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Sermon Notes

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## **Our Expensive and Fragile Freedom**

### **Galatians 5:1-5**

What is “freedom”?

Many people think of it as the ability to do anything you want to do whenever you want to do it. They see it as a complete severing of all the shackles and chains and boundaries and requirements that could restrict your ability to do whatever you want to do. If you want to go there, you go there. If you want to eat this, you eat it. If you want to jump off a cliff and soar like a bird, you do it. If you want to have this possession, you have it. If you want to say these words, you say them. No boundaries. No rules. No restrictions.

The Bible has a great deal to say about freedom. Our text this morning asserts plainly that Jesus Christ shed His blood to set you free.

***Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.***

In another very memorable place in Scripture, Jesus talked about His mission to set us free:

***John 8:34-36 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.***

The real bondage is SIN... Jesus alone has the power to break the chains of sin and set us FREE... “free indeed”... truly free.

But what does that mean? Is it freedom from all restraints, all boundaries?? No rules, no restrictions, no limitations... able to be and do and say and own and eat and drink WHATEVER WE WILL WHENEVER WE WILL?

I think not. If that is the definition of freedom—absolutely no boundaries—only Almighty God is truly free. At the dedication of the Temple, King Solomon said with great wisdom and humility about the little golden building he built for God to dwell in:

***1 Kings 8:27 “But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!”***

There is no “CONTAINER” for God! No boundary line across which He cannot travel.

Only God has the freedom of self-existence... all creation depends on God for continued existence. And only God has the freedom of absolute sovereignty... all creatures derive their positions from God.

Creatures have boundaries...

“the birds of the air”

“the fish of the sea”

“the beasts of the earth”

“the lilies of the field”

All of these speak of the proper boundaries in which these created things live and move and have their being.

An eagle soars through the air... winging its way through its assigned place... it is free to fly.

A dolphin swims through the sea... gliding its way through its assigned place... it is free to swim.

A cheetah races across the surface of the earth... leaping its way through its assigned place... it is free to run.

A lily grows up stationery in the field... its roots make it stable and suck nutrients from the soil... it is free to grow beautiful and stay in one place.

So also man has boundaries... we were created to operate in a set of constraints... salvation does not change that.

Satan, when he fell, did so because he was not content to stay within his boundaries... he coveted God's throne and sought to soar to the heights of rulership over all creation:

***Isaiah 14:13-14 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. <sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."***

But God threw Satan down to the earth to be judged.

So also the angels that rebelled with him did not accept their boundaries:

***Jude 6 And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day***

In the Garden of Eden, the Serpent tempted the human race with the same discontent of boundaries... "You will be like God..." We TRANSGRESSED... we sought to leap our boundaries. God had given us freedom, but He LIMITED IT by a prohibition:

***Genesis 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."***

Man did not stay within boundaries, but TRANSGRESSED... we "hopped the fence" and ran into a field that was OFF LIMITS for us.

At that moment, we became slaves... with spiritual chains on us. The essence of our bondage was in our hearts and minds... we HATED GOD and we HATED GOD'S WILL FOR US. We chafed and yearned and lusted and coveted and hated others and murmured and were churning restlessness in our assigned place.

Christ came to SET US FREE by enabling us to accept the limitations and delight in what is INSIDE those boundaries:

***Psalm 16:6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.***

The Word of God describes our boundaries... the freedom Christ gives is to allow us to run freely within those boundaries:

***Psalm 119:32 I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free.***

America: the land of the free and the home of the brave! Our "freedom" is one of our most cherished national treasures. Much of the American history and civics taught in schools centers around the precious value of freedom.

Declaration of Independence (Thomas Jefferson):

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Preamble to the Constitution:

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure **the Blessings of Liberty** to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

Bill of Rights:

## Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

During WWII, Norman Rockwell painted the “Four Freedoms”

- 1) Freedom of speech
- 2) Freedom of worship
- 3) Freedom from want
- 4) Freedom from fear

What IS freedom?

Webster’s Dictionary:

the quality or state of being free: as

*a* : the absence of necessity, coercion, or constraint in choice or action

*b* : liberation from slavery or restraint or from the power of another  
; INDEPENDENCE

*c* : the quality or state of being exempt or released usually from something onerous <*freedom* from care>

*d* : EASE, FACILITY <spoke the language with *freedom*>

Biblically, the definition of freedom is different: it is the God-given heart inclination and power to do what is right according to God’s word.

