

SET FREE TO...

Galatians 5:1-15 & John 8:31-36 (ESV)

Galatians 5:1-15:

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

² Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. ³ I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. ⁴ You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. ⁵ For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

⁷ You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? ⁸ This persuasion is not from him who calls you. ⁹ A little leaven leavens the whole lump. ¹⁰ I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. ¹¹ But if I, brother still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. ¹² I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!

¹³ 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. ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

John 8:31-36:

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." ³³ They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

INTRODUCTION:

Galatians 5:1–15 calls believers to live in the freedom Christ has won, not by returning to legalism or indulging the flesh, but by walking in grace, guarding the gospel, and serving one another in love. Paul urges the church to stand firm, stay true, and live out holiness in community. Jesus affirms this in John 8:31–36, where He teaches that true freedom comes from abiding in His word and being set free by the Son.

DISCUSS:

1. Set Free to Stand Firm in Grace (Galatians 5:1–6):

Paul begins with a strong exhortation (Galatians 5:1):

Freedom in Christ means we are no longer bound by the law or driven by self-effort. Yet the temptation to earn God's approval through performance or religious duty still lingers. Paul reminds us that grace is not just how we begin, it is how we continue. To stand firm is to rest in what Christ has done, not strive to prove ourselves. Jesus echoes this in John 8:36. True freedom is found in Christ alone, not in striving, but in abiding.

Where in your life do you feel tempted to rely on self-effort instead of resting in God's grace?

2. Set Free to Guard the Gospel (Gal 5:7–12):

Paul warns against distortions of the gospel (Galatians 5:9):

The gospel is easily diluted; by cultural trends, traditions, or convenience. Guarding it means staying rooted in truth, discerning what we pass on, and refusing to compromise the message of grace. It is not just about what we teach, but what we believe and embody. Jesus emphasizes the importance of truth in John 8:31–32. To guard the gospel is to abide in His word and let the truth shape our lives.

How can you actively guard the gospel in your conversations, decisions, or ministry?

3. Set Free to Love in Holiness (Gal 5:13–15):

Paul shifts from doctrine to practice (Galatians 5:13):

Freedom in Christ is not a license to indulge the flesh, it is a call to love. Holiness is relational; it shows up in how we treat others, especially when it is inconvenient or costly. Jesus sets us free not to live selfishly, but sacrificially. True discipleship is marked by humble, and Spirit-led service. In John 8, Jesus speaks of freedom that begins with truth and leads to transformation; freedom that expresses itself in love.

What does it look like for you to serve others in love, especially when it is inconvenient or costly?

Pray:

1. Pray for hearts that rest in the finished work of Christ. Ask God to break the grip of guilt, striving, and performance-based faith. Invite the Holy Spirit to renew confidence in grace, especially for those who feel weary, burdened, or tempted to earn their way back to God. Pray that believers will stand firm in freedom, not fall back into fear or legalism.
2. Pray for spiritual discernment to recognize subtle distortions of the gospel, whether through cultural pressure, tradition, or personal convenience. Ask God to raise up believers who hold fast to truth with humility and courage. Pray for leaders, teachers, and everyday witnesses to embody the gospel clearly and faithfully, passing it on without compromise.
3. Pray for a love that reflects Christ; patient, kind, and sacrificial. Ask the Spirit to help believers resist selfishness and fleshly indulgence, choosing instead to serve one another in humility. Pray for grace to love when it's inconvenient, costly, or uncomfortable. May holiness be seen not in separation, but in Spirit-led relationships and everyday acts of service.