

Introduction

In 1981 I went through the Xerox six-week course in sales. At that time, it was considered to be one of the best corporate sales courses, if not the best. Before trying to close a deal, we were taught to talk about the Features, Advantages, and Benefits of our products. Then, we were taught almost thirty different closes. A few of the closes were more humorous to me than a serious closing. For example, we could make a statement about a table in the office supporting a copier, and ask if they would like me to write up the order. Before trying to close a sale, one must first earn the buyer's trust and respect by providing information and answers about our product. Once we had made our presentation, we were taught how to close the deal. We were taught to ask for their business. Even though I did not follow that line of business, the sales training has been helpful to me in many other ways.

The Apostle Paul has written to the Galatian churches in response to hearing that the Judaizers had come in and taught that they needed to be circumcised, believe in Jesus, and follow the Law. It was a perverted gospel. It had some truth in it, that we must believe in Jesus, but it added works to it, and was therefore a false gospel. Paul has defended the gospel message to them. He said that anyone who preaches a false gospel is to be accursed.

These Judaizers had not only taught a false gospel, they had also made false and negative allegations against Paul. His letter was not just a defense of the gospel, it was also a defense of his own apostolic calling and ministry. He wrote that he was called while in his mother's womb. He had been a zealous Pharisee before God saved him. After God revealed Himself to Paul, He gave him the revelation of the gospel message. The gospel Paul taught did not come from men, but directly from God. Paul submitted the gospel message to the apostles in Jerusalem, and they had agreed with the gospel message he was preaching, that it is by faith that we are saved, and that circumcision is not required. The apostles in Jerusalem gave Barnabas and Paul the right hand of fellowship, meaning that they recognized that Paul was an apostle, just like them, and that he was called to the Gentiles. All of these points refuted the false allegations made by the Judaizers.

Then, Paul taught them about the Law. He wanted them to understand that the Law reveals sin, and was a tutor to bring people to Christ. However, the Law did not make anyone righteous, and it brought a curse on those under it. Abraham was saved by faith, not by the works of the Law. The Galatians had also been saved by faith, not by works of the Law. They had also performed miracles by faith, not by the works of the Law.

Paul has said all of these things leading up to his closing argument, which is found in Galatians 5:1-12. In his close, he starts by exhorting them to stand firm and not to be subject to a yoke of slavery. Paul wants the Galatians to choose freedom. That is the decision that he is urging them to make. His first closing argument is about the consequences of being circumcised, or following the Law. His second and final closing statement is about those the Judaizers who brought in this false gospel. He gives six characteristics of these false teachers. He wants the Galatians to see these false teachers for who they really are.

Choose Freedom

1. Consequences of choosing the Law (Gal 5:2-6)
2. A look at false teachers (Gal 5:7-12)
3. The decision (Gal 5:1)

(Ga 5:1) “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”

(Gal 5:2-6) “Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. {3} And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. {4} You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. {5} For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. {6} For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.”

(Gal 5:7-12) “You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? {8} This persuasion *did not come* from Him who calls you. {9} A little leaven leavens the whole lump *of dough*. {10} I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is. {11} But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished. {12} I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.”

1. Consequences of choosing the Law? (Gal 5:2-6)

Paul’s first closing argument is about the consequences of choosing the Law. The first consequence of receiving circumcision is that Christ was not going to be of any benefit to them. Circumcision was the sign of the Old Covenant, and it was part of the Law. If they were going to try to be justified by circumcision, they were making a choice to be under the whole Law, and Christ was not going to benefit them. Jesus paid the price for our sins and makes us righteous by faith, not by works of the Law. Abraham was made righteous by faith, not by works.

(Gal 5:2) “Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you.”

The second consequence was that they were going to be under obligation to keep the whole Law. They were then under obligation to keep the whole Law. They could not pick and choose this Law or that; they were either trying to become righteous by the works of the flesh, or by faith. If they chose circumcision, they were choosing to be under the whole Law.

(Gal 5:3) “And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.”

Paul had just told them that those under the Law were under bondage. They were slaves to the Law. He also taught them that those under the Law are under a curse. He had told them that the Law was meant to be a tutor to bring them to Christ. The Law was not going to make them righteous. Christ came to set us free from bondage, not put us or keep us under bondage. If they chose to be under bondage, Christ’s payment for their redemption was of no benefit.

The third consequence was that would be severed from Christ. If someone is depending on works to save them, to be justified by Law, they are not trusting in Christ for their righteousness; they are trusting in their own works. Believers are those who believe that Christ died for our sins, was raised from the dead, and have confessed Him to be Lord of their life. They are trusting in the grace of God, not the works of the flesh. If someone is trusting in their works, and not the finished work of Christ, they have no place in Christ. It is by faith that we are made righteous.