Galatians 5:5 speaks very powerfully about FREEDOM and BONDAGE... of a spiritual kind! It makes a soaring assertion – that it is for freedom that Christ set us free; but this freedom is FRAGILE... it must be defended at every moment!

Transition in the Letter:

Galatians 1-2: Paul defended the heavenly origin of his apostolic call and the gospel he preached

Galatians 2:16, 20: Paul specifically establishes the doctrine of justification by faith alone on the basis of Christ’s death on the cross

Galatians 3-4: Paul proves the doctrine of justification by faith from experience and scripture.

Galatians 5-6: Paul now turns to the probing question: “How shall we now live?” If we are truly justified by faith in Christ, doesn’t that mean we can live any kind of life we want? Doesn’t it mean we can sin and get away with it?

Centuries of Christians have struggled with this question, and many church leaders have responded by instituting systems of morality (laws) which sought to restrain the bad exercise of Christian freedom... but that form of legalism is the wrong answer...

That makes the next two chapters really key to understanding the full Christian life that Paul is teaching here

HOW SHALL WE LIVE???

In Galatians 5-6, he will answer: we live as free people, justified by faith in Christ... but we also live a righteous life by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul is going to describe the BEAUTY OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE here... free from the accusations of the Law, free from the bondage of sin itself, free to live as God wants us to live... free to be like Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The life of the flesh is a life of slavery... the life of the Spirit is the life of freedom.

In Galatians 5, we’re going to unfold the glories of the Spirit-filled life, the answer to the fears that the doctrine of justification by faith leads to an immoral life of freedom from all constraint.

## I. Our Blood-Bought Freedom (vs. 1)

### A. Powerful Opening Statement

***Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.***

1. The whole reason Christ died was to SET US FREE!!
2. Awesome thought! Christ wants to see us completely free from the chains that have robbed us of joy and delight and power to do what God has designed us to do
3. He hears the cries of His people as they are groaning in the chains of slavery as Yahweh did when the Jews were in bondage in Egypt

***Exodus 3:7-8 The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. <sup>8</sup> So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey***

## B. Our Natural Bondage

1. We are part of an ENSLAVED RACE... as sons and daughters of Adam, we were born in slavery to sin

***1 John 5:19 ...the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.***

***John 8:34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."***

***Romans 6:20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.***

2. The essence of the slavery is COMPLUSION... chains... you can't escape

***Romans 6:16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey-- whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death...***

3. We felt the lash of the task-master as much as the Jewish slaves did in Egypt

4. We were dominated by Satan's clever temptations, and by our own fleshly nature... we could resist certain temptations occasionally, but we had no power to escape Satan's dark Kingdom

5. Thus Paul uses the language of TYRANNY... of sin REIGNING

***Romans 5:21 sin reigned in death***

6. Part of the bondage was the ARROGANCE of INDEPENDENCE from God

7. Part of the bondage was arrogantly thinking we could be our own saviors from sin!! We were enslaved to an independent path of self-righteousness, of ladder-climbing to heaven from the lowliness of our sin and our creaturely nature

8. And that's very DEVIL-LIKE:

***Isaiah 14:13-14 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. <sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."***

9. The depth and power and complexity and sinister nature of Satan's bondage is hidden from us... He has ensnared the human race in unbreakable cords of compulsion... we had NO CHOICE but to sin in this way or that

10. Essentially, it was a matter of the MIND

**Romans 8:7-8** *For the mind-set of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit itself to God's law, for it is unable to do so. <sup>8</sup> Those whose lives are in the flesh are unable to please God.*

**Ephesians 4:17-19** *So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. <sup>18</sup> They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. <sup>19</sup> Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

11. We were wrapped up in invisible chains, unbreakable by our power... even our best works were displays of our independent pride
  - a. To break an average steel chain, you would have to exert over 10,000 pounds of force... = at least 2 pickup trucks!
  - b. You can't!!
  - c. Satan's chains of sin are unbreakable!!!
  - d. We could not set ourselves free

