

Title: Free to love and be loved  
Text: Galatians 6.1-10  
Theme: Freedom in Christ means being free to love one another  
Series: Galatians summer series 2019  
Prop Stmtnt: Involvement and commitment to the body of Christ is a fruit of the gospel and the Spirit.

Read Text:

As a kid, school was not my thing, especially grammar. Even in my first couple of years in college, I didn't want to bother with it, until I started to study Greek. All of a sudden, grammar came alive for me and Galatians is a great example of why. Paul and Barnabas established several churches in this region of modern day Turkey. Within one year, these fledgling congregations were overrun by false teachers who were trying to tell the believers that in order to really be followers of Jesus, they had to obey the law. Let's look at this grammatically.

Obey the law and you will be a follower of Jesus.

Look at the verbs. The first verb (obey) is a command. In grammar that is called an imperative. The second verb (you will be) is a "being verb." That is called an indicative. Most religion follows this order. Imperative causes indicative. Do and you will be. Obey and you will become. If you keep these rules then you will become a good \_\_\_\_\_ (Muslim, Jew, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, etc.) When you read through the gospel accounts that tell us about the life of Jesus, you see how much conflict and turmoil Jesus creates. Jesus was and is very controversial because he blows this up. Jesus went after legalistic religion (the idea that if you keep certain laws then you will be a good person. Jesus went after moralistic religion (the idea that you are humanitarian and do no harm to others) then you will be a good person. Jesus went after self-righteousness (the idea that your standing and validity is based on you being better than others.

Legalistic religion, moralistic religion and self-righteousness are all based on this idea that imperative causes indicative. Do and you will be. Obey and you will become. Over and over Jesus went after that because what you do will never be good enough. Jesus exposed the fact that the OT law was intended to show you that you could not keep it. God's standard of righteousness is unattainable by us. We need a Savior outside of us. We do not measure up. Jesus told us that. And that is why he was so hated. But, and this is an amazing truth, Jesus did more than tell us what the problem was, he told us what the solution was. Him! Jesus is the solution. Jesus DID what we could not do. Jesus obeyed the law in our place. Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant.

Jesus flipped religion on its head. Genuine Christianity (and not what most people think of when they hear the term Christianity), but genuine Christianity that follows what Jesus actually taught is NOT based on imperative causes indicative, but is based on indicative causes imperative. Your being (who you are in Christ) causes your doing. Be and then you will do.

Four observations about this text:

1. This text is full of imperatives. (1-10)

There are responsibilities and obligations that we have. If you are a follower of Christ, these are yours to own. You cannot pass these off to someone else. These are yours to own.

2. These imperatives come at the end of the book.

Paul does not begin this letter with these commands because he wants to remind us (his readers) of our foundation in the gospel, our identity in Christ and the fact that who we are in Christ drives what we do in this life.

3. These imperatives are presented as the fruit of the Spirit.

The end of chapter 5 summarizes our lives. Like soldiers, or members of the marching band who have to keep in step with each other, we are to keep in step with the Spirit. (Left, left, left - right - left) If we live by the Spirit, let us walk by the Spirit. That is not only by means of, but it also has the idea of with. Walk alongside of the Spirit. The Spirit sets the pace and establishes the path. What is the Spirit doing? The Spirit helps the fallen, cares for the burdened, cares about the pastors and cares about the church. When we do these things, we are working alongside of the Spirit. Throughout this book Paul contrasts living by the Spirit with living by the law. Living by the law creates a culture of conceit (empty praise - people who think they have the right to praise but don't), provoking one another, envying one another, being threatened by one another, being distrustful of one another, being alienated from one another. Living with the Spirit creates a community of care. That is why...

4. These imperatives cannot be done without being part of a church.

I hope you understand this. You cannot follow Jesus well without the church. We make a big deal about the church, your commitment to the church, and church membership because of passages like this. You simply cannot obey these without being part of a church. As followers of Christ and members of his church:

I. **Here is how we care for the fallen.** (1)

A. **Remember that you are responsible for your brothers and sisters.** - "Brothers"

We are not in competition with one another to see who is more righteous or spiritual. No, we are brothers and sisters who are in the family together. This means that we are responsible for one another.

B. **Remember that this is for all of us** - "anyone"

The picture is one of a person walking through life and unexpectedly finding himself committing sin, and being somewhat surprised by it. He didn't see this coming. This happens to all of us.

