

Taking it Home:

- When tempted to sin Galatians 5:1 has proven to be a useful nugget of truth encouraging the Christ-follower to choose wisely. You might memorize Galatians 5:1 so that when you are in the thick of dealing with temptation you can remember your higher calling and put forward resolve to not return to the place of shame and guilt.

- Sometimes we think it is actually okay to sin because, well, Jesus will forgive us and so it just does not matter. But it does matter to a holy God. He wants us to be free, and he wants us to be responsible men and women, not using our freedom as an opportunity to cater to selfish desires. Prayerfully examine yourself to see in what ways, if any, you buy the lie that says it is okay to misuse our freedom. If you have bought this lie repent of this right now, seeking God's forgiveness and tender mercy.

- Loving others show that we are already loving God supremely well. To whom can you more intentionally and meaningfully show the love of Christ today?

For a restatement of Pastor Matthew's sermon points, visit pastormatthew.net and click on the "Write This Down" tab.

Christ Has Set Us Free

Notes:

For more information about Growth Groups, Growth Group homework, and a podcast of sermons with homework, visit www.bethelfc.com.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of June 17, 2012

Galatians 5:1-15

Quick Review: Because the freedom given to us has come at high price—the death of God’s Only-Begotten Son—then we should not dismiss such freedom by submitting again to the slavery of law, sin and shame. Those who would force us back toward such slavery should, if they like “circumcision” so much, go emasculate themselves. But just as our freedom should not be forfeited for legalism, it is also no license to sin! The freedom purchased for us by Jesus Christ must always have as a goal what edifies and honors.

My Story:

- The word “freedom” evokes many things for many people. For African-Americans it brings to mind intense feelings of justice and release from dehumanizing bondage. For Muslims and Arabs in general it brings to mind images of gross license and immorality. For newly released prisoners it serves up a strange mixture of anticipation and fear. What does the word “freedom” mean to you?
- How have you seen the concept of “freedom” misused? Have you ever misused it?
- Have you experienced an environment—maybe work or home or school—where the expectations to follow all the rules, whatever those may be, was so intense that it left you anxious and frustrated? Share about this experience. Was it possible to joyfully and completely (note the word completely) keep every rule?
- If possible, share some ways in which the blessing of your freedom in Christ has transformed your life and how you see the world around you?

Growing Deeper:

- Jewish tradition recognizes 613 commands to be heeded within the ancient Law of Moses. These include 365 negative commands (“don’t do this...”) and 248 positive commands (“you must do this...”). When the Apostle Paul declares in Galatians 5:3, “I testify to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law,” what is he implying? Think through and even discuss with others what it might be like to keep all 613 commands (scan the QR Code to the right to see a list of all 613 commands).



- What does the Apostle Paul mean when he declares that “a little leaven leavens the whole lump,” recorded in Galatians 5:9?
- Paul declares in Galatians 5:10 that the “one who is troubling” the Galatian believers with the lies about spiritual self-sufficiency “will bear the penalty.” What might this statement mean? Read Mark 9:42, James 3:1, and 2 Peter 2:1 for further insight.
- Galatians 5:13 says, “For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” In what ways might we use our Christian freedom as “an opportunity for the flesh”? Be as honest and specific as possible.
- Read Matthew 22:34-40. How does the response that Jesus gives to the questioner in this passage correlate with Paul’s statement from Galatians 5:13 about serving one another through love? In what way does loving others mitigate selfish and sinful living?
- James 2:8 tells us that the “royal law according to the Scripture” is that Christians love their neighbors as they love themselves. This reflects the Apostle Paul’s comments in Galatians 5:14. However, we might intuitively think that the greatest command in Scripture would be to love God and not our neighbor. How did Pastor Matthew explain supposed tension?