(Gal 5:4) “You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.”

This particular verse is very controversial. There has been tremendous debate and divide over the meaning of this verse. John Calvin was a French reformer, who was born in 1509 and died in 1564. Out of his writings and teachings, his followers came up with the five points of Calvinism, known as the TULIP. The T stands for **Total Depravity**. The U stands for **Unconditional Election**. The L stands for **Limited Atonement**. The I stands for **Irresistible Grace**. The P stands for the **Perseverance of the Saints**. They believe that God chooses who is to be saved, and that man has no part in the process. Since it is God that chooses, and it is by His grace, not by works, man cannot lose his salvation by works. “Salvation is entirely the work of the Lord.”¹

Joseph Hermann was a reformed-trained pastor in Amsterdam, who was born in 1560 and died in 1609. The Latin form of his last name is Arminius. He had serious doubts about the sovereign grace that was taught by the followers of Calvinism. He left his reformed congregation and became a professor of theology at the University of Leiden. He gave lectures on election and predestination that were in sharp contrast to Calvinism. After he died, his followers came up with their own five points, known as the “Five Points of Arminianism.”

The Arminians believed in **Free Will**, that men could choose to receive Christ. Second, they believed in **Conditional Election**, where man’s “act of faith” was seen as the “condition” of being elected to eternal life.² Third, they believed in **Universal Atonement**, that Christ died for everyone and that the Father was not willing that any should perish. Men needed to exercise their free will in order to be saved. Fourth, they believed in **Obstructable Grace**. Since men had a free will, they could resist God’s will for their lives. Fifth, they believed in **Falling from Grace**. Since a man cannot be saved unless he chooses by his will to place his faith in Christ, he cannot continue in salvation unless he continues to will to be saved.

The Arminians would say that Galatians 5:4 clearly teaches that you can be severed from Christ and fall from grace. God is not going to go against anyone’s will, and if they don’t want the kingdom of God, He will not force them. If they choose to depart from following God, they can be severed from Christ. The Calvinists would say that man does not have a free will, and if God has chosen and elected the person, that person will be saved. God will finish the work He began in that person. So, this verse has been a difficult verse for many centuries, and there are many godly theologians on both sides.

Personally, I really like what Chuck Smith, the founder of the Calvary Chapels, has written. He maintained a “Bible-centered balance” in these issues. His essay on Calvinism is exceptional in my mind, and very balanced. Rather than attacking either side, he came up with his own five points of what he believes the Bible teaches in these areas, which I believe was a sound approach. Since there are well-respected theologians on both sides of this issue, we have to be careful about being too dogmatic. I believe we should study the Scriptures and have a clear conviction about what we believe. In regard to the five points of Calvinism, I have found that most people who study the issues are somewhere in between, not accepting all Calvin’s points, and not embracing all of the points of Arminianism.

¹ Calvinism, by Chuck Smith, page 3

² Calvinism, by Church Smith, page 2

Here are some further thoughts on this particular verse about being severed from Christ and falling from grace. First, when a person truly believes and receives Christ into his life, he is born again. He is a new creation. The Holy Spirit comes into the new believer and he is sealed with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13 says, “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.” In addition to being sealed, we are adopted and can call God, Abba, Father. I do not believe God is going to unseal us, or cancel the adoption papers because we were deceived about an issue.

(Eph 1:13) “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,”

Furthermore, Jesus said in John 10:27-29, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.” Then He added, “and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.” If we are truly God’s sheep, we are pretty secure.

(Jn 10:27–29) “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; {28} and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. {29} “My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father’s hand.”

We are not saved by works, but by placing our faith in Christ for our salvation. Since it is not by works that we are saved, I do not believe that our works will cause us to lose our salvation. However, if our works do not reflect our faith, there is good reason to question whether we truly believed and were born again. Peter wrote that we need to be diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing us. Paul wrote something similar, saying, “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you, unless indeed you fail the test?” We need to diligent to make sure our salvation and faith in Christ.

(2 Pe 1:10) “Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;”

(2 Co 13:5) “Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?”

That is important because Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father...I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’” We need to be diligent about examining our faith, and whether we have been born again.

(Mt 7:21–23) “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. {22} “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ {23} “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”

I believe we can be confident in our salvation. In 1 John 5, God tells us that he who has the Son has life, and he does not have the Son does not have life. John wrote these things so that we

could and would know that we have eternal life. When we truly receive Christ, we can know for sure that we are saved, and our life will change. The old things will pass away and new things will come.

