

## 20260426 Stand Firm In Your Freedom – Ps Bijoy

### Galatians 5:1-12

“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.

Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again, I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. “A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.” I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!”

The most fundamental choice any of us will ever make is the choice between slavery and freedom. After defending and explaining the Gospel of grace, Paul now shows us how to live it. At the heart of this practical application is a vital choice: will we live in the freedom Christ won, or slip back into slavery?

#### **Slavery or Freedom**

In Galatians 5:1, the Apostle Paul issues a clarion call: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.” Christ didn't just open the prison door for us to sit in the cell; He brought us out. But Paul adds a vital command: Stand firm. True freedom requires us to stay awake and alert, because the "yoke of slavery" is always trying to slip back over our shoulders.

The greatest threat to this freedom is the blend of grace and works. We live in a performance-based world that demands we earn our keep, and unfortunately, many find this same pressure in their Christian life. When people add extra-biblical demands or human rules as a means to gain God's favour, they replace the gospel with a burden of guilt. While rules can be helpful for wise living, they are never a currency to buy God's love.

This pressure to "measure up" extends to our daily lives - through the sting of a coach's conditional approval, the weight of an employer's expectations, or the pain of a spouse's disappointment. We all face the trauma of rejection.

How do we maintain our stance in a world that judges us by our successes? We must daily, even hourly remind ourselves that we are "accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6). Our security doesn't rest on our performance, but on our position in Christ. Because He lives in us, we are secure children of God, liberated from the guilt of sin today and its presence tomorrow.

Ultimately, your enslavement is voluntary. No one can force the yoke back onto your shoulders unless you willingly surrender your neck. You have been liberated at a great cost. Do not let the judgments of man steal the liberty of God. Stand firm.

### **Law or Grace 2-6**

In Galatians 5:2-4, Paul warns that returning to the law as a means of pleasing God carries disastrous consequences. Using circumcision as his example, he demonstrates that when it comes to spiritual freedom, there are no "small concessions." A tiny compromise in doctrine can lead to a total collapse of faith.

Paul outlines three specific dangers of choosing the law:

- Christ becomes of no value: By adding human effort to the Gospel, you are essentially saying Christ's sacrifice was not enough.
- You are bound to the whole law: The law is an all-or-nothing proposition. Like a chain, if you break one link, you have broken the entire system.
- You abandon grace: Seeking justification through rules alienates you from the very grace that sets you free.

While our modern struggles may not involve circumcision, the principle remains: small decisions have enormous consequences. For the believer, the Gospel of grace is a "hill to die on." To compromise here is to trade the liberty of Christ for the chains of legalism.

### **Circumcision or the Cross 7-12**

In the next few verses, he points out the five dangers of living by the law instead of living by grace.

1. It stops our spiritual progress.

“You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?” (Galatians 5:7). Here the picture is of a runner who was doing well until someone cut in and knocked him off stride. This is what the Judaizers had done. It is sobering to realize that all of us are either helping or hindering our friends in their race for the Lord. Ask yourself this question: “Does my example bring my friends closer to Christ or am I pulling them farther away from him?”

2. It pulls us away from God.

“That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you” (Galatians 5:8). This is the logical consequence of a bad example. Paul wants the Galatians to know that though the Judaizers claimed to be speaking for God, it was not true. As he says elsewhere, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (see II Corinthians 3:17). It is God’s will that his children be free, not bound once again in the chains of a suffocating legalism.

3. It leads to other errors.

“A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough” (Galatians 5:9). Here Paul reminds them that one act of disobedience soon leads to another. Just as you have to tell a second lie and a third and a fourth to cover up for the first lie, in this case, taking even a tiny step toward the law soon leads to total enslavement.

4. It produces spiritual confusion.

“I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be” (Galatians 5:10). It seems clear that Paul did not personally know the Judaizers who were misleading the Galatians. He only knows that they will be judged by God for teaching false doctrine to impressionable young Christians. Their emphasis on circumcision had led to enormous spiritual confusion and caused many of these new believers to waver in their trust in the Lord. We must preach the Gospel in its entirety since it has eternal consequences.

5. It removes the stigma of the Cross.

“Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished” (Galatians 5:11). Paul could have avoided the controversy that dogged his steps if only he would stop preaching the cross of Christ as the only hope of salvation. If only he would start preaching circumcision, his critics would be happy and would leave him alone. But that was something Paul would not do. The cross was the center of his faith. Let others preach circumcision. He would preach Christ crucified. In the cross there is forgiveness, freedom, liberation, new life, abundant

life, access to God, membership in God's family, redemption, reconciliation, peace with God, eternal life, and the hope of heaven. Why would anyone exchange that for the approval of man?

**The only thing that matters is knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.**

In the end it is faith in Christ that moves the heart of God. When you tell the Father that you are trusting His Son as your Savior, you are saved, born again, redeemed, reconciled, welcomed into God's family, adopted, justified, regenerated, and given eternal life. And it all comes as a free gift from heaven on the simple and single condition of wholehearted trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a pastor, I have the privilege of hearing miraculous testimonies of how God saves the very people others thought were beyond reach. It's a miracle, indeed it is. Every conversion is a miracle, but sometimes the miracle is very obvious. I draw two lessons from these testimonies I hear. First, never give up on your friends and loved ones. Those who seem so hardened against the Lord today may by God's grace be drawn to the Savior tomorrow. Keep on praying and keep on believing for a true miracle of conversion. Second, the way to heaven is simple because God has made it simple. Anyone, anywhere can be saved anytime.

The only thing that matters is knowing Jesus Christ as Savior through faith that works by love. Do you know him? Are you trusting him?