

## Freedom From and Freedom For

- **Vs. 1.** As Americans, we are acutely attuned to concepts of frdm & slvry. Embedded ntnl histry/idnty. Some you know, I was away: 2 Rev War btlflds in SC (Patrts vs Brit for indpndc). Also 4 Cvl War forts alng S. Atlantic coastln (Union soldrs vs Confeds for frdm/1000s enslvd ppl). Even: plantn, Charleston, SC (major port/entry slave trade); heard prsnttn on Gullah Geechee culture fr dscndnt. So btwn Rev & Cvl War, frdm/slvry just embedded in ntnl histry/idnty.
- Frdm always 2 sides: from/for. In Rev War, colonists wanted frdm – from: govt control overseas, txtn w/o reprsnttn; for: (Declrtn/Ind – celebrated signing wk/half ago – life, lib, purs/hap), (Bill/Rights – speech, relgn, assembly, press). Cvl War bght about frdm – from: ownrshp/opprsn human beings; for: dignity/humanity. Those: 2 sides/frdm: from/for.
- When Paul in Gal 5 writes re frdm/slvry, not thinking re: Brit rule, Declrtn/Ind, Bill/Rights, Confdrncy, slvry in deep south. Writing re the frdm we have in CJ – how Xp has set us free. But that frdm also has 2 sides: from/for. Again, **vs. 1.** Paul writing to brand new Xians. These ppl in Gal loved/trusted J; belvd that J died/rose pay sins & give etnl life. But new to faith & weren't quite sure re diff btwn Xianity & Judsm. In Judsm, lot rules, like: circmcs, food laws, sacrfcs at worship – had follow. But all those OT rules in Judsm pointd ahead to/fulfilld in J; so no longer apply to us NT Xians. What Paul saying here: you're free! Have frdm in Xp - frdm fr OT laws; and frdm for a life of serving J. Frdm from/for.
- In fact, Paul makes really big deal! Notice: vs. 1, jumps to 13. Vss in btwn: **“Mark my wrds! I, Paul, tell you that if you let selves be circmcsd, Xp'll be of not value to you at all... You who trying be justfd by law have been alientd fr Xp; you have fallen away fr grace” (2, 4).** Strong wrds! What telling new Xians: your salvtn depends on J alone! You need rely on Xp alone! And if you think that keeping those old laws is going win God's favor or smhow contribute to your salvtn, then you're going lose J & hvn! Here's a helpful way thinking re it: J+smthng=nthng; J+nthng=evthng.
- Today, you/I: diff fr ppl in Gal Paul writing to in that we've nvr really thght re follwng OT food laws or worship laws or circumsng chldrn for relgs reasons. However, these wrds very much apply us today, bec by his death/res, Xp has set us free – and so we too have frdm from/for. **Vs. 13ab.** Xp has set us free from slvry/sin. What mean? Apart fr Xp, no forgvnss. W/o J, sins not paid for. So, w/o J, we're still under sin's curse; we're guilty in God's courtrm; and punshmnt: etnl dth in hell. And there's nthng we can do to free selvs fr that slvry/sin – can't make up for sins, do engh good wrks pay for them. W/o J, we are slaves to sin.
- But it goes even step further. Apart fr J, w/o faith in J, we don't even want frdm. Our sinful nature wants nthng to do w/God or Gos; it actly wants be slave/sin. See, ev Xian, 2 parts: sinful nature (Paul: flesh) & new man/person (baptzd bel, Spirit/God wrkng in hrt) – bad/good side; heathen/Xian; sinner/saint. Conflict! **Vs. 17abc.** Battle that rages inside all us! Remem, Rom 7: good/evil. That's what like be Xian. Unbels don't have that strggl bec don't have new man; don't have God's Spirit wrking w/in them; and so don't even want Gos frdm J gives.
- But when HS brings you faith/Xp (baptzd, hear/bel Gos), J sets you free. As Xian, you: free! Have frdm from/for. You're free fr slvry/sin. God does not count sins vs you. Has video survlnc of ev evil thng ever done; audio recrdngs of ev filthy wrd ever spkn; knows ev wicked thght that's ever crossed mind. But does not bring that evidence vs you in his holy courtrm bec his Son, your Sav JC, has alrdy made full payment for those sins on cross! J has fully & compltly canclld our guilt. Do not undrestmt grace/God! He holds nthng vs us! That's what it means to have frdm in Xp. He has set us free fr slvry/sin.
- Problem: ev day our sinful nature wants makes us a slave/sin all over again. Our flesh wants revert fr frdm back to slvry. And when we sin, that's exactly what doing – relapsing back into slvry. **Vs. 1.** Think: after Rev War, why'd Amrcns want be under Brit rule again? After Emancptn, why'd freed slaves want be whipped by plantn owner again? Sevrل forts we visited: chambers for prisoners of war. If you're prisoner & get set free, why'd want go back into prison cell & shut door behind you? Crazy! But that's exctly what we're doing when give into tempttn & sin vs God – reverting back to slvry/sin.

