

Series: Galatians
Title: Stand Fast in Liberty
Text: Galatians 5: 1
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For context, let's begin in Galatians 4.

Galatians 4: 21: Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? 22: For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23: But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise. 24: Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25: For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26: But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all [us all who are born again of God]. 27: For it is written, Rejoice, *thou* barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. 28: Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29: But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now. 30: Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. 31: So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Galatians 5: 1: Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

“*Stand fast*”—maintain and defend and do not move from—“*the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free*. Believer, Christ has made us free. You that are born-again of the Spirit of God are born into liberty.

All who were born into this country were born free. We had nothing to do with having liberty. Someone else before us died to give us this liberty. We were simply born into liberty. Likewise, every true believer has been born-again into liberty in Christ. Christ laid down his life to give us this freedom. It is the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

What is true liberty in Christ? It is freedom from sin, freedom from condemnation, freedom from the dominating reign of our fleshly nature. It is being made a new man—a new creation in Christ's righteousness and holiness. Christ dwells in us and us in Christ and we are inseparably one with Christ. As he is so are we in this world. He is complete and those born of his Spirit are complete in him. The only way we stand is by Christ continually purging our consciences with his blood through the Spirit. Christ is our Master who alone makes his servant stand. We still have sin's presence in our sin-nature. But with Christ's command, Christ gives his redeemed the power to makes us stand in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

FREEDOM FROM CONDEMNATION

Christ has made us free from condemnation.

Romans 8: 1: *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life

in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Christ purges our conscious from the guilt of sin so that we know there is no more offering for sins because Christ has perfected us forever by his one offering. He sets us free from the dead works that kept us in bondage by purging our conscious to know that God shall never condemn us in Christ. He makes us know that our old man of sin was crucified with Christ and is dead. We are dead to sin because our old man, before God, has died in Christ. Our new man is alive with Christ at God's right hand. When Christ is in you, he is your Life, your Righteousness, your Holiness and there is no more condemnation from God upon you.

FREEDOM FROM THE REIGN OF OUR SIN-NATURE

By creating a new man within the sinner and purging our conscience to know there is no condemnation, Christ has given us liberty from the dominating power of our sin-nature.

In Romans 6 Paul said it is impossible for God's child to serve sin. Before God it is impossible because our body of sin is dead and we are justified in Christ.

Romans 6: 6: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7: For he that is dead is freed [justified] from sin.

Not only is our body of death—our old man of sin—dead in Christ, but God's elect are also risen in Christ. The Spirit of God makes us account that we are dead with Christ and risen with Christ never again to die.

Romans 6: 8: Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10: For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul's point is that it is the Spirit of God keeping us knowing this in our conscious that frees us from the dominating power of our sin-nature.

Romans 6:14: For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace....17: But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18: Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness....

Be sure to get this. The yoke of bondage we become entangled in is in the heart and mind of our sin-nature. Notice Galatians 5:3 that Paul says, "*every man that is circumcised, is a debtor to do the whole law.*" You can put any work in place of circumcision. But it is not simply the outward deed that makes us to be entangled with the yoke of bondage. We know that because later Paul circumcised Timothy. In Paul's new heart he knew that circumcision is nothing. Paul told Timothy to be circumcised and Timothy submitted to it from a motive of love so that circumcision would not be an issue as they preached in Jewish synagogues. So the issue in Galatia was not merely the outward act of circumcision. The thing that made it the yoke of bondage was their heart's motive. They wanted to be circumcised for justification

as we see in verse 4, “*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*” All who were circumcised with their heart-motive of being justified had left grace and entered into works salvation. When in our heart we think we must do something—whatever it may be—in addition to Christ for justification before God then we are entangled in the yoke of bondage.

Also, in heart they were being beguiled to do this with the motive of being *justified before men*. God’s child will do good works which justifies our faith as genuine gift of God but it is from the heart-motive of love—constrained by the love of Christ. But anything we do to be seen of men or because a man compels us or constrains us is a yoke of bondage. If anyone’s motive in believing the doctrine of grace is simply because their father believes then they are in the yoke of bondage. If we receive brethren but when a certain man comes around we remove from them and have nothing to do with them—as Peter removed from the Gentiles when James and the Jews came around—then we are entangled with the yoke of bondage. Our heart’s motive is to be seen of men and please men. That is being in the bondage of the law. When the motive of the heart is the love of Christ it is liberty. Believers are under the rule of *faith which worketh by love*. But when the motive is the watchful eye of a man then we have become entangled in the yoke of bondage. It is as legal as those who think salvation is by the works of the law. It makes men conform to that watchful eye! Only Christ can purge the conscious and give his child the *liberty of faith by constraining our heart by his love* so as to free us from that bondage.

In Romans 7, Paul declares Christ gives us liberty by making us know that Christ has made us free from the law by his death. Christ fulfilled the law for us so that our former husband, the law, is dead to us and we are lawfully married to Christ. When Christ purges our inward conscious to know we are free from the law then are we freed from the law for justification and rest in Christ in sweet liberty. Then, and only then, do we truly worship God.

But how easily we are entangled with the yoke of bondage. The chief sin of our flesh from which Christ must free us continually is prideful self-righteousness. There is an Ishmael in every child of promise. The only way Ishmael we subdued so as not to persecute Isaac more than he did was by his father. Thankfully, our everlasting Father subdues the Ishmael of our persecuting, legal fleshly old man so that our flesh cannot reign over our new man.

For instance, we commit some sin. That is also bondage. But immediately our fleshly mind thinks we need to do some work to put it away that sin so as to justify ourselves before God and men. We do such work then we think all is well but it is bondage. Only Christ can purge our conscience from that vain fleshly sinful legal thinking. He alone can make us know in our conscious that we are dead to sin because our old man is crucified and we are free from the law so that there is no condemnation before God. He makes us know again that we are righteous in Christ. By this Christ mortifies our flesh and delivers us from this bondage and gives us liberty in heart. This fruit of liberty is of Christ like all fruit is of Christ. We are married to Christ so that all our fruit is produced of him like as a husband produces fruit in his bride. Spiritual fruit is not of our flesh, not by the condemning yoke of men or the constraints of men with their commandments. All spiritual fruit is only of Christ.

Also, we easily come into bondage when we see or hear of sin in our brethren. This is why we scripture warns us about receiving a critical word about our brethren or about uncovering their sins. Our flesh so easily becomes puffed up in self-righteous bondage. In our fleshly thoughts we impute guilt to our brethren. We condemn our brethren. We put constraints on our brethren from a legal motive of the fleshly heart. What has happened? We, ourselves, are entangled in the yoke of bondage.

Remember the Philippian jailor? In order to keep the prisoners in bondage, he had to live in the jail too. When our fleshly hearts bring others into the yoke of bondage, we entangle ourselves in the same yoke. It brings us into the gall of bitterness. It makes us unable to hear the preaching of the gospel. If we uncover the sins of our brethren to others, it easily makes them unable to hear the gospel if they become entangled in the same yoke. It is what the Judaizer's were doing to the Galatians so that they considered their beloved Paul and enemy though he preached the same gospel to them as before. It is such an offense and so dangerous to God's people that the Spirit of God moved Paul to say that he would they were cut off.

There is only one way we are delivered. Christ sends someone with the good news of the gospel of liberty—as he did the apostle Paul in this epistle—and the Spirit of God purges our conscious with the blood of Christ, creating the fruit of faith and love in us by making us remember again that our brethren, like us, are righteous in Christ. He makes us cease knowing our brethren after the flesh. He reminds us that if Christ died for all his people then the old fleshly man in all his people is dead. We are alive unto God and complete in Christ.

When Christ has done this, Christ constrains us by his love not to be puffed up—not to condemn and rebuke harshly and put constraints on our brethren. But instead in the spirit of lowliness and meekness to speak of Christ to our brethren. It is the truth of the gospel by which Christ makes us free indeed. He turns each of us to him who alone is our Liberty. He frees us, as well as our brethren, from our sinful flesh by creating the fruits of faith and love in his child. But he only does this work through the gospel that gives Christ all the glory. This is how Christ breaks our hearts so that we are contrite and mourn over our legal sin and the sin of our brethren. Until then we are puffed up. Scripture nowhere teaches us to rebuke in any spirit except a meek and lowly spirit. It is our legal flesh that wants to speak harshly. But it is only when Christ has given us a meek and quiet spirit that Christ uses us to speak the gospel and help one another.

Paul said at the end of Romans 7 that this warfare will be in us until the day we die. This condemning, legal spirit toward ourselves and toward others is the number one sin that brings us into captivity. Who shall free us from this body of death? Paul thanked God that is through Jesus Christ our Lord alone. What is the next verse in Romans 8:1? “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” This is the gospel through which the Spirit purges our conscious from our legal bondage and from all sin. It is by permitting us to be entangled in this bondage over and over—so easily—that Christ teaches his child that he alone is our Liberty and he alone frees us. He does it by making us know that **WE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM—THAT IS LIBERTY!**

Colossians 2: 16: Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: 17: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ. 18: Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19: And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. 20: Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21: (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? 23: Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and [false] humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

How is this flesh mortified? In Colossians 3, he says that if ye be risen with Christ then set your affection on Christ above! Only when we are turned away from this flesh do we treat our flesh like it is dead—that is mortification of the flesh! Only Christ can set our affection on Christ. He gets the glory for our liberty from the yoke of bondage.

FREEDOM AT THE THRONE OF GRACE

Furthermore, liberty is having freedom to access God's throne of grace. We are free to come to him to ask for grace to help in time of need. Christ is our High Priest. Through his flesh we have access to God. Therefore, let us come to his throne of grace to ask help for ourselves and for brethren. We need Christ because only Christ can make the gospel effectual so as to free us from the yoke of bondage.

Galatians 5: 5: For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

By the Spirit we wait by faith in hope for the end when we shall be made fully righteous. But also the Spirit gives us faith to wait for the hope of Christ our Righteousness to come and work in those we love to mortify their flesh and renew their inner man. Therefore, we come to his throne of grace, call on him, and wait on him by faith to work. We have a good hope—a confident expectation that Christ will do so and he shall!

FREEDOM FROM DEATH

In addition, liberty is having been made free by Christ from death. He makes us know in our inward man that we are free from the wages of sin which is death. Our flesh will die because of sin but the new man will never die.

Romans 6: 23: For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So much of our entanglement in the yoke of the law in our fleshly hearts is a fear of death. Most in religion operate from this motive of fear. They only want to escape hell. God's has made his child want Christ. Heaven for the believer is Christ. But when we sin or our brethren sin, much of our entanglement in the law is the same fear. Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. This is what Christ has to continually remind us in order to free us from that condemning Ishmael in us which tells us we are not a child of God due to some sin in our members.

LIBERTY TO BELIEVE ON CHRIST AND WORK BY LOVE

This is the fruit of the Spirit created in us by Christ. This is what matters. Here is the law that every true believer is under. This is our rule of life—*"faith which worketh by love."*

Galatians 5: 6: For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Galatians 6: 15: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16: And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

True faith works, indeed! But our works are not performed from a motive of legal requirements. Our works are performed from a heart of love. All true works are works of

love in the heart created by Christ. They are works of faith, believing on Christ for All, waiting on Christ, looking to Christ, speaking of Christ. It is beholding how Christ bore all our sins away that constrains us to bear the sins of our brethren and restore them with the gospel. That is faith working by love. That is the law of Christ that every true believer is ruled by by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ working in us.

Galatians 6: 2: Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

We know no believer after the flesh. We put no confidence in the flesh. We worship in Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus. Why?

2 Corinthians 5: 14: For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then [are] all dead: 15: And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

The old man of flesh I see in my brother is dead in Christ. Christ died for all his people so that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves. One of the worst ways we live unto ourselves is by becoming entangled in the yoke of bondage as judge our brethren. Christ died for us that we should live unto Christ by doing for our brethren what Christ did for us by bearing their sin and restoring them to Christ with the gospel.

The moment our sinful heart of flesh makes any other thing but Christ, necessary, Paul says, "*Christ shall profit you nothing.*" Be it to obtain God's favor for ourselves or requiring it for others. Be it to improve our standing in God's favor for ourselves or for others. Be it to keep God's favor for ourselves or for others. While we are in that yoke of bondage, Christ profits us nothing. We cannot see Christ or rejoice in the gospel while in that bondage.

Still, since Christ everlastingly loved his own, made us righteous in him and put away all our sin even when our sinful flesh rises up and causes us to be entangled in legal bondage, it does not change our standing in Christ. Christ always profits those he redeemed. He comes again and purges our consciences from those dead works, making us behold our Liberty and our brother's Liberty, is being Complete in Christ. When Christ has once again brought us down to his feet then Christ shall make us once again be helpers of one another's joy in meekness and lowliness as we, from a broken and contrite heart, speak the truth of Christ our Righteousness to one another.

Amen!