

08.11.24

Galatians
Chapter 5 - Christ Sets Free
Stay Free (vs.1)

Galatians 5:1: It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

We come to a verse that has a cumulative effect. It actually is in some ways what the whole book is about. It's about the freedom of Christ. Why did Christ come? Well, the passage tells us, it was for freedom that He came to set you free.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:17 that where the Spirit of God is, there's liberty; there's great freedom. The

question is, what is he talking about when he's talking about freedom? I mean, is he talking about disobedience and rebelliousness? Is he talking about a unsubmitive spirit? We know that Jesus Himself was obedient, even to the point of death on the cross. Philippians 2 tells us that. Scripture tells us as well that we need to be obedient, but how? Well, Romans 6 says that we become obedient from the heart. Well, that's the freedom. It clearly is not as much about the external, but the freedom that we have within. If you think about it, the problems that we have, the prisons that we're in are really more internal than external. The anxieties that we have, the anger that we have, the sense of oppression and fear and paranoia, those things are really what imprison us. So, when we talk about the gospel, we're talking about that which frees us from these things. We live in a world that is very unfree and very hostile, and there are going to be times where we might suffer loss here. Paul, actually many times, writes from a prison. So, here's a guy writing from prison going, "You can be free."

If you look with me, there's an interesting passage in Ephesians 3, and how he starts off is,

(Ephesians 3:1) “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ...”

We know that he's in prison at this point, and one of the things that he's trying to convey to those that are in Ephesus is, “It's a mystery that I'm in prison; not just that I'm in prison, but I'm in prison for you, that is the Gentiles.” In Acts 28, it actually ends with Paul being in prison and under house arrest and really having, surprisingly enough, one of his greatest ministries in prison. We think that the external is really what it's all about, but God reveals you can be out of prison and be in prison and you can be in prison and be out of prison. God reveals to us what true freedom is about.

When I think about a passage like Philippians 1, as he begins to write the church at Philippi, he states that he's in prison, but he also conveys that a lot of effectual doors have opened up for him. In fact, the whole Pretoria and many of the Praetorian Guard, which are ultimately going to be the senators in the Roman Government and maybe

even a Caesar out of them, were coming to know the Lord. One of the reasons why the whole Roman government did this basic transition was because of the great gospel that was being preached, and it was all because he was in prison.

In fact, what's interesting, if you look with me in Hebrews 10, it's written that there were many that had been going through a lot of difficulty. The way that it's written, if you look in Hebrews 10:32, "The point is that I want you to remember the former days and I want you to remember the difficulty that you went through. The question is, why would you suffer loss willingly?"

(Hebrews 10:32) "But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,

(Hebrews 10:33) partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.

(Hebrews 10:34) For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property..."

Who does that?

The point is that maybe on the external it looked like they were prisoners, but they weren't. They did this willingly with great joy. So, as we come to this passage, we want you to understand that when Paul is talking about freedom, he is not necessarily talking about the freedom from people on the external. People are going to be mean. We're in a world that is like that, but you can find freedom in the gospel. The reason why the gospel is proclaimed, its very name means "good news," and the good news means not only that it's beneficial, but it's virtuous and it brings such wonderful things with it. So, God has given us good news.

What is the good news? Well, the good news, according to Galatians 5:1 is that Christ has come to set us free, and He wants us to stand firm in that. He doesn't want us to move off of this. He doesn't want us to in any way subject ourselves to the things that would oppress us; specifically, as we're looking in the book of Galatians, those things which would imprison us; the things that man would place on us.

So, as you go back to Galatians 1, it's important since we look in Galatians 5:1, as it really is kind of a summary statement that we ask ourselves, "Well, what specifically is he talking about freedom?" If you look with me in Galatians 1, we're going to see as we go through the book briefly, as we've already gone through it, but hopefully as you begin to see specifically what he's talking about when he's talking about setting us free, what is he talking about? Well, Galatians 1:3 is a great beginning because he makes reference to the fact that the favor of God, the grace of God is upon us and the sense of well-being. Here again, who has well-being? Who has a sense of fulfillment, satisfaction, and peace in their life? "*Eirēnē*," the Greek word that is used makes reference to a sense of that oneness, but it gives that wonderful picture of literally, "I couldn't ask for anything more." The passage tells us that this comes from God. It doesn't come from man; it doesn't come from the things that you do, and it doesn't come from the external circumstances that come

upon you. It comes from God. So, the favor of God brings those things, brings a sense of well-being.