- Here's what that looks like: **vs. 19-21a**. Pretty nasty list! But I think we need look at this list, say 2 things. 1) That's what I used be like; that's my past; that's what I was stuck in; and (thank Lord!) J has freed me fr that slvry! 2) Unfrtntly, smtms that's my present; smtms, even though I'm free, I go back to this nastiness & live like slave to sin. Mentions **idolatry** – what idol in your life have you set up above God; what's more imp to you than Lord? **Hatred & fits of rage** – when you unable control your anger; when hrt filled w/hatred? **Selfish ambition** – don't tell me you're not selfish; ev one us selfish. **Drnkns** – drink too much? **Impurity** – spk w/filthy lang w/o remorse? **Sexual immrlty**, evthng fr cheating on spouse, to looking at porn, to having sex before married. By the way, have we forgtn that's wrong? Become desensitized to fact that sex outside of marg: sin vs God, even if in love. It's a gift God gives to the married, and a sin he condemns for those who are not married. God's serious, about all this! **Vs. 21b**. The point today: Xp has set you free fr these sins; you're no longer slave to them! So don't go back & live in slvry! **Vs. 13ab** (that's frdm from).
- **Vs. 13c** (that's frdm for). What you going do w/your frdm? Love Lord God w/all hrt/soul/strgnth/mind & nghbr as self (Lk 10:27) – not bec have to (that's slvry) but bec want/get to (that's frdm). Gos motivates us, moves us to say thank you to J by serving Lord & serving his ppl. That's what we've been freed to do! So again, what you going do w/your frdm? What do you have frdm for? For this: **vs. 22-23a**. There's a sermon for ev one of these fruits/Spirit. But think re it: **love** (Xian love, motvtd by Xp's love, imitatng Xp's love); **joy/peace** (come fr knowing you're loved by God & going to hvn). **Vs. 22-23a**. There's a sermon for ev fruit. But really good news: God is growing these fruits w/in you! And of course, these fruits (just like apples & raspbrs) take time to grow. Don't ripen overnight. But they are growing.
- J: **"I: vine; you: brnchs. If you remain in me & I in you, you'll bear much fruit... This is to my Fr's glory, that you bear much fruit"** (Jn 15:5, 8). That's what you're free to do now! Xp has set you free! Not Declrtn/Indpndnc frdm, but Xian frdm. Frdm from slavery/sin; and frdm for fruitful service to your Lord and to your neighbor.

### Galatians 5:1, 13-25

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>13</sup>You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. <sup>14</sup>For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>15</sup>If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

<sup>16</sup>So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. <sup>17</sup>For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. <sup>18</sup>But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

<sup>19</sup>The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; <sup>20</sup>idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup>and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

<sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup>Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup>Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.