

Lesson 12 20 July 2014

Liberty From the Law

Lesson Scope: [Galatians 5:1-15](#)

Lesson Focus

It is difficult for us to comprehend what it was like to live under the Law. We gather from the Scriptures that it was burdensome! It is important for us to keep in mind that the Law was added to grace because of transgressions. It revealed man's need of a Saviour, and it pointed forward to the coming of the Saviour. Salvation by grace through faith goes back to the beginning. Neither is sonship a new concept. Adoption involves the maturing of sonship. It is no longer necessary for the son to be under a schoolmaster. He is now of age and serves the Father as an adult. This freedom is marvelous!

The Gospel empowers the justified believer to live above the Law. This freedom in Christ issues into a life of willing obedience and loving service.

This lesson is closely related to the dispensational change from the Old to the New Testament. For this reason, the application of its principles is a bit more difficult. It is important to understand that the Law was added to grace and that obedience to the Law was to be an expression of faith.

The bondage of the Law was due, in part, to the burdensome elements of all that it required. But it also brought bondage because it produced an awareness of sin without providing a remedy for man's fallen nature. In regard to application, think through the error of legalism. The legalist starts from the platform of strict adherence to law. This stands in contrast to one whose platform is principle or the reason behind the law. The Christian is governed by principle. He views church standards as a united effort to apply principle. The legalist uses obedience to the standards as evidence that he is a good Christian or a faithful church member. Some throw aside principle in an effort to avoid legalism. This lesson teaches a "faith which worketh by love." That is the true spirit of obedience.

Lesson Aim: To present principles related to Gospel liberty from the bondage of the Law.

Theme Verses: [Romans 8:3-4](#). For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Lesson Text

"Be Not Entangled Again"

[Galatians 5:1-6](#) ¹ Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. ² Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. ³ For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. ⁴ Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. ⁵ For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. ⁶ For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

"By Love Serve One Another"

[Galatians 5:7-14](#) ⁷ Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? ⁸ This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you. ⁹ A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. ¹⁰ I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. ¹¹ And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. ¹² I would they were even cut off which trouble you. ¹³ For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. ¹⁴ For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Questions for Study

"Be Not Entangled Again"

1. Why is the Law referred to as a "yoke of bondage"?

2. How does the Gospel of Christ supersede the Law?
 3. Why is righteousness by faith referred to as a hope?
 4. How might we be entangled again in the yoke of bondage?
- "By Love Serve One Another"**
5. How does the "offence of the cross" relate to Gospel liberty?
 6. How might liberty be used for an occasion to the flesh?
 7. How is love the fulfilling of the Law?

Analyzing the Passage

The "yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1) is the Old Testament Law. It was added to grace to make mankind conscious of their need of a Saviour. It was a "schoolmaster" to bring man to Christ. To continue observing the Law as a means of justification after Christ had come was a rejection of the Gospel. This phrase, "yoke of bondage," is very descriptive, and it helps us understand the significance of our deliverance from the Law.

The phrase "hope of righteousness" (Galatians 5:5) alludes to the fact that we have not reached a state of perfection. It is the work of the Spirit, in response to our faith, to lead us unto perfection.

The conflict that was being faced was very real to the apostle Paul. He had faced it himself as he laid aside the Law in favor of the Gospel. He could empathize with those to whom he was writing. He was calling them to a commitment of love that would resolve the conflict.

Principles and Applications

"Be Not Entangled Again"

1. The Gospel liberates from the bondage of the Old Testament Law (Galatians 5:1). Servitude under the Law was similar to the experience of a young son working under the directive of his father. The freedom of the Gospel is likened unto a son that has become of age and is now doing the same chores because of their value. The bondage is gone! So it is in church life; when following principle, we live by the spirit of the discipline and not by the letter. The spirit of love replaces the letter of the law.
2. The continued practice of the Law makes the provision of Christ ineffective (Galatians 5:2-4). Christ came and fulfilled the Law. Its purpose was temporary; it is replaced by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We do

not base our practice on the keeping of the Ten Commandments. Our church leaders are not considered to be priests. We follow the teachings of Christ and place our faith in His work of redemption.

3. The Gospel provides justification through grace (Galatians 5:4). We fall from grace when we lean upon good works for justification. Salvation cannot be earned; it is a gift! However, when one is redeemed and purified through the work of Christ, he becomes "zealous of good works."

4. Gospel liberty is expressed in the work of faith (Galatians 5:6). We understand that faith is more than mental assent. It is governed by the law of love—there are ordinances to practice and a brotherhood to embrace that test our submission. However, the Gospel is so enriching that the thought of bondage should not exist.

