



Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

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The Liberty in Which We Stand (Galatians 5:1)

Believers are to remember the Lord's death until He comes whenever they take communion. As we partake of the bread and the cup, we come together and we are nourished, spiritually nourished for the purpose of being strengthened in the inner man. As

we remember what Jesus Christ has done in our behalf, we are encouraged to endure in the faith. We began in grace, being saved by grace through faith. Grace, faith, and repentance are all gifts of God, flowing from His grace and from His love. We are exhorted to remain in this estate of grace.

We are to **stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not be again entangled with the yoke of bondage. Galatians 5:1.**

In Galatians, Paul addresses the false teachings of the Judaizers, who were teaching that these new Gentile believers in Galatia needed to be circumcised in addition to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This would be grace plus law. Paul calls it no gospel at all: no good news in that!

In Galatians 4 Paul asks, "Why exchange one bondage for another?" He has shown that by law no one is justified before God, that no law was ever given that could impart life, and that the law served only in a preparatory way. It was temporary, but the covenant in Christ's blood is permanent. Salvation is by grace through Promise, not law-keeping or performance.

God sent forth the Spirit of His Son. Paul is baffled. God the Father adopted the believing Galatians as sons and sent forth the Spirit into their hearts. They received the Holy Spirit and should be conscious of their sonship (Romans 8:15). Salvation was bought for God's people by the Son and wrought in their hearts by the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Son, the Spirit of the Father.

The believer is no longer a slave, but a son, and the true believer knows he is a son, and an heir. Are the believing Galatians going to go back to their former state of slavery? Will they exchange heathenism for Judaism? They had been slaves to those who by nature are no gods. Idolatry always spells slavery, of fear and of moral and spiritual degradation. They came to that place where they were known by God, so why are they turning back to something having no power to help achieve salvation in any way? Salvation is by grace, by Promise. Judaistic bondage is no better than paganistic. Those who are sons in position are to walk in the blessedness of the estate of grace in order to be sons in disposition. Adoption implies transformation. Deliverance means freedom of ACCESS, access to the Father. Does that mean anything?

The Judaizers prided themselves in being "sons of Abraham." The Galatians were impressed and influenced accordingly. But Abraham had two sons, one by the slave-woman Hagar and one by the free-woman Sarah. Law-keeping, law-observance, as the path of salvation makes one similar to Ishmael. The exercise of one's freedom in Christ and Christ alone with nothing added to this good news, this Gospel of Grace and the Promise, makes one a true son of Abraham, like

Isaac, the son of Abraham which the true God recognized. Isaac was the son by Promise, the son of Abraham which God recognized in the line of the Covenant of Grace.

Christ delivered the believer from the bondage of sin, from slavery to sin. This is a rescue: Rescue from the guilt and power of sin (Romans 6:18); rescue from an accusing conscience (Hebrews 10:22), rescue from the wrath of God (Romans 5:1, Heb. 10:27); rescue from the tyranny of Satan and the kingdom of darkness (2 Timothy 2:25, 26, Hebrews 2:14); and particularly here, rescue and freedom from “the law” (Galatians 5:1, 13) referring to deliverance from the curse which the law pronounces upon the sinner who had been striving unsuccessfully to achieve his own righteousness (Galatians 3:13, 22-26; 4:1-7). He has been delivered from the results of the law’s inability to make alive what is dead (Gal. 3:21), to give life. He has been delivered and freed from fear, the fear arising from the error that both the moral and ceremonial law must be strictly obeyed in order that one be saved. It is freedom from the oppressing awareness of one’s total inability to meet the demands of the Law. (Gal. 3:23; 4:21-31; Romans 7:24-8:2)

O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Who will deliver me from the bonds of this death? (Romans 7:24)

Okay. The believer is delivered from, but what is the deliverance to? The believer has been delivered to the kingdom of God’s dear Son, by grace. He has been turned to Christ and salvation in Him (Phil. 3:4-9).

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1, 2)

Look at this! Freedom in and through Christ is **more than deliverance**. Deliverance takes us to some neutral place. Freedom is a positive, the state in which a person is walking and living in the Holy Spirit. (Gal. 5:25) What the law could not do, God did through Christ and the Spirit (Romans 8:3, 4).

This liberty is characterized by delighting in the law of God in one’s inmost self (Romans 7:22). God is not lawless. Lawlessness is sin. But we have no ability to keep the Law or to please God or to fully obey God on our own. We can do absolutely nothing apart from Jesus Christ, who with the Father sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within the true believer. The person who is truly free no longer behaves/acts from constraint but serves God willingly, happily, with gratitude in his heart. The truly free person has access to the Father. That is life, knowing the Father, the Source and Supplier of all life and blessing. (Gal. 4:6; Romans 8:15)

A person declared not guilty walks out of the courtroom a free man. When a slave is set free, he is a free man. But that’s just leaving the courtroom. A person can receive mercy, not receiving what he deserves, but grace is more than mercy. Grace is like the Deliverer adopting the accused and now acquitted person as his son, taking that person into his own family as a son. Access implies the right to the inheritance.

Christ Himself sets a person free. We are not set free because we deserve it or by our own merits or by our own deeds. Christ became a curse for us. He died and paid the penalty exacted by the Law. He gave Himself as the offering that satisfies God’s justice. By that sacrifice, by His Blood, His life poured out, we have redemption. Christ did it and is constantly doing it through His Spirit (Gal. 3:2, 3, 14; 4:6, 29; Romans 8:4).

