

Riverview Baptist Church
Sunday School Teaching Plan
January 17, 2016
Galatians 5:1-15
“Free in the Spirit”

Memory Verse:

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” Galatians 5:1

The Big Idea:

Sermon Scripture: The sermon will be the twelfth in a series of expository sermons on Galatians

Scripture: Galatians 5:1-15

ESS: Disciples bear fruit in their relationship with Jesus due the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit

Preparation:

Read through this passage at least twice, slowly. Read from two different Bible translations.

Presentation:

Begin with a discussion about the words, LIBERTY and FREEDOM. What do those words mean and what images do they bring to mind.

Then ask the class to discuss words that are the OPPOSITE of Liberty and Freedom.

Paul is using this language to say that Christians have come out of slavery to sin AND out of slavery to RELIGIOUS systems that enslave. Christians are not to go back to practices and religious systems that characterized their slavery now that they are free!!!!

“Christian liberty is produced by the Holy Spirit not by religion or religious practices! Verses 1-14

a. Freedom fails when:

- i. The free man returns to slavery by choice! Can you think of examples of how Christians are tempted to return to a type of spiritual slavery after having been made free?
- ii. Freedom can be forfeited for legalism! Circumcision, outward religious rule keeping. Paul said that they should “mark his words”. It was a sure promise that anyone who returned to circumcision as a religious action was turning to spiritual slavery.
 1. Identify the legalists in your life: Ask the class to spend time thinking about the legalistic influences in their lives.
 2. Limit their influence: verses 7-10 Ask: How can you limit the influence of the legalistic temptations? The scripture said that someone has cut in on you! And a little yeast, “negative influences” leavens or permeates the entire loaf. Be careful! A little legalism can spread and do great damage in your life and in the church. It may sound extreme to encourage you to identify these influences in your life. And it is, but it is important. The cost of comfortable legalistic accommodation is high. It often seems simpler to compromise with the culture of legalism rather than to fight against it. But it can

destroy the church. So stand up and be free. The running analogy of someone cutting us off is very frustrating. Who is it that is frustrating your freedom run for Christ!

3. Admit! There is no partial compromise with legalism according to Paul. It is all or nothing. Either we keep ALL the Law for our righteousness or admit that we don't have to keep any of it.

iii. Viewed as a license to sin! Verse 13

The true persuasiveness of legalism is the idea of a slippery slope. That you will slide into immorality without the help of legalistic rules and ceremony. But God will not allow himself to have a substitute in your life. He is with you through the Holy Spirit. So the Law or legalism is not necessary. You do have help living for the Lord. You can reject legalism and embrace holy living. The Holy Spirit is the key. You should not reject the Law in order to throw off restraint. You are choosing the restraint of a direct relationship with God over the restraint of the temporary guardian of the Law. You are a child of the free woman, not the slave woman. Live free!

b. Free for "Love our neighbor as our self!" Read verses 1, 6, 13-14

Freedom in the Holy Spirit is best described as a journey into what we are free for not an escape of what we are free from. You are now journeying into a relationship in Christ that will compel you and empower you to do some life changing and unbelievable things. These things were not able to be done before under the Law. What the Law could not achieve, the Holy Spirit can empower you to both will and to do!

- i. An expression of faith, not a religious law keeping! Hebrews 11:6

You are now expressing your faith in love when you obey the commands of God. You aren't obeying to earn anything or to impress anyone. You aren't compared to others, you are living out your faith in Jesus. You are expressing your relationship in practical, outward kindnesses!

- ii. Serve one another in humility: Since we do not operate out of our own goodness, but rather the love of Christ, we can serve others with humility. Whereas legalism promotes and allows for comparison and competition, serving others out of love in faith simply expresses humility and promotes more of the same.

- iii. Love fulfills the law! Affirmed by both Jesus and Paul!

Luke 10:27 NIV - He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Rom 13:8 NIV - Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.

Romans 13:10 Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

c. Free from Law: verse 18

- i. The Law is an all or nothing obligation? Verse 3, Since the Law is an all or nothing proposition, circumcision must be left behind. All current types of legalism should be left behind as well. It is difficult for people today as it was for people in Paul's day to distinguish between actions based on conviction of truth and cultural traditions that have become legalistically followed.
- ii. Alienates from Christ and pulls away from grace! Verse 4, But the truth should be told. Legalism never takes us to Christ no matter how devout it seems, not matter how passionately it is defended.

- iii. Of no value to the saved! Verse 6 There really is not boasting in circumcision or no circumcision. The truth is that it makes no difference either way. So sing the hymn with Pipe organ or guitar, God doesn't care. But when you sing the hymn, sing it to God!
- iv. Removes the offense of the cross! Verse 11 A switch from an emphasis on faith working itself out in love, empowered by the Holy Spirit, removes the offense of the cross because it swaps the emphasis. The emphasis is on man's action and initiative instead of God's action and initiative.

Rom 8:2- 4 NIV – “because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

- d. Free from slavery to sin! Verse 16 So what restraint is there to keep us from sinning? In addition to the motive of love and action of service produced by the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ, there is a restraint from sin that is effective and real. The Law could not restrain from sin. Read Romans 7 for explanation of this in the life of Paul. But now the Spirit restrains from sin.

- i. Will not gratify desires of the flesh!
- ii. The Flesh and the Spirit are in conflict!

Rom 7:25 NIV - Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Rom 8:12-13 NIV - Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation--but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

Discuss:

- What humble acts of service have you been involved in that were produced totally by the work of the Holy Spirit as acts of faith in Jesus? (Things that can't be explained by normal love or loyalty)
- Describe a person, time, and place when you were ministered too by another Christian in humility. What motivated this person? What impact has it had in your life?
- Describe a time when you saw freedom abused by a Christian. How can freedom be turned into an opportunity for the desires of the flesh?
- Does your faith and experience of the Holy Spirit comply with the command to stand in your freedom in Christ?

Apply:

- ✓ Confess any legalistic attitudes and/or actions to God.
- ✓ Commit to cut out the influence of people who are cutting in upon your race of faith!
- ✓ Check to be sure that your freedom isn't a cover for feeding the desires of the flesh.
- ✓ Love your neighbor in humble Christian service. So something kind for someone today!

For additional study helps go to this link at blueletterbible.org.

http://www.blbclassic.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=20173&commInfo=31&topic=Galatians&ar=Gal_4_1