(1 Jn 5:12–13) “He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. {13} These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

(2 Co 5:17) “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

I lean towards the view that we cannot lose our salvation, if we have truly been born again. However, there are warnings in the Scripture about falling away. In Hebrews 3:12, we are warned, “Take heed, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.” In 1 Timothy 4:1, Paul prophesied that in the latter times some would fall away from the faith. I believe that true believers cannot be taken away from the Father, and true believers will persevere until the end. Since there are great men of God on both sides of this matter, we have to be careful about being too dogmatic. We should focus on loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and on being faithful all of our life.

(Heb 3:12) “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.”

(1 Ti 4:1) “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,”

In regard to being severed from Christ and falling from grace, if the Galatians were trying to earn their righteousness by being circumcised and keeping the Law, they would not be depending on the grace of God; they would be depending on their own works, and we know that no one is saved by their works. Since they are not pursuing God by faith, they have fallen from grace and are severed from Christ. It is only by faith that we are saved, and I believe that is Paul’s point of writing this verse. He follows up by stating, “For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness, for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.”

(Gal 5:4-6) “You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. {5} For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. {6} For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.”

After giving the three consequences of choosing the Law, Paul testifies how believers, through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. They are not trusting in the works of the Law, but are living by faith. They are waiting for the hope of righteousness; they are not trying to earn their righteousness by works. In their decision, they need to realize that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything. The key thing is faith working through love.

2. A look at false teachers (Gal 5:7-12)

Paul’s first closing argument was about the consequences of choosing the law. His final argument is about the Judaizers that had brought in a false gospel. He wants the Galatians to take

a look at their lives. The things that Paul shared do not just apply to the Judaizers; they apply to false teachers in general.

Jesus, when warning against false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves, said, "So then you will know them by their fruits." These Judaizers have come into the churches of Galatia in sheep's clothing. But they were not sent by James and they are not under the authority of the church in Jerusalem. They are ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing and Paul wants them to be aware of their fruit before they choose to follow them and their teaching.

(Mt 7:15–20) "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. {16} "You will know them by their fruits... {20} "So then, you will know them by their fruits."

A. They hinder people from obeying the truth

Paul begins by telling the Galatians that they were running well. He had shared the gospel with them, and invested much time there, teaching and making disciples. He had raised up elders in their churches. People were getting saved, and there were miracles being performed. Something has happened, and Paul asks, "Who hindered you from obeying the truth?" False teachers hinder people from obeying the truth. The Amplified Bible renders it this way. "Who has interfered in (hindered and stopped you from) your heeding and following the truth?" The Greek word is *enkopto* (Strong's G1465), and it means to cut into, impede, detain, or hinder. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says it basically means to block the way. These Judaizers have put an obstacle in the path of the Galatians, and have blocked, impeded, and hindered them in their walk and in obeying the truth.

(Gal 5:7) "You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?"

(Gal 5:7 Amp) "You were running the race nobly. Who has interfered in (hindered and stopped you from) your heeding *and* following the Truth?"

B. They are not sent by God

Paul's second point about false teachers is that they are not sent by God. He wrote, "This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you." They are not doing God's work. They are not under God's authority. They are not under James, the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, or the church in Jerusalem. They have not been sent there by God. They are wolves in sheep's clothing. Ultimately, the one who tries to hinder people in their faith is the devil, and the devil is using these Judaizers as his instruments in bringing the Galatians into disobedience and bondage.

(Gal 5:8) "This persuasion *did not come* from Him who calls you."

C. Their sin spreads throughout the body

Third, Paul said, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough." Sin, like yeast, spreads and affects the whole loaf. If you put yeast in the dough, it does not just affect a portion of it; it spreads throughout the whole lump. The destructive doctrines and sin caused by these false teachers spreads and affect the whole body.

(Gal 5:9) “A little leaven leavens the whole lump *of dough*.”

When Paul was dealing with the immorality in the church of Corinth, he asked if they knew that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. He told them to clean out the old leaven so that they would be unleavened. He wanted them to deal with the immorality and remove the sin from the church. These false teachers in Galatia and their destructive doctrines need to be removed from the churches in Galatia. That applies to us today. Destructive doctrines, false teaching, and sin needs to be removed from the churches so that we are unleavened or holy. If we do not remove it, it spreads throughout the whole body.

(1 Co 5:6–7) “Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump *of dough*? {7} Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.”