### C. Christ Has Set Us Free!!

1. Christ is the great liberator!
2. His miracles as portrayed as liberation from Satan's chains... Satan's powerful HOLD on human beings

In Luke 11, Jesus was defending His ministry of driving out demons from those who said it was by the power of Satan that he drove them out

- 1) Jesus said that MAKES NO SENSE!!! How can Satan drive out Satan? If Satan drives out Satan, his kingdom is divided
- 2) The Jesus explained what is ACTUALLY HAPPENING... He said, in effect, this is a rescue mission, an ACT OF WAR, a liberation of captives

**Luke 11:20-22** *if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you. <sup>21</sup> "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. <sup>22</sup> But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils.*

3. Therefore many verses speak of the liberating work

***Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed..."***

***Luke 13:11-13 a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. <sup>12</sup> When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." <sup>13</sup> Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.***

***Luke 13:16 Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"***

#### D. Jesus Set Us Free Ultimately by His Death

1. Debt Americans feel to those who sacrificed their lives for our political freedom
  - a. "Freedom isn't free!!!"
  - b. "Home of the free because of the brave!!!"
2. How much MORE TRUE is it of our spiritual freedom in Christ!!
  - a. "Freedom isn't free... it was INFINITELY EXPENSIVE... the blood of Jesus Christ was shed to set us free from sin and death and guilt and the condemnation of the Law and the power of Satan
  - b. "Home of the free BECAUSE OF the brave..." no one has ever been braver than Jesus... the ultimate display of courage was Jesus on the cross
3. Our spiritual freedom is BLOOD-BOUGHT... it was Jesus who set us free
4. BUT He did it so that we WOULD BE free!!!

#### E. It was FOR OUR FREEDOM that Christ Shed His Blood

1. Freedom from the condemnation of the Law
2. Freedom from the terrors of Hell
3. Freedom from Satan's dark realm and it's awesome power
4. Freedom from sin's dark magnetic attraction
5. Freedom from the sting of death—the accusations of a guilty conscience

6. BUT CERTAINLY NOT freedom do whatever we want in whatever self-definition of a so-called “good life”
7. It is will be freedom to love to do everything God wants us to do
8. Freedom from the minutiae of the law and from the bondage of legalism... constant attention to tiny details (tithing mint, dill, and cumin) to please God... BUT ALSO:
9. Freedom to run as Christ did in the path of God’s perfect moral law

***Psalm 119:32 I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free.***

10. Freedom to LOVE RIGHTEOUSNESS and live a life of love

***Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.***

Christ died to give us this freedom! It was extremely expensive... the most precious substance on earth given to set us free—

***1 Peter 1:18-19 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.***

## II. Our Fragile Freedom (vs. 1)

A. BUT... this Freedom is Clearly Fragile! It must be DEFENDED

***Galatians 5:1 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.***

1. The clear command: “Stand firm!!”
2. The idea is of a determination against a force pulling you down... like a mountaineer walking up a knife-edge ridge with a howling cross-wind which threatens to blow him off the mountain to his death below. He needs to STAND FIRM with a strong footing or he will die
3. Or like a soldier fighting in hand-to-hand combat before gunpowder changed the nature of warfare; the soldiers would line up in a shield wall and crash against their enemies, pushing and grunting and striving; if you slipped and fell, you would almost certainly die
4. STAND FIRM in your freedom!

The Most Famous fake Thomas Jefferson quote: “Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom”

He never said it...

Irish orator and politician John Philpot Curran said in Dublin in 1790. "The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance".

5. Either way: your blood-bought spiritual freedom must be defended by constant vigilance against its enemies
6. And what are the enemies?
  - a. Legalism on the one side
  - b. License on the other
  - c. Legalism: a yoke of bondage to the idea that we have to earn God's favor by our obedience to the law
  - d. License: a yoke of bondage to the lusts of our corrupt hearts

#### B. Here Especially: the Yoke of Legalism

1. The Judaizers wanted to get these Gentile converts to bow their necks to their interpretation of the Christian life
2. They wanted to fit an iron yoke for them and put it on them... to make them submit to a series of rules and regulations, the Pharisaic interpretations, the whole system of laws based on the Law of Moses

***stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.***

3. The logic: because Christ shed His holy blood to buy you freedom, don't GO BACK UNDER the slavery of false religion
4. The essential legalism: a right relationship with God must be earned by constant obedience to the law
5. The Apostle Peter has the strongest word on this to the legalistic Judaizers at the Jerusalem Council on circumcision:

***Acts 15:10-11 Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? <sup>11</sup> No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."***

#### C. Key Concept: Local Churches are Responsible for the Teaching They Get

1. Paul is holding the Galatian churches responsible to kick these Judaizers out
2. It is THEIR RESPONSIBILITY not to put up with false teaching!!

