

## Daily Devotional, July 27, 2020 Freedom in Christ

***“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.” Galatians 5:1 (NIV)***

Are you free? We're fortunate and blessed to live in a "free" nation! We should never forget the price that others paid for the freedoms we enjoy. It's tragic that so many today live in a "free" nation and yet, are not free. They are bound by hurts, habits and hang-ups that enslave them. Others are bound by legalism, trying to earn God's favor through their achievements.

This Bible verse today was directed toward a people who didn't have the privilege of living in such a free nation as ours. Many to whom this letter was written were slaves at worst and politically oppressed at best. They were hoping for a Messiah to come that would be a military king and liberate them from Roman oppression restoring the glory days when King David ruled Israel. Despite the political constraints, the Bible says, ***“We have freedom NOW!”*** That's the Good News of the Gospel! ***“Christ made us free!”*** The Gospel writer John wrote: ***“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed!” John 8:36 (NIV)***

This freedom means the shackles of the past have been broken! You are free in Christ! How is that possible? He set you free by breaking the power of sin that enslaved you and condemned you! The power of the cross sets the captives free! For the Christian, the cross is something like our Statue of Liberty! It was there that our souls were set free! But, freedom must be maintained! That's why the Bible adds, ***“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.” Galatians 5:1 (NIV)***

This is the snare of religion! Having been set free by grace through faith, somehow, we begin to act as if we have to maintain that freedom through our human effort. Soon, we fall from grace and begin trying to earn God's favor and lose our freedom in Christ along the way. It's not that grace has failed. We have! In the Bible we read, ***“Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?” Galatians 3:3 (NIV)***

If you find yourself slipping back into that works-based religion, shake off the shackles and stand strong in the freedom by which Christ has made you free! Celebrate it! It's yours by the blood of Jesus Christ! Read Galatians this weekend. It's the Magna Carta of Christian liberty!

***Prayer: Lord. We find our freedom only in you. You have granted us the freedom that we share as a nation, unencumbered by harsh suppression of our thoughts and ideals. But the true freedom you bring is the freedom from the weight of our sin and the burden of our guilt. Thank you for carrying our burdens and for freeing us to carry the burdens of others. In Christ's name I pray. Amen,***