C. **Remember that sin is serious.** "caught in any transgression"

When we see a brother or sister going in a wrong direction, we can think of all sorts of reasons why we shouldn't bother with getting involved. But, do you think that what that brother and sister is doing matters to the Spirit? Of course it does! Therefore, if it matters to the Spirit, it matters to us. It matters to the Spirit because sin is serious. Sin traps people and will destroy their life if not addressed. When we pretend that what is not okay, is okay, then we are not okay. ok? But, here is what happens. When you see a brother or sister getting trapped in sin or in a sinful pattern and you try to warn, even in love, you get accused by some of being a legalist. Do you see why that is not true and so hurtful to the conversation and the life of a church? Helping someone who is going down the wrong road is a fruit of the Spirit. Ironically, when you label someone a legalist for simply obeying God's Word, you are being the legalist in the sense that you are elevating your law above God's.

**D. Remember who you are.** "you who are spiritual"

This is a little awkward to translate into English. "You who are spiritual" is not intended to be a select group in the church who are tasked with handling this. The idea of this is, "you who are of the Spirit" or "you who are Spirit people." In other words, this is what a church does. We are people who restore because we are people who have been restored and are being restored.

**E. Remember that Jesus (the gospel) is bigger** - "should restore him"

We can get involved in each other's' lives, even in the messy parts with a lot of hope because Jesus is bigger than any mess they have created. This is our story. I am talking to a roomful of people who know this personally. Jesus is a bigger savior than you are a sinner. So, when a person is overtaken by sin, we do not seek to punish, we aim to restore.

**F. Remember to watch out for your own sin** (caution)

How do we help one another who get caught in sin? We do it with the hope and the power of the gospel. That informs our process (restoration) and it demands tenderness (love) and humility. Legalistic religion has no help for this situation at all. The primary weapon of legalism is shame. And while shame is a powerful force on behavior, shame cannot bring about heart change. Shame is the weapon of choice of self-righteous people. But shame cannot cause you to love. Shame cannot produce godliness. Therefore, legalism will over time produce hypocrisy. Legalism cuts people off. It acts like this is your problem and not mine. That sin is serious, but that Jesus is not bigger and that I am above you. When it comes to helping one another, legalism creates a culture of relational cannibalism.

You can see why Paul is so burdened about the devastating effects of legalism. Bad theology destroys lives by either not taking sin seriously, or by acting as if sin has the final word. Ezekiel promised that there would come a day when God would establish a new covenant with his people and would give them his Spirit who would give them power to carry out his commands. Why then would you try to place people under the Old covenant when it did not work then and will not work now?

II. **Here is how we care for the burdened.** (2-5)

The burdened could be those who are snared by sin, but the language here, in my opinion goes beyond that to the fact that all of us live east of Eden. We live in a fallen world. We live with burdens and as followers of Christ, we have the wind of the world in our face. This is not only for all of us, this is about all of us.

**A. Remember that you are responsible for your brothers and sisters.** - “bear one another’s burdens”

In order to obey this command (imperative) we have to care for people more than we care for ourselves and we have to keep on caring. We will do this until we go to glory. We have to know what is going on in the lives of our brothers and sisters and enter into their lives so that we can come alongside of them and help them carry a load that is too big for them. This word for burden means a load that is too big for one person to be able to life. Your brother/sister needs your help. If you don’t help them lift this load, it will crush them.

But, wait, what about 1 Corinthians 10.13? Let’s think about that promise for a minute.

*“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”*

So, let’s say that you have a brother or sister who are going through a very difficult situation or season in life and you know it. First of all, I am glad that you know it. That is a good first step. I am glad that they have shared it and you are informed about it. What are you supposed to do? You can remind them about this promise in 1 Corinthians 10.13, right? This promise is true. But don’t remind them about this promise and say - “hey, good luck with that, hope it works out, see ya later” sort of thing. No, we remind one another of this promise remembering that we are part of the way of escape. We are part of the means of grace that God has raised up to help our brother or sister not be tempted beyond their ability. We are part of the army that prays for them, that seeks to encourage them, and that reminds them that they will endure and persevere. This church family is not divided up between those who are needy and those who help the needy. We are all needy and we all help the needy. We are all the patients and the caregivers at the same time.