3. They are to be the noble-minded Bereans who take everything back to Scripture and assess it; Paul is not writing to the Judaizers here, but to the churches who are listening to them
4. DON'T STAND FOR THIS FALSE GOSPEL!! It's up to you!!!
5. Same thing in Corinthians with the so-called "super-apostles"

***2 Corinthians 11:19-20 You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! <sup>20</sup> In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face.***

6.

D. Bottom Line: We Must Continually Defend Both our Souls and our Local Church from the Yoke of Legalism

1. There is a relentless Satanic attack, trying to draw us into slavery
2. Satan wants us either in slavery to legalism, acting like slaves rather than sons

### III. How Christ Can Become Worthless and Alien to Us (vs. 2-4)

A. The Threat: Christ Will Become Worthless to Us

***<sup>CSB</sup> Galatians 5:2 Take note! I, Paul, tell you that if you get circumcised, Christ will not benefit you at all.***

1. Paul wants the Galatians to sit up and take notice! This is really vital!!
2. This is a severe warning to them... if they walk under the door entitled "Circumcision", they'll be walking into a whole lifestyle and mentality in which Christ's death is basically meaningless
3. Similar to this verse:

***Galatians 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"***

4. If you begin down this road, the death of Christ will have been worthless
5. Circumcision will just be the start
  - a. They'll have to keep the dietary laws
  - b. They'll have to observe special days and months and seasonal festivals
  - c. They'll have to keep the Sabbath regulations as the chief priests determine

- d. They'll have to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem three times a year
- 6. Even worse than that... they will be continually thinking like slaves rather than sons!!
  - a. Every moment, the legalist is laboring under the scowl of God... God with His holy arms crossed, glowering down across a perfect standard, not lifting a finger to help
  - b. Every moment, the legalist has to prove his love for God, and God stands aloof, wanting to be impressed
- 7. All the time, the blood Christ shed on the cross shrinks into insignificance... what REALLY MATTERS is independent obedience to the perfect standard

#### B. The Impossible Standard: The Law

***Galatians 5:3 Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.***

- 1. Clear reminder of what the legalist is dealing with
- 2. Paul repeating this earlier statement again, in case they missed it:

***Galatians 3:10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."***

- a. "ALL THE LAW... ALL THE TIME... OR YOU'RE CURSED!!"
- b. The legalist is IN DEBT... this is debt language

***<sup>KJV</sup> Galatians 5:3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.***

- c. Christ was of NO PROFIT; but rather the person has a DEBT to pay
- d. More on that in a moment!

#### C. Alienated from Christ

***Galatians 5:4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.***

- 1. Once this legalism takes root, we no longer stay close to Christ... there has come a separation from us and Christ
- 2. Christ said

***John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.***

3. Grace is the life-giving sap that flows through us to produce the fruit of the Christian life by the Spirit
4. Christ by His incarnation and by His Spirit has invaded not only our sinful world but our sinful hearts
5. He is moving in us to obey God's moral law and to do good works (fruit) that will glorify Him
6. He did not remain aloof, high and holy, up in heaven, with His arms crossed, commanding us to obey all the law or else, and telling us we're on our own
7. Rather, He came down to save us from WITHIN... He has promised to never leave us or forsake us
8. He is working from within us by His Spirit to obey God's law: to love Him, and to love our neighbor
9. If we step off independently, saying to Christ, "I don't need you, I will do this on my own", you have become ALIENATED (separated) from Christ
10. Christ is distant from you, judging you... He set a perfect example, and He is a perfect judge, but He cannot make you do what He wants... that's up to you

