

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for September 2, 2007

“Righteousness Based on Liberty”
Galatians 5:1-6
Gerry Andersen

The final two chapters of Galatians teaches us the righteousness of God comes to us by God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, not our works through the keeping of the Law.

1. The privilege of liberty (5:1)

- a. Paul's assertion: We are set free to live in freedom

- b. Paul's appeal: We must stand firm to live in freedom

Galatians 5:1 serves as a hinge between the doctrinal section of freedom from the Law and the practical section of walking in the Spirit.

2. The problem of legalism (5:2-4)

The mandate of circumcision was for Israel, not for the church (Genesis 17:10-14; Acts 15:6).

The motivation of circumcision must be love, not Law (Acts 16:3).

a. Circumcision sterilizes us (5:2)

When we seek righteousness through the keeping of the Law we stop the work of Christ in our hearts.

b. Circumcision snares us (5:3)

When we seek righteousness through the keeping of the Law we become a slave to the entire Law (cf. James 2:10).

c. Circumcision severs us (5:4)

When we seek to obey God through the keeping of the Law we become separated from God's grace.

The reason we become separated from God's grace as we seek to keep the Law is because it is of the flesh, not the Spirit.

The phrase “fallen from grace” has been wrongly understood as meaning the loss of one's salvation. We do not move from justified to unjustified (Romans 8:29-30). The verb “severed” means “rendered inoperative” not “cut-off.”

Galatians 5:4 speaks of falling from the ministry of God's grace.

3. The path to liberty (5:5-6)

a. Our future liberty (5:5)

Note the change in pronoun.

The way we live in freedom is by faith through the Spirit.

The way we achieve righteousness is by waiting for, not working for it. This is not the imputed righteousness that we possess now but the complete righteousness that we will possess in glory.

b. Our present liberty (5:6)

While faith waits for righteousness, faith also works through love.

- Our faith is established by the Spirit
- Our faith is empowered by the Spirit
- Our faith is effective through the Spirit

May God give us the grace to allow us to walk by the Spirit rather than according to the flesh.