



New City Church: Sermon Discussion Notes

“Gospel Freedom” – Galatians 5:1-15

Purpose: These discussion questions are designed to help you apply the sermon to your personal life, church life or your city’s life. You can use these for personal, family, or small group reflection. To review the sermon, go to www.newcitychurch.ca/sermons.

Introduction

Pray – Take a moment to pray, asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture.

Read – Galatians 5:1-15

Sermon Summary – Freedom is something that humanity desires and strives for incessantly. Whether it is a people group seeking political or economic liberation, or a woman seeing freedom from an abusive husband, the common yearning is that of freedom. Paul offers us a profile of what it means to be free in Galatians 5:1-15. First he tells us what it means to be “Free”. The freedom that Paul is talking about here is not mere physical freedom, nor is it freedom from sin. He knows that the Galatian Christians were freed from the bondage of sin when they were converted. What he means here (when he says “stand firm”) is that they are not to lose their freedom of conscience as free Christians. He was concerned that they would come to believe that they had to keep themselves saved by their good works, as if Jesus saved them at first but now they had to maintain it. So freedom in Galatians 5 is freedom from guilt and doubt, which is expressed in our desire to cover that guilt and doubt with our efforts.

Paul then tells us what threatens our freedom, namely, our failure to trust that Jesus holds us tighter than we could ever hold him. We slip into this sort of error often and easily. Christians can come to believe that their disciplined devotional life earns them good health and good days. We can easily come to think that Jesus is like a union boss, demanding our due payments in order to keep us in good standing. Paul says that this lack of faith and desire to be our own Saviour is what most threatens our freedom in Christ.

Lastly, Paul shows us how to live as free Christians. Our lives should be marked by an unflappable hope. We should not use the word hope as the world does – it is not a synonym for “uncertain”. Biblical, Christian hope is certain. We hope for our eventual perfection and Christ-likeness in the same way we hope when watching a movie or reading a story we have read before – we hope with certainty, knowing what the end will be. This leads us to live lives as outlined in verses 13-15. We do not use our freedom to carry-on in the way we used to live when we were God’s enemies. We don’t exploit our neighbours but love them and serve them without expectation of return. We live as people who actually fulfill the Law of God, not because we think we are saved by our obedience but because we are so filled with gratitude towards Jesus and so empowered by the Spirit that we actually want to, and are able to, fulfill it. And the only way we can actually live this way is because the Spirit makes it possible and because we have been changed by the cross. When we see that we deserved death, but were given the life and reward that Jesus deserved, then we will be motivated to live as Paul tells us to.

Questions

1. Review the passage (Gal 5:1-15) How does this speak to your life?
 - Have you ever lost your “gospel freedom”? When? How? How did you regain it?
 - How have you been able to grow in your freedom? How do you stand firm in your Christian freedom each day?
2. What implications does Galatians 5:1-15 have for us as a church community?
 - How does gospel hope (5:5) help us to love one another better?
 - In light of 5:15, how can NCC keep from “biting and devouring” one another?
3. How does this text speak to our city?
 - How might NCC use its freedom to set Calgarians free from the sins that keep them enslaved?
 - Read verses 13-15 and discuss what it means for NCC to serve the city through love.

Concluding Question

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

Prayer

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