"By Love Serve One Another"

5. To reject Gospel liberty is to reject the truth (Galatians 5:7-10). In returning to the Old Testament Law, the Galatians were forsaking the truth! In our day many have turned from the truth in the pursuit of liberty. In both circumstances, true liberty is lost, and we have witnessed the effects of a little leaven. It is vital that the church be faithful in carrying out the necessary disciplinary action so that she is protected from the influence of false brethren.

6. The cross of Christ is the foundation of Gospel liberty (Galatians 5:11-12).

Christ's death on the cross was the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices. Likewise, the crucifying of the flesh is foundational to Christian liberty. It is significant that the ordinances of the church are not pleasing to the flesh. Consequently, they are gradually lost in the course of apostasy. Self-denial is a constant along the road to freedom.

7. Gospel liberty is not liberty to serve the flesh (Galatians 5:13). The carnal nature is always with us, beckoning for our attention and submission. But the grace of God gives us power to live in obedience to the principles of the Scriptures. We are disciples of Jesus; therefore we support and follow His teachings. Jesus taught and exemplified self-denial and cross bearing. Pride and self-will always lead into the bondage of sin! We cannot practice sin and claim Gospel liberty.

8. Christian love is the fulfilling of the Law and the essence of Gospel liberty (Galatians 5:14-15). Disobedience, strife, and divisions are not

compatible with love. Christian brotherhood is realized through the work of the Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit is the solution to the difficulties that arise. When we are truly governed by love, we are free to do as we please because we will only be pleased to do what is right.

Important Teachings

1. The Gospel liberates from the bondage of the Old Testament Law (Galatians 5:1).
2. The continued practice of the Law makes the provision of Christ ineffective (Galatians 5:2-4).
3. The Gospel provides justification through grace (Galatians 5:4).
4. Gospel liberty is expressed in the work of faith (Galatians 5:6).
5. To reject Gospel liberty is to reject the truth (Galatians 5:7-10).
6. The cross of Christ is the foundation of Gospel liberty (Galatians 5:11-12).
7. Gospel liberty is not liberty to serve the flesh (Galatians 5:13).
8. Christian love is the fulfilling of the Law and the essence of Gospel liberty (Galatians 5:14-15).

Answers to Questions

1. Why is the Law referred to as a "yoke of bondage"?
The fulfilling of the Law was heavy and burdensome. The ceremonial laws required sacrifice of material gain and time. The moral laws exposed their sin without providing a remedy for the carnal nature. Living under the Law is likened to a child who serves under the rules and regulations of his father (Galatians 4:1-5).
2. How does the Gospel of Christ supersede the Law?
The Gospel is the fulfillment of all that the Law foreshadowed. The blood of Jesus does not just cover sin; it cleanses from sin. The Law made man aware of his sin, but the Gospel provides the remedy. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28, 30).
3. Why is righteousness by faith referred to as a hope?
The phrase "hope of righteousness" implies that we have not yet reached a state of perfection. It is the work of the Spirit, in response to our faith, to lead us to perfection. It also includes all that awaits those

who are made righteous by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. How might we be entangled again in the yoke of bondage?

It is our responsibility to keep ourselves in the love of Christ. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Galatians 5:17). There is always the possibility that we might turn again to the weak and beggarly elements of the world. It is our choice! We also face the threat of legalism. And because of apostasy, many have become disobedient to the faith.

5. How does the "offence of the cross" relate to Gospel liberty?

It is through the cross that we are crucified unto the world and the world unto us (Galatians 6:14). If we become weary of bearing the cross in the face of opposition and persecution, we will be tempted to give up the faith. We must take up our cross daily and follow Christ if we would experience true liberty.

6. How might liberty be used for an occasion to the flesh?

Liberty from the bondage of the Law is not an excuse for every man to do that which is right in his own eyes. The thought of liberty naturally beckons to the carnal nature and sends the signal that we may please ourselves. The flesh is always looking for carnal liberties. But Jesus taught and exemplified self-denial and humility. And the law of love makes no room for the works of the flesh.

7. How is love the fulfilling of the Law?

If we love God, we will surely not serve other gods. Nor would we want to do anything that displeases Him. If we love our parents and family, we will honor and respect them. If we love our brethren, we will always want what is best for them, and we will be willing to sacrifice our liberty for their spiritual good. If we love our enemies, we will be non-resistant and seek their salvation. Love never overlooks sin, but it is long-suffering and kind. Does any need of the Law remain? No!

Summarizing the Lesson

Freedom from the bondage of the Law may never be construed as liberty to serve the flesh. Rather, the Gospel of Christ Jesus lifts us above the Law to a life of victory over sin. "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6).

Research Guide

Read Romans 5-8, noting verses that parallel thoughts in the lesson text.