



# **“Freedom in Following”**

Standalone Sermon, Part 1 of 1

Sunday, June 1, 2025, at 9am and 11am

Spiritual Formation Director | Paolino Curto

Text: Galatians 5:1 & Selected Scriptures

**Big Idea: Many are plagued by the mistake of thinking the gospel is just about being saved, when in actuality, the gospel is what radically transforms our lives and brings about freedom in following Christ.**

Galatians 1:6-7a (NIV), ““I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all”

Galatians 5:1 (ESV), “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

## **Mistake 1: Sin Offers Freedom, Holiness Does Not.**

2 Peter 2:17-19 (NIV), “These people are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for “people are slaves to whatever has mastered them.”

Hebrews 12:9-11 (ESV), “we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

## **Mistake 2: Christians Are Not Really Free From The Law.**

Luke 10:25-37 (ESV), “And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the

Law? How do you read it?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live. But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Galatians 3:10-11a (ESV), ""For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them. Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law."

Galatians 3:11b, 13a (ESV), ""The righteous shall live by faith.'...Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."

### **The Solution: God's Love and Acceptance**

"Christians are continually trying to change their lives; but God calls us to experience the exchanged life. Christianity is not a self-improvement program. It isn't a reformation project. It is resurrection! It is new life! And it is expressed in terms of a total exchange of identity. Jesus Christ identified Himself with us in our death in order that we might be identified with Him in His resurrection. We give Christ all that we were spiritually dead, guilty sinners and Christ gives us all that He is resurrected life, forgiveness, righteousness, acceptance." - Bob George (excerpt from *Classic Christianity*)

"To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything" - Tim Keller

### **Three changes needed to experience God's love and acceptance:**

- a. **Forgive yourself.**
- b. **Find a trustworthy and mature Christian to share your struggles with.**
- c. **Focus on Christ and the Cross.**