

Surrey Chapel Fellowship Group Notes 14th/15th November Galatians 5 - The Fruit of the Gospel

In this passage Paul continues to drive home the message that we are no longer to be bound by the regulations and restrictions of the law and in particular the practice of circumcision. Rather we are to walk by the Spirit. This passage deals with some of the fundamental truths of the Christian faith and life. "Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:2) - Set us free to live a new life by the Spirit. A life that will not "gratify the desires of the sinful nature" but rather will be characterised by the fruits of the Spirit. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works". (Ephesians 2:10)

Freedom in Christ v. 1-15

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free." What, in the context of this passage has Christ set us free from? And how? See overleaf for a blog post by John Piper that explores Christian freedom more widely.

This passage was clearly written to address a specific issue in the Galatian church. What are the parallels in the 21st century church? There are many warnings in the Bible about false teaching and it is something that we must be constantly alert to. Even if this isn't a problem for us at Surrey Chapel we may come across false teaching elsewhere and we must be on guard to ensure that false teaching doesn't come in.

v.4 Highlights that the problem is not in keeping the law but in trying to be justified by it. Again what are the modern parallels? Are there things that are made out to be pre-requisites for salvation that are not required in scripture?

Pause for a moment and reflect on verse 6.

v.11 "If Paul was still preaching that people had to be circumcised, then the offence of the cross would be removed because human pride in human effort would return. In other words, there would be no 'offence' to humble us, by declaring that no work of ours can make us righteous before God." - ESV Study Bible

v.13 With freedom comes responsibility. This verse is a strong warning.

Life by the Spirit - The Fruit of the Gospel v. 16-26

Paul's command in v.16 to 'live by the Spirit' has two components, empowerment and direction.

v.17 Have you ever felt this inner tension? How do you deal with it? - Paul expands on this in Romans 7.

v.18 Is perhaps the key verse in this chapter.

v.19-21 - It is easy to read this quickly and focus on one or two of the acts and think that it only applies to *really* bad people. Read the whole list again and remember the standards that Jesus sets in Matthew 5: 21-22 & 27-28. Verse 21 "those who live like this" implies that this section is aimed at people who make a practice of doing these things rather than occasionally slip into them.

The Fruits of the Spirit

Love - The Greatest quality that most closely reflects God. God is love.

Joy - Rejoicing in God's salvation. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever."

Peace - With God as reconciled sinners.

Patience - Following God's timing and plan for our lives.

Kindness - Showing goodness and generosity to others.

Goodness - Working for the benefit of others. Galatians 6:10

Faithfulness - Constantly trusting God and doing what we say we will do.

Gentleness - Enables us to encourage others, Jesus attributes this to himself in Matthew 11:29.

Self control - Allows us to resist the power of the flesh.

v.25 How do we "keep in step with the spirit?"

Prayer Pointers

ADB

Pray that we would be characterised by the fruits of the spirit.

Pray for the new governments in the USA and China and for Christian freedom in those countries.

Preparation for Christmas services and outreach.

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What Is Freedom? — Filling Out the Passion 2012 Message

by John Piper | January 7, 2012

<http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/what-is-freedom-filling-out-the-passion-2012-message>

Part of my message to Passion 2012 defined true Christian freedom. Here is a fuller statement of what that is taken from a sermon on John 8:32, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

There are at least four kinds of freedom. And each one adds a crucial dimension of freedom to the last until we get to the full Christian freedom — "free indeed." Let me try to sum up these four kinds of freedom in one definition of full and complete freedom:

You are fully free — completely free, free indeed — when you have the (1) desire, (2) the ability, (3) and the opportunity to do (4) what will make you happy in a thousand years.

Or we could say, You are fully free when you have the (1) desire, (2) the ability, and (3) the opportunity to do (4) what will leave you no regrets forever.

- 1 If you don't have the *desire* to do a thing, you are not fully free to do it. Oh, you may muster the willpower to do what you don't want to do, but nobody calls that full freedom. It's not the way we want to live. There is a constraint and pressure on us that we don't want.
- 2 And if you have the desire to do something, but no *ability* to do it, you are not free to do it.
- 3 And if you have the desire and the ability to do something, but no *opportunity* to do it, you are not free to do it.
- 4 And if you have the desire to do something, and the ability to do it, and the opportunity to do it, but it destroys you in the end, you are not fully free — not free indeed.

To be fully free, we must have the desire, the ability, and the opportunity to do what will make us happy forever.

No regrets.

And only Jesus, the Son of God who died and rose for us, can make that possible.

To be happy forever, our sins must be forgiven and God's wrath removed and Christ must become our supreme Treasure. Only Jesus can do that. In fact, he has already done it. He died for our sins. He absorbed God's wrath. And he rose from the dead and is today therefore supremely precious. And he offers us that now as a free gift.

If the Son shall set you free, you shall be free indeed.