We may be in a season of strength and health at the moment and may be giving a little more help than what we are receiving or we may be in a season of need and may be receiving a little more help than what we are giving, but we are all in this together. In fact, that is one of motivating factors for us in these situations. But, before I explain that, look at the last phrase of v.2. “And so fulfill the law of Christ.”

What is the law of Christ? (Galatians 5:6, 13, 14) Jesus tells us in John 13.34, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” Do you remember the words of the second verse of “O Holy Night”? His law is love and his gospel is peace. The law of Christ (the imperative that comes after the indicative) is to love another. When you flip the indicative and the imperative you have legalism.

Relationships are built on keeping the code instead of being a family. What is the power of legalism? Shame.

So, here are the options that Paul is presenting. If you live under the law and you put everyone else under the law you will have a shame-based church, that will not really be a church. A shame-based church creates an environment of fear, dread, insecurity, suspicion, judgment, and authority. You are only as good as your last performance. But, contrast that with Christ! Life in Christ, life in the true body, life in the vine is a love-based culture. Relationships are formed by the gospel and the Spirit is the mortar that holds us together. The gospel is wondrously sticky. Therefore, when a brother or sister experience a burden, they are not a bother to be discarded, but a family member to love.

### **B. Remember who you are and what you are. (3-5)**

Look at the warning in v.3. Why wouldn't you bear someone else's burden? Do you think that you are better than the burdened? Are you afraid to admit your own burden? Who do you think you are? Do you think that you are above problems? If you think that you are too important to be bothered with the needs of others, or too arrogant to admit your own needs, you are deceiving yourself. Arrogant people do not make very good care givers. Neither do they make very good care receivers.

But, what is verse 4 about? Verse 4 is underlining the importance of being self-aware. The emphasis here is for us to think rightly about ourselves. If you do not understand who you really are, then you will be tempted to think of yourself as being more important, more necessary, more valuable, more right, wiser, and of course, more spiritual than what you are.

Have you ever had someone come to you with a problem and they are in a mess and it is really obvious. But, when you try to help them, all they want to do is argue with you. That is when I want to say, "Listen if you have everything all figured out so perfectly, I need to be coming to you. I don't know why you are coming to me."

I was talking with someone about this the other day. Here is an extreme example of what I mean. There are people who have crazy, wacky, sinful and evil ideas. They get on-line in order to meet people who agree with them. They do not want their crazy, wacky, sinful and evil ideas to be challenged. They want to be validated. They are only looking for people who agree with them and if you don't agree with them, well someone must be wrong with you. A person who thinks that he is something, when he really isn't, is not willing to be corrected. They really believe that they are the smartest person in the room and they have everything and everyone all figured out. But (v.4) But, instead of being like this, let each of us test his own work. We have to allow our lives to be scrutinized and examined so that our confidence is not based on how better we think we are in comparison to others, but our confidence is based on our alignment with God and His Word. Because each one will have to bear his own load. I will give an account for my life. I cannot blame anyone else for what I do with my life.

### **III. Here is how we care for our pastors. (6)**

The one who teaches, is expected to be teaching the Word. Those who are taught the Word are to share all good things with the one who teaches the Word. In other words, take care of your pastors. This really makes sense doesn't it? What was the big problem in these churches? People were teaching false things? What did the churches need? They needed good teaching. But, good teaching takes time to study, pray, meditate, and prepare. If we want to encourage competent young men to go into the ministry, they need to know that they and their position is valued by the church. We value the gospel and we value the Word by esteeming and taking care of those who are charged with preaching it. This is for all of us. This is our privilege to care for one another in this way. Actually, the rest of this section addresses generosity.

#### IV. **Here is how we care for our church.** (7-10)

Generosity is a fruit of the Spirit. We take care of one another. We take care of our family members. One of the primary reasons why we should be diligent in our work and wise in our spending is so that we will have resources to help others who are in need. There is a lot of wisdom in these verses. The emphasis is not only on being generous but also on wisdom. What you plant (for good or for bad) will bring forth fruit. If you are planting good, do not forget this, even though the fruit is not immediate, it will come. Conversely, if you are planting bad, do not forget this. In the moment you may think that you have not been found out, or you have not had any effects, but even that thinking is an effect.

Legalism produces stinginess.

Grace produces generosity.

Which of these (stinginess for generosity) look like Jesus? What are you known for? What kind of a church do we want to be?