(Galatians 1:3) “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

(Galatians 1:4) who gave Himself for our sins...”

Ah, now he's getting specific. That's extremely good news, that I wouldn't have to pay for my sins. As the psalmist puts it, God doesn't reward us according to our deeds, but according to His mercy. I'm so thankful for that. If we do reap any kind of discipline, it is because He's directing us. It's not because He's punishing us. There is a difference between discipline and punishment. Punishment means you get what you deserve; discipline is God directing us and teaching us through those things. The passage tells us that He gave himself for our sins so that He might deliver us. Well, there's the freedom. Deliver us from what? One of the great problems with sin is that it leads us astray. All we like sheep have gone astray. We go our own ways. Our thought is, according to Proverbs, that there is a way which seems right in a man's eyes, but the end thereof is death. By virtue of us making our own decisions and going

our own way. Ok, at first it might seem really good and like it works, but it basically works until it doesn't. Then when it doesn't, it's not good, and we begin to reap some of the ramifications of the things and the decisions that we've made and in so doing, we ultimately get to a point going, "I need help." It is that which Christ saves us from. If you look in the passage, not only the results of our sin, but if you look at verse 4,

"Who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age..."

Strangely enough, the decisions that we make place us in the realm of a world that is virtually harsh, hateful, deceptive and repressive. I mean, you think of all the descriptions of this world in which we live. It's not a friendly place to live. Though, on the external, people may show some facsimile of kindness, you still sense that oppression. In fact, I'm sure that probably most of us have been in particular places where the oppression seems extremely thick. You can feel the darkness in the place that you come in, and in so doing, your hope is that you

could be rescued out of this. The world that we live in is like that.

It's also interesting that there's a Psalm in Psalm 50:21, in which the psalmist talks about the fact that oftentimes when it seems like God is not in the picture and He keeps silent and that's actually the way it's put; God says, "I kept silent," but He goes on, He says, "and you thought I was just like you." Man does what he does, God gives him enough rope to hang himself, so to speak, and in the silence, we begin to think, "Well, maybe God's just like the world. Maybe God is harsh." One of the problems of religion is that it has sort of piggybacked on the world's way of thinking because religion has oftentimes been extremely harsh and oppressive and demanding, but that's not our gospel. If your religion is harsh and oppressive and demanding, then where's the good news? I don't get it. The good news is that Jesus is saving you from that; from a world that is like that. The whole context of Galatians is about the oppressiveness of man.

That's why he starts off, if you go back to Galatians 1:1,

“Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father...”

As you go on in Chapter 1, he's saying there's no different gospel because this gospel has nothing to do with man. Why? Because man is harsh and hateful and resentful. I mean, you go to Titus 3, and he literally describes the way we used to be, but God is not like that. Though, we might do a projectionist type thing on God and go, “Well, I think You're just like me.” He's not like you. God is not like us, and that's why we call Him holy. There's nobody like Him. He doesn't think like us. “I know, but He's harsher.” No, He's less harsh. He's loving. God is love. So, the very fact that Jesus Christ came and died for your sins is demonstrating to us that He's far more loving than you are. You wouldn't die for somebody else's sins, especially if they hated you, but while we were yet sinners, Christ would die for you. This is good news. He's taking us out of the hatred and the acrimony of the world, and He's now placing us into a different kingdom, a different hope. So, the fundamental focus of Galatians is that He came to

deliver us from “this present evil age.” See what it says there? Now, when we look at this, we begin to realize that we're fundamentally in this world before we come to Christ in what I would call a confinement of hopelessness. We're in a prison of sorts of hopelessness.

I like 1 Thessalonians 4 because it says we are not as those who have no hope. We now have hope, but can you imagine living in a world that is so hostile towards one another, and yet realizing that there's no place to go? “Where do I go from here?” Well, in the grave, I guess that's it, or worse, but we have hope, and we have somebody that loves us, and it's one of the wonderful things about the church. When you come into the church, and you start talking with people that actually seem to care for you, and they seem to be genuine. They seem to care for what's going on in your life. They are interested in you. Does that sound like the world? Well, once again, they might outwardly convey those kinds of thoughts but do they really? The genuineness of the body of Christ; by virtue of Christ saving us, it brings us into a realm of hopefulness, really within the passage. Let me just say

this, that would seem to be unattainable, that God would rescue us by virtue of perhaps, “my goodness,” because who could be worthy enough to be rescued by God?

(Ecclesiastes 7:20) “Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.”

In the book of Job, they'll begin to ask the question, “Who can be justified before God?” But to imagine that Christ came and saved us, that's a freeing thought; that it wasn't because of anything that I did.

But as you go into Galatians, the second thing that he really wants to demonstrate is, not only are we freed from this kind of confinement of the sense of hopelessness, but we're actually freed from a treachery of rivalry. I don't know if you notice or not, but people are fairly competitive. You might have been watching some of that recently, but the way that it's put in Ecclesiastes 4:4 is,

“... every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor...”

Every skill, every work, somebody's competing with somebody in some way.

Paul really demonstrates this if you look within the passage and his whole emphasis is that the gospel frees us from having to compete and strive against, as well as try to please man. It just frees us from that. If somebody comes up and says, “Well, I can do this better than you,” You go, “Thankful for you brother. I don't need to compete with you. I'm glad that you have it. I have a crown in heaven too.”

So, his point is,

(Galatians 1:10) “For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? ...”

He's going to then say that this thought and desire to only please God takes us out of the whole rat race. That's part of that whole “evil age,” and I would say specifically the whole rat race of rivalry, and Paul even admits, “I was in it.”

His statement, if you look at the passage,

(Galatians 1:13) “For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.”

And you say, “Why would you do that Paul?” And I think the answer is in verse 14,

“And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries...”

Well, that kind of reeks with rivalry, doesn't it?

“...among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous...”

I mean, people will compete with anything. They'll compete about who's most humble. It doesn't matter what you're talking about.

But what's interesting in verse 15 is the sense of realization, “But I realize now that everything I have and everything that I'll be is something that God gave me, not on basis of anything that I've competed for.” The way he describes it in verse 15 is this,

(Galatians 1:15) “...when God, who had set me apart even from my mother’s womb...”

Well, I'm pretty sure there's nothing fantastic he had done during that time that would merit in any way any kind of position or anything. His point is it was by His grace that He did it. The Scripture is letting us know that our gospel is based on once again, just the goodness of God, period, and that really sets me free. I don't have to worry about what somebody else is doing, and I don't have to look better than somebody else. God sees my heart. He's made me the way that I am. He's made me very unique for a particular purpose and how wonderful it is that I just have to please Him. I just have to love him with all my heart, seek what He wants.

Then if you look in Galatians 2, he's going to reveal not only the fact that we've been set free from a sense of confinement and hopelessness from the world that we're in and the sin that will so easily beset us; not only that we would be free from the treachery of rivalry that often comes within our lives and our and all around us, but if

you look in Galatians 2, He's going to free us from that sense of cruelty, of exclusion where you think, "I wish I could be a part of this particular group, but I'm just not good enough for them." How wonderful it is to understand that that our faith has nothing to do with you being a part of a group. It was one of the great arguments there in First Corinthians 1 where some were even at that time saying, "I'm of Paul," "I'm of Peter," "I'm of..." So, Paul says, "Why are you doing this? We're followers of Christ." And once again, I guess it's that sense of competitiveness, but we form these esoteric clubs of elitism perhaps for the purpose of feeling superior. We know that they exist, which they sometimes exist in a church. I remember at one time going in into church and realizing I'm an outsider. If you've ever had that sort of feeling, you just know, "I'm an outsider." Quite frankly, there's probably no way I was going to get inside because that's just the way it was set up. You have these that are in their hierarchies, and they're established. They're not where they are because God loves them and because they love God, they're just there because maybe they've earned some badges or something like that.

So, you come into Galatians 2, and he begins to deal with that particular issue because he's setting free the Galatians that have found themselves entrapped in rivalry and in the sense of hopelessness and now, in a sense of exclusion; being pushed out.

His statement is, if you look at the end of Galatians 2:4, that people have spied out their liberty and have come to put them in bondage, and it's under the guise of,

(Galatians 2:6) “... from those who were of high reputation...”

Another way of putting that, just to transliterate the Greek within the text, they were perceived as somehow seemingly higher by quality or by mannerisms, not unlike the Pharisees who had the long robes; not unlike the people that have degrees and pedigrees. The sense is that these guys are really special. Paul goes, “That they seem special makes no difference to me.” How freeing could that be?

(Galatians 2:6) “But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.”

If you sit around with somebody that is resting on their laurels, and they seem to like talking about themselves, when you walk away, you go, “I'm not sure that benefited me.” Because there's not really a sense that they were there to help you. They were just there to let you know just how wonderful they were. That might have made them feel better, but I'm not sure that it really ministered to anybody. The point of the gospel is that the gospel is that which saves and sets people free. It doesn't oppress them, and it doesn't make them feel excluded. It doesn't make them feel like they are a nobody.

If you go all the way to the book of Revelation, you remember the seven churches in Asia Minor? There's one in particular, Church of Philadelphia. That's kind of ironic because you know the name itself, “brotherly love,” probably like our own Philadelphia, couldn't be further from the truth. I've sort of found like in politics, whatever

they say, it's the opposite. Anyway, I won't get into politics. In Revelation 3:7, he begins to talk to the Church of Philadelphia and the reason why he begins to talk to them is that they're actually being oppressed. Specifically, interestingly enough, by Judaism, that is saying basically, "You're a nobody because you're not in with us."

(Revelation 3:7) "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens..."

In other words, God says, "Who do you think controls all of who's important and who's not? It's Me."

(Revelation 3:8) "I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door..."

Now the fact the matter is, they've been seeing shut doors. Have you ever had that happen, where every day seemed like it was a shut door? You ought to read this verse in those days. God is the one that opens the doors.

"I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a

little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

(Revelation 3:9) 'Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan...'

That's an interesting way of referring to the Jews, because obviously the Jews worship in the synagogue.

"Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you."

Talk about how freeing that is; that God is fundamentally saying, "If I love you, you're good."

One of the statements that is made in Galatians 4:17 is that they go after you, they wish literally to bring you in so that they might shut you out. The point of the passage is that they seek you to get you to a point of realizing, "Oh, they're far superior to me and I could never be like them." They like the audience that says, "Wow, if I could just be in that club; if I could just be in their position."

Then, they look down and they go, “Yes, gather around, see how wonderful I am.” If you think that nothing like that exists in the world, you've not lived long enough, but it does exist.

So, the point of the passage is that God has set us free, and the truth of the gospel is, “For God so loved the world.” I mean, that's a pretty open thing, “But as many as received Him...” (John 1:12) “Whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord...” (Romans 10:13) There is no sense of exclusivity, there is no esoteric group. There is the open arms of God, who loves you and invites you to come. That's why he uses this particular phrase in Chapter 2, which he makes reference to they've not been straightforward about the truth.

If you look in Galatians 2:14,

“But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel...”

Once again, surprisingly, that Peter would even falter in this, as well as Barnabas, was an amazing thing. Christ has

come to set us free from confinement of hopelessness, obviously from the treachery of rivalry, from a sense of cruelty, of exclusivity; a fourth thing that he actually mentions within the passage, and probably to me, one of the grandest, that sets me free more than anything else, is the tyranny of perfection. I've met some people that actually refer to themselves as "perfectionists". I've actually never found one, but I've had people tell me they were, but "perfectionist," think about that; to be perfect. But to have that hanging over your head, to have that sense of, "I'm not going to be of any value unless I were perfect." And if you think about it, that fundamentally is the concept of the Law hanging over you. People think, "Well, the Law of God has been established to make me perfect." No, God did not give the law to make you perfect. God gave the Law according to Romans Chapter 3, to show you that you weren't perfect. Because everybody was saying, "I think I'm pretty good, I think I'm pretty good." And quite frankly, as Galatians will say, many were going outside of the lines, and he says, "We're going to have to build higher walls to keep you from just

literally killing yourself.” So, the Law was a protection as well as it was a reminder that you need a Savior.

If you look at the end of Galatians 2,

(Galatians 2:16) “Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.”

(Galatians 3:11) “Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident...”

I mean, there's the self-evidence. Once again, just the simplicity of 1 John 1, saying, if any of you say that you don't have any sin, you're lying, and the truth is not in you. The very evidence that the Spirit of God is within you is that you have this sense of, “I realize that I need a Savior.” Now, you're being truthful, the truth of the gospel, and now you run to the Savior. It's just living truth,

right? The passage is telling us that there's a tyranny involved here.

Here again, we won't go into all the detail that we've already been through, but the way he describes it, in Galatians 4, is it's like a tutor or an overseer that is coming over you and making sure that you're doing the right thing. It is a sense of tyranny, rules and regulations and demands and sometimes condemnation. But how wonderful it is that there's now no condemnation to those who in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1) So, what a great promise that has given us, and it takes us out of that world. These are all things that oppress us, but to realize, like that wonderful song, "Just as I am, without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me and that Thou bids me come to Thee. Oh, Lamb of God, I come." And the initial phrase, "just as I am," how freeing that is, that you know, "I don't have to compete. I don't have to be better than this guy. I don't have to be more wonderful than somebody else. I don't have to belong to a particular club.

I'm free." And he emphasizes this. Now, how he emphasizes this is really through specific different points. Let me just emphasize this, in this way, he points out that this whole freedom is based not on man's performance, but it's based on God's promise. So, when God says in John 3:16, that He loves the world; that He gave His Son for you, He states this, if you'll believe in Him, here's the promise, you will not perish but have everlasting life now. Here again, I've had people say, "You don't know how bad I am." It's not based on you, it's based on He just made you a promise, and His promise was, "If you'll believe in Me and My goodness, I'll save you." Now, that's a promise, and that's far surer than my performance.

Hebrews will put it this way, if you look with me in Chapter 13; here again, a passage that is extremely comforting to me when I consider the love of God, as he'll make reference to the fact that we ought to continue to love one another at the beginning of this chapter, but his statement will be,

(Hebrews 13:5) “Make sure that your character is free from the love of money...”

Now, remember, he's talked about the fact that the world is a very hurtful place? You want to know one of the things that makes the world hurtful? The love of money. As 1 Timothy 6 says, the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, hurt, pain. Isn't it bizarre that people would somehow love money more than their relatives? I've seen families divided and separated over money. Have you ever seen that happen? Have you ever seen somebody not do something for somebody because it cost too much? I mean, I've often been surprised, and don't get me started on the whole healthcare thing, or maybe I started it but it's basically, you have to get a plan, and then you rely upon the plan. The plan is going to save you, right? Until you call them up, and you say, “I have this problem.” “Oh, we don't cover that.” “You don't cover that?” “No, we don't cover that.” “Well, do I need it?” “Maybe.” “Do you cover it?” “No, not really.” Then we say something like, “Well, I guess I won't get it.” I'm saying to myself, “I don't know, do you have a piggy bank at home?”

Break the piggy bank. Sell the dog. Go get what needs to be done.” But people go, “It's just not in the plan. It's going to cost too much.” And how people think that way because money is so important. They just have to have that nest egg to have some sense of security.

“Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said...”

This is a promise. Are you listening to Scripture? This is a promise,

“... “I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU.””

Think about that. That's a guarantee. Our faith is not based on our performance, it is based on the promises of God, and I can't think of anything more freeing than that.

In Galatians, he not only states that our faith and that which brings us security and our freedom, is not only with a promise, but it's by the Spirit. As he talks about in Galatians 3, he makes reference to the fact that we

received the Spirit of God; it was the spirit of promise that we received. This is an amazing thing. Here again, we could talk all day about it, but I won't. Receiving the Spirit of God is a change in my heart, and it's an affirmation that there not only is a God, but there is a God who loves me. Because when I received God's forgiveness, and I received His redemption through Jesus Christ, I had the comfort of God in my heart. I cannot explain it. I had the sense that all of the guilt and all the shame was gone. I mean, I've oftentimes shared with you, I've asked people to forgive me before, and though they forgave me, I still didn't lose the guilt and the shame, but when I came to the Lord, and I placed my burdens before Him, the spirit of truth changed me. My desires changed. It was a spirit that was freed in the sense of, "I don't have to do this anymore, but I really, really want to." And you have this desire. In fact, the way that Paul will put it is, "the love of God constrains me."

If you look in Galatians 2:20, he says this, in this way,

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now

live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me...”

What motivates us? It's not the Law, it's trust. It's the love of God. God loves me and I trust in that love. Now, I live by that. I don't live by the sense that I've got to measure up, or "I've got to do this." I live in the sense that God loves me, and He has a wonderful plan for my life. If He ever disciplines me, it's for my good. It's because He loves me. Everything He does is because He loves me. He's prepared a place for me, not because I deserve it, but because He loves me, and everything is focused on that truth, the truth of the gospel. It has nothing to do with me.

Let me just say this in closing as well, that we are moved and motivated by conviction, not commandments. Paul will speak specifically about this in Romans 14. And in Romans Chapter 14 he talks about the whole thing of opinions and but then he goes into the fact, "But if you have a conviction, and you can sense that it's a conviction

of God," he goes, "you follow that conviction because that which is not of faith is sin." His point is that we no longer live under rules and regulations, though Romans clearly says that if in fact we walk in the love of God, love will fulfill the Law. So, it's not setting aside what the Law is, but there is a sense of, "I just do naturally by the Spirit of God, by my love for God, the things that are right, and I don't want to hurt somebody. I want to help people. I don't want to be selfish." So, immediately all those things are gone because the new Spirit has come within me, but I'm living by the convictions of my heart. These are my convictions, and this is why people will die for their faith. If you've ever read Foxe's Book of Martyrs, you begin to read the history of those that have died for their faith. I mean literally, people being thrown in the fire and while they're in the fire, singing hymns. What would cause somebody to do that? How could they do that? You begin to realize that they're not there because somebody told them that they had to do right. They're doing what they're doing because of the conviction that is in their heart, and they will not turn and that's why our faith and conviction (by the way, same word in the Greek) will not

allow us to be dissuaded. We will not move because though we are faithless, humanly speaking, God is faithful. He cannot deny Himself, and the conviction that He has placed in my heart, I cannot move from that. It is so substantial, and in so many respects it is so freeing that I don't have to please man and I'm not doing this for man. In fact, there's so many things that I have found in my life where people might say, "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you." I'm saying in my head, "I'm not doing it for you. I'm doing it for Him." Because, quite frankly, there's not enough money in the world, there's not enough accolades in the world that could get me to do some things, but God could, and I would do it for Him. There's a conviction that moves me and motivates. That's very freeing when you think about it.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, we ask You to change our hearts. Lord, we ask You to come within our lives as You have died on the cross for our sins; we've received

You as Lord and Savior, and You've become the Lord of our lives, but not because we felt forced, but because the love of God constrained us. You, who loved us, died on that cross for us. Why would we not give our lives for You? Why would we not present our bodies a living sacrifice that would be wholly acceptable to You?

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, what the Spirit of God is telling us in Galatians is that Christ is setting us free from all those things in the world that so easily beset us, make us miserable and full of anxiety, and He's saying, "Stop listening to them. I've rescued you from that. Come to the gospel. Come to Me, and you can be free."