Illus. #1: Like an expert athlete who becomes a hard-driving coach; think about Michael Jordan... trying to coach a college team; he puts on videos of his exploits on the court, he yells at you to do the same things he used to do... but he cannot and will not MAKE YOU do what he wants you to do

Illus #2: a father playing Legos with his six-year-old son; at the end of the time, he can rightly COMMAND the son to pick them all up and put them away in a certain amount of time, OR ELSE. The son then with a sense of burden and fear labors to do the job he is capable of doing; OR the son asks the father, "Daddy, will you help me?" The daddy gets down off his chair, sits down on the floor, Indian-style, and says, "Sure... let's have a race... I'll put away all the blue and red ones, and you put away all the white and yellow ones. Ready, go!" The son is doing the same work, but the feeling is one of joy and delight.

Christ by His Spirit enables us to fulfill the law... He is WITH US, and IN US... not apart from us, judging us. We are not slaves burdened by a crushing obligation, but sons doing a delightful work in FELLOWSHIP WITH God!

#### D. Fallen from Grace

***Galatians 5:4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.***

1. So often this expression is taken out of context
2. Some people use this to teach that, at every moment, human free will can trump grace... that grace is not IRRESISTABLE...
3. The logical extension of this doctrine is that you CAN LOSE YOUR SALVATION!! You can “fall away from grace”
  - a. Roman Catholic theology said that if you committed a “mortal sin” (like murder) you had “fallen from grace” and would end up in hell
  - b. Arminian theology (including Wesley and the Methodists) taught that a genuine Christian could later “fall from grace” through sin and later end up in hell
  - c. Both systems employed this phrase to describe it... “fallen from grace”
4. Let’s settle this right now... A JUSTIFIED PERSON CANNOT LOSE THEIR JUSTIFICATION

***John 6:39-40 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."***

5. BUT Paul is just continuing his overall presentation of the deadly dangers of legalism... people who are trying to save themselves by lawkeeping have been ALIENATED FROM CHRIST... alienated from His cleansing blood and alienated from HIS ONGOING WORK in their souls by the Holy Spirit
6. God’s grace is a powerful force that overcomes the hardness of our hearts
7. God’s grace is EFFECTUAL... it sovereignly produces what it seeks to produce

***1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them-- yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.***

8. That is the whole point here... by trying independently to live a legalistic life of law-keeping, you have turned your back on Christ crucified and resurrected, and the Holy Spirit imparted and indwelling
9. You have day by day become severed from the ongoing work of God in the soul... you have become a slave serving a distant and aloof God; you are no longer living like a son who is moment-by-moment empowered by the Spirit to serve

### E. The “Debtor’s Ethic”

1. 1994: John Piper wrote an award-winning book *Future Grace*
2. In it he uncovered a problem in the way many think about the Christian life... being in constant debt to Christ, especially through thanksgiving

Piper: The debtor’s ethic says, “Because you have done something good for me, I feel indebted to do something good for you.”

3. This especially comes through the matter of THANKFULNESS: I just want to say thank you to Christ for all He’s done for me!

Piper: Here is the legalistic twist which can happen to gratitude. When grace is offered to us we slyly try to pay it back by doing works of “gratitude.” We see the grace offered to us through the work of Christ, receive it, but then immediately move to pay it back. The legalistic habit starts living again. But the habit hides itself under a cloak of “holy gratitude.” We begin telling ourselves that we have to work so much harder in doing good works because Christ gave us so much. Christ’s death becomes a legalistic law which we place ourselves under. The very reversal to what Christ’s death was meant to be!

4. Soon we are acting like SLAVES and not like SONS
5. We are acting like our salvation was really a vast MORTGAGE which we must pay back through daily installments... setting up a payment plan of thanksgiving
6. We know that the value of Christ’s work on the cross was infinite, so we’ll be in debt the rest of our lives
7. But we have to do what we can every day to PAY IT BACK... especially by being THANKFUL

Piper: Is gratitude a bad motivation for obeying God?

It can be a bad thing if we conceive of acting out of gratitude as returning favors, like when somebody invites you over for dinner and out of gratitude you feel the need to invite them over to dinner. If that's the way we're thinking about our relationship and obedience to God, it's bad.

It's going to be legalistic and devastating. And it's going to dishonor God, because it says, "OK, God made a deposit in my life of some good and some kindness. Now, as I face the future and ponder what my motivation is for pleasing God or for doing good things that he commands, I must now do something good for him because of what he has done for me in the past."

8. This whole approach is WRONG!! Instead, the work of Christ on the cross PAYS debts; it doesn’t make us even more indebted

9. It was for FREEDOM that Christ died for us... it was for FREEDOM that Christ sent His Spirit...

10. It was not to make us slaves on the plantation

#### F. An End to Debt Bondage

1. After slavery was abolished in the British Empire through the efforts of William Wilberforce; a new form of slavery arose: DEBT BONDAGE
2. What is "debt bondage"? It occurs when a wealthy employer gives a large sum of money to a laborer before the work is done... so the laborer OWES WORK because of the sum of money... but in the way things work out, the laborer can never pay it back; their wages are never enough... they become slaves
3. Poor laborers were transported (mostly from India) all over the world to work on sugar plantations, making a pittance every day
4. They were legally bound by their debt... they worked every day under the broiling sun to repay a debt they could never repay
5. So it can be with the DEBTOR'S ETHIC in Christianity

Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf: Nicolas visited an art museum in Dusseldorf where he saw a Domenico Feti painting titled Ecce Homo, "Behold the Man." It portrayed the crucified Christ with the legend, "This have I done for you - Now what will you do for me?"

Francis Ridley Havergal: Hymn "I Gave My Life for Thee,"

Christ says, "I gave, I gave My life for thee, what hast thou given for me?" And: "I bring, I bring rich gifts to thee, what hast thou brought to Me?"

What God want is for us to say not, "You did all this for me in the past, now I must do something now or in the future to PAY IT BACK"

Rather: "God, you've helped me so much in the past; I am counting on you to help me now and in the future!"

The second is far more glorifying to God!!

That is the power of GRACE!!

Actually, every second of the true Christian life, we are going DEEPER AND DEEPER into debt to God! We can do nothing apart from Him!

#### IV. Eagerly Awaiting Righteousness through the Spirit (vs. 5)

***Galatians 5:5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.***

***ESV Galatians 5:5 For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.***

##### A. Looking Ahead by Faith to Future Grace

1. More and more expectantly looking forward
2. Trusting by faith that the same God

***who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6)***

3. Not looking ahead to paying off a spiritual mortgage by good works and expressions of thanks
4. Rather looking ahead to receiving more and more grace from God to finish your salvation journey

##### B. Looking Ahead to What?

1. A future righteousness
2. The final declaration by God on Judgment Day that we are righteous
3. The final transformation of our whole selves to glory

***Romans 8:30 those he justified, he also glorified.***

***Matthew 13:43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.***

##### C. Looking Ahead How? EAGERLY... through the Spirit

1. Not like cowering slaves but confident, joy-filled sons and daughters!!
2. Some day we will be PERFECTLY RIGHTEOUS!!!
3. Not trusting in our own powers, but relying on the ongoing power of the Holy Spirit
4. And what does the Spirit produce?

***Galatians 5:6 The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.***

## V. Applications

### A. Do You Know this Freedom?

1. Are you still in bondage to lusts and sins and rebellion?
2. Are you still in chains to a guilty conscience?
3. Are you still in bondage to fear of death?
4. Are you still in chains to terror and fear of wrath?
5. IT IS FOR FREEDOM THAT CHRIST SETS YOU FREE!!
6. Trust in Christ!!

### B. Embrace the Fight to Stay Free

1. You have to be eternally vigilant to stay free from bondage to sin on the one hand and to legalism on the other
2. Understand Satan is always dragging you to one or other extreme... but BOTH are forms of bondage
3. The bondage addressed here is legalism

### C. Fight the “Debtor’s Ethic”

1. Salvation is not a mortgage
2. Every moment we genuinely obey God, we do it by faith and by the power of the Spirit
3. We are even deeper in debt (if we look at it that way!)
4. We dare not look back continually with thanksgiving as if to get a sense of our debt and try to pay it off

### D. Learn How to Obey by the Spirit

### E. Learn How to Wait Expectantly for Righteousness by the Spirit