D. They disturb people

Fourth, false teachers disturb and upset people. Paul said that the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment. There were probably more than one of these Judaizers, but Paul addresses the “one” who is disturbing you. There was probably a leader of the pack, the alpha wolf. In Galatians 1:7, he wrote, “only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.” There were more than one, but there is probably a ring leader of these false teachers.

(Gal 5:10) “I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.”

(Ga 1:7) “which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.”

The Greek word for disturbing is *tarasso* (Strong’s G5015), which means to stir, agitate, roil, or trouble. It is the same word that is used in Galatians 1:7, where there were some who were disturbing them. False teachers stir up trouble. They disturb people. They upset the faith of people. These false teachers that had disturbed them.

In Paul’s letter to Titus, he said that he left him in Crete to set in order what remains. These false teachers had come in and brought chaos to all the churches. Scholars say there were five churches on the island of Crete, and they were all in disorder and chaos. He went on to say that there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families. Just as there were more than one of these false teachers in the churches of Galatia, there were more than one in Crete. Paul wrote that there are many of these false teachers that needed to be silenced. They had upset whole families with their teaching. False teachers have bad fruit. They disturb and upset people in the church, and they have bad motives. Many of them do it for the sake of sordid gain.

(Tt 1:5-11) “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,... {10} For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, {11} who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain.”

In the midst of these insights into false teachers, Paul said he had confidence in the Galatians that they would adopt no other view. He believes they will make the right choice, which is to reject their false teaching, stand firm, and not be subject to the yoke of slavery by trying to earn their righteousness through works, following the Law.

E. They will bear their judgment

Fifth, false teachers will be judged, and they will bear their judgment. All of us will stand before God and give account. For believers, this is good news, as we shall receive rewards and crowns. For unbelievers, their judgment is not such a good thing. They will bear their judgment.

(Gal 5:10) “I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.”

At the beginning of Paul’s letter, he told the Galatians twice that whoever preaches a false gospel is to be accursed. In Matthew 25, Jesus preached about the separation of the sheep from the goats. The worthless ones were assigned in the place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. They are the accursed one, who will be sent into the eternal fire, into eternal punishment. These false teachers will bear their judgment, and it is a serious matter.

(Mt 25:30-46) “Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.... {41} “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels... {46} “These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

F. They persecute true workers

Sixth, Paul talks about his own persecution. He said, “But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.” Paul was being persecuted everywhere he went, and it was primarily the Jews that were persecuting him. They persecuted him because he taught that people did not have to follow the Law. The Law was given to reveal sin, and to be a tutor to bring us to faith in Christ. Now that Christ had come, people were free from trying to earn their righteousness through the Law. The Jews were adamant about following the Law, and Paul’s message upset them, so they persecuted him.

(Gal 5:11) “But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.”

False teachers will slander, persecute, and try to destroy legitimate leaders in the church. As we saw in Paul’s letter to Titus, some do it for sordid gain. Others do it for control. Ultimately, they are not being led by the Spirit of God, but are of the devil.

G. They have no concern for the flock, only themselves

Seventh, false teachers have no concern for the flock; they are only concerned about themselves. Paul wrote, “I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.” They want power, control, sordid gain, and other things, but they are not looking out for the welfare of others. These Judaizers did not care that they were going to bring great pain and suffering to

these Gentile believers by making them receive a circumcision. Circumcision of a baby at eight days is one thing. The body heals itself very quickly. Circumcision of adults is quite a different matter, and the pain and healing time is longer. That was of no concern to these false teachers.

(Gal 5:12) “I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.”

Paul said that he wished that these false teachers would mutilate themselves. He wanted them to taste a little of the pain and suffering that they were bringing upon these Gentile believers. I do not believe that Paul wanted them to mutilate themselves. I believe that Paul wanted them to come to Christ. I believe he has said this to reveal that they were not looking out for the welfare of others, but only looking out for their own interests.

In Matthew 23, Jesus exposed Pharisaism, and then gave eight woes. He began by saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them. They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.” These Judaizers were acting in the same way. They were putting a heavy burden on these Gentile believers, and Paul is wishing they would experience the pain and suffering they are causing the Galatians.

(Mt 23:1–4) “Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, {2} saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; {3} therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say *things* and do not do *them*. {4} “They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with *so much as* a finger.”

Jesus said that He was the good shepherd and the good shepherd lays down for the sheep. True shepherds of the flock will lay their lives down for the sheep.

(Jn 10:11) “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”

Peter gave three exhortations to pastors about shepherding the flock. True shepherds are going to shepherd the flock. Shepherding entails feeding, watering, watching over (praying), protecting, and caring for the flock. Peter exhorts pastors not to do it for sordid gain, or for any other evil motive. He