Whenever [*ean*] the Son sets you free, you are free indeed. (John 8:36)

Would Christ set a person free only to transfer that person to another prison? To a different kind of bondage? Jesus set us free to be free indeed, to remain free, to continue to stand firm in this freedom. Don't go back into bondage. Keep going with the Holy Spirit. Be firmly rooted so you won't be moved in the hurricane. Offer resistance and defeat the enemy (Eph. 6:10-20).

Stand firm in order to continue in the place where God is active. (Mt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10)
Overcome. Do not be loaded down again with a yoke of slavery. (Acts 15:10) The yoke of the law with all its regulations and man-made traditions caused Israel to groan under that yoke. Beware highly elaborate systems of religion and ritualism.

It is dangerous to abandon grace for Law. Paul explains what the believer loses when he turns from God's grace to man-made rules and regulations.

You lose your liberty. Paul says in Galatians 3:24 that the law has been a school-master or tutor to lead to Christ, in order that by faith believers might be justified. He compares being under the law with being then children of Hagar, a bondswoman. (Galatians 4:21-31) It is a yoke of slavery. (See Peter's comment, Acts 15:10.) The yoke can represent slavery, service, and control by someone else over your own life. It can also represent willing service and submission to someone else. God delivered Israel from Egyptian servitude and so broke a yoke (Lev. 26:13). A farmer uses a yoke to control and guide oxen because they would not willingly serve if free.

We lost the yoke of slavery to sin and put on the yoke of Christ (Mt. 11:28-30). The yoke of religion puts heavy burdens on us, but Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light. Christ's yoke is kind, gracious, and frees us to fulfill His will. The unsaved person wears a yoke of sin (Lam. 1:14) and the religious legalist wears the yoke of bondage, but the true believer who depends on God's grace wears the yoke of Christ. (Romans 6:18-22) Yes, we wear a yoke. The New Covenant in Christ's Blood is a bond that cannot be broken. We have the Holy Spirit internally leading us, making crooked places straight, keeping us in the Way, Jesus Christ.

God's grace is sufficient. The Holy Spirit frees us from ourselves, from the tyranny of our "selves," from sin and slavery to sin and the sin nature. He does this as we live in the Spirit, are led by the Spirit, love in the Spirit, and keep in step with the Spirit. He is the Life-Producer and the One who produces the fruit in the believer as we abide in Christ as branch to vine. (John 15) When we are slaves to sin, when we go back under the law; we lose our liberty for which Christ set us free. Whenever we turn from grace to law, we lose our wealth; we fall from the estate of grace. We are robbed. We do not lose our salvation. We fall out of the sphere of God's grace by deciding to live in the sphere of Law. That moves us toward another gospel and disobeying the truth. (Gal. 5:2-6) We lose our direction. (Gal. 5:7-12) The Holy Spirit enables us to fulfill the Law of Love, to overcome the flesh, and to produce fruit. He gives us life. He keeps on producing this life as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. (Craig, Mary. *The Just Shall Live by Faith*. Fort Lauderdale, FL: Mary Craig Ministries, Inc. 2017-2018)

I'm adapting what follows from the message "For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free" given May 29, 1983, on Galatians 5:1-5 by John Piper. His web site is: www.desiringgod.org. John Piper notes: "The key to freedom is whether we have to do the work ourselves to escape punishment, or whether our Father comes down to be with us and help us." He says, "Any act is wrong that we do to bribe God for blessings." We are not to let a system bewitch us or think any outward act of obedience can be offered to God as a benefit to HIM so as to make God in debt to us.

“Look what I did, God; You owe me.” All benefits given by Jesus Christ are paid from His own investment at Calvary. He invested in the bank of God’s glory, an investment so great that the dividends are infinite, endless, and available to all who are not trying to earn them with their own investments. These types of investments nullify grace (Gal. 2:21) and remove the stumbling block of the Cross (Gal. 5:11).

Instead we must admit that we have no assets to invest and that what Christ did is sufficient. We are to trust Christ, believing that He is merciful and gracious and shares with us.

The mindset of slavery is the mindset of a debtor. It’s the favor system of the world. I did you a favor, so now you must do me a favor. And likewise, though we feel the pressure to pay back, we have a debt so huge that only what Jesus did can pay it back. We must receive the grace in gratitude.

But be warned of this: If we think that we work for God because He has given us so much, we may start operating as though God’s free gift was and is a loan to be repaid, or advance wages to be earned. Now we are debtors of a different sort, and not operating as sons. This, too, is slavery. In the case of the free gift of eternal life, our debt would be unending. Instead, we must accept and receive the gift of eternal life and live with a sense of joyful indebtedness. We must not diminish the Cross and God’s glory. We are not to insult the Spirit of Grace. Jesus paid it all. It is a finished work. But God’s work is not just past, it is also present and future, not just for us but in us. God is pleased when He sees Himself working in us, bearing fruit. (Hebrews 13:21)

Freedom depends on grace. We are to stand in the freedom for which Christ has set us free. The experience of freedom is enjoyed when we depend on the grace of Christ. Slavery happens when we fall away from the power of grace. We are to approach God at the Throne of Grace boldly in order that we might obtain mercy and find grace and favor in a timely way. ! Corinthians 15:10 gives us Paul’s attitude toward all of this. God exerts grace in our lives. Romans 5:21 Don’t yield to systems of slavery. Do yield in submission to Christ. Doing so makes obedience an adventure as we watch God work. God desires our freedom, “uncompromising, unrelenting, indomitable freedom” (John Piper). Our lives began by the work of the Holy Spirit. Our lives continue by the work of the Holy Spirit. Living in the power of the Holy Spirit keeps us free. <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/for-freedom-christ-has-set-us-free>

Stand fast in the freedom for which Christ has set you free.

Just the Messenger,

Mary Craig

Mary Craig, D. Min.

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 2 Corinthians 3:17



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