

TODAY'S VERSES:

Galatians 5:1-4

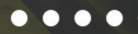
THIS WEEK, I WANT TO FOCUS ON THIS TRUTH OF
WHAT JESUS HAS DONE, IS DOING, WILL DO...

MY NOTES:

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| FOR FREEDOM'S SAKE.
| GALATIANS 5:1-4

Galatians

TO THE CHURCHES IN GALATIA



Galatians

TO THE
CHURCHES
IN GALATIA

FOR FREEDOM'S SAKE. GALATIANS 5:1-4

For thousands of years, fellowship with God had been established through observance of the Law, but the Law was always a time of winter—a time of waiting. There are different modes of travel that are appropriate during the winter season. If you try to use winter modes of travel (e.g., snowshoes, snowmobiles, etc.) during springtime (when everything has melted), you will get stuck and no longer be able to travel. Similarly, the false teachers in Galatia wanted the Galatians to use the Law in a season where it was no longer needed—through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus fulfilled the Law.

- **As in N.T. Wright's analogy, how do you often "try to travel across the lake" – on your old ways or through Jesus?**

If we want to walk in relationship with Jesus, we cannot cling to the Law. If we do cling to the Law, we are declaring that we don't want to belong to Jesus. Paul says throughout the book of Galatians that we have been set free from **empty religion** (a passionless religion with no joy or life in it), **fear-based behavioral modification** (thinking God is looking to give us a spanking when we get out of line), and **pursuit of pleasures that never deliver what they promise** (the futility of being our own God).

Read Galatians 5:1-4.

- **What does it mean to be truly set free by the Gospel?**
- **How have you experienced freedom from the following?**
 - **empty religion**
 - **fear-based behavioral modification**
 - **pursuit of pleasures that never deliver what they promise.**

If we try to be our own god, then we are left to answer all of life's big questions on our own:

- *"What's your purpose in life?"*
- *"What do you do with suffering and loss?"*

If you are your own god, you rely on yourself for everything. Paul is telling us something we so desperately need to hear in our culture: we have been set free from that weight. We have been set free for what purpose? Freedom.

WEEK NINETEEN

- **Do you struggle answering questions like, "What's your purpose in your life?" and "What do you do with suffering and loss?"**
- **What do your answers, or lack thereof, reveal about who is in control of your life?**
- **How have you been set free from relying on yourself?**

If we could boil a cultural definition of freedom down to one sentence, it would probably be: *"Freedom is ultimately being able to do what I want most."* If you try to block people from what they want to do most, they feel as though you've taken their "freedom" from them. The Bible says that in Jesus, we have been set free to instead walk in REAL freedom... **freedom from ourselves.**

- **How does the culture we live in define freedom?**
- **How could we explain what true freedom is to the people who buy into that cultural definition?**

The Gospel of Jesus Christ not only saves us, it sustains us—meaning we never move on or graduate from the Gospel. We must preach the Gospel to ourselves. From the moment God wakes our hearts until the moment He calls us home, we make our stand in/on the Gospel.

- **How does the Gospel save and sustain us?**
- **Why is it important that the Gospel provides salvation and sustenance?**

Grace is beautiful because while it freely acknowledges our failures it doesn't gloss over our shortcomings, it covers them. The Law will never be a comfort, whether it's Judaism or our own personal law; the Law can do nothing other than condemn us. Grace leads us to remember that we are saved and sustained by God Himself. That is good news.

- **Do you believe grace is beautiful in how it acknowledges AND covers our failures?**
- **How can we celebrate the sweetness of grace together?**
- **Take an assessment of your life. How much time do you focus on yourself/issues of life vs. the Gospel?**
- **How can we challenge each other to focus more on the Gospel this week, and less on ourselves?**

Paul couldn't be more clear with the Galatians as to what ultimately counts: it is the Gospel.