

VOTC Sept # 4 – Galatians 5:13-15 “Called to Freedom”

Hello listener and welcome to our final episode here at Voice of the Church. Today we conclude our series in Galatians on the topic of “Gospel Freedom.” Today, we want to think about how the gospel frees us up to serve others in love.

Introduction

There is a story from the Civil War era about a man who went down to the **slave auction** to buy a young slave girl. As the young girl looked at the white man bidding on her, she figured he was just another white man who was going to *buy* her and then *abuse* her. But after the man won the bid, he said to her these words as they walked away from the auction:

“Young lady, *you are free.*” She said, “What does that mean?” “It means you are free.” “Does that mean,” she said, “that I can say whatever I want to say?” The man said, “Yes my dear, you can say whatever you want to say.” “Does that mean,” she said, “that I can be whatever I want to be?” He said, “Yes, you can be whatever you want to be.” “Does that mean that I can go wherever I want to go?” He said, “Yes, you can go wherever you want to go.” The girl, with tears streaming down her face, said, “Then I will go with you.”

Dear listener, God’s Grace frees us in a *similar way*. The love of Jesus *frees* us from the chains of sin and death and *enables* us to love God and serve our neighbor from heart’s that are set free. Our text here begins with...

Called to Freedom

You were *called to freedom*, brothers! What a beautiful summary of Christianity! So many people think of Christianity as bondage, rules, etc. That is a gross mischaracterization. In Christianity, we follow a Savior who gave his life for our sins to deliver us from this present evil age. Even though the way is costly, & requires sacrifice, in Christ, we belong to our Father in heaven who fully secures and cares for us! What a glorious freedom we enjoy!

1. People in the world love that word freedom. We thank and praise God for the freedoms we enjoy in our country that come at the cost of others. People talk a lot today about religious freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of expression. What does this word mean in a Christian context?
2. What’s the answer? Here we see Christian freedom leads to service. Again, Paul shows us there are only 2 ways to serve - we either serve ourselves & our sin, or we serve others in love.
 - a. Paul says, “*don’t use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh.*” This is the kind of thinking that say, Jesus went to the cross to forgive me, now I can live however I want. Paul says, “*a man will reap what he sows.*” Jesus warns **Jn. 8:34**, *everyone who commits sin a slave of sin.*
 - b. We are free in Christ not so we can go back to sin, or to the commandments of men, b/c that is going back to bondage. But we are free not to indulge the flesh, or walk in selfishness, but free to walk in love and sacrificial service for others.

3. What does God really want for your life at the end of the day? What should your life be about? How should you spend your days here on earth? There are many laws in the bible, both in the OT and NT for Christian conduct. But Paul they are all summarized in this word: “*you shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” The Holy Spirit is writing the essence of this law on the heart of every Christian.
 - a. YOU – that is, redeemed Christian who are set free in Christ.
 - b. SHALL LOVE this is not merely a feeling, but an action God calls us to. “*Don’t bite and devour one another.*” Don’t show hatred, or act in selfishness, but sacrificially and selflessly love in word and in deed all people.
 - c. YOUR NEIGHBOR – Jesus was once asked the question, who is my neighbor? He shows us that our neighbor is all kinds of people, especially those diff from us - 1st, your actual neighbor. All sorts of people – love your non-Christian neighbor, your LGBTQ neighbor, your Muslim neighbor, your homeless neighbor, your neighbor who doesn’t vote like you or look like you or live like you. Love them. Serve them. Pray for them. Do good to them in the name of Christ!
 - d. AS YOURSELF - care for others even as you care for yourself.
 - e. In Christ, our good works don’t contribute one ounce to our salvation, b/c Christ alone is enough. But God calls us to walk in good works for the good of others! Luther put it this way, “God doesn’t need your good works, but your neighbor does.” Seasons of life may change w/ lockdowns & pandemics, but this law never changes for God’s people. We are called at all times to walk in love for our neighbors for God’s glory.
4. Here we find a great *paradox* in the Christian life. We are free in Christ, no longer slaves to sin, death, or hell. But we are to make ourselves slaves of our fellow man. B/c a servant is not greater than his master, and if Jesus came to serve and give himself a ransom for many, we are too are to follow in his steps as we serve others in love.
5. The gospel liberates us in such a way that we begin to offer this love and service to others freely because we know how much God has loved us in the gospel.

Conclusion

*How foolish it would be for that young slave girl to reject the man who had purchased her freedom and to go back to the chains of an awful slavery. That is what we do when we serve ourselves our serve our sin. We put the chains back on ourselves. Dear listener may you know the freedom that Jesus has won for his people by his gospel, and may you stand firm in the freedom. May you also share that freedom to a world in chains. And serve one another in love with hearts that have been set free in Christ. Amen.

It’s been a pleasure to consider the topic of Gospel Freedom with you in the book of Galatians. We hope you’ll join us next month for a brand-new series here at VOTC. Until then, may you enjoy living in the freedom that Christ has won for you.