those who have heard the Gospel, and the church planting movement among the unreached.
- Pray for Good Shepherd Ministries and Bill & Sandy Younger.
- Pray for Servants Hearts Ministries and Bob & Georgette Kornegay.
- Pray for Pastor Abraham and his church in Guatemala.
- Pray for the work of Paul & Sarah Young and Dakota Baptist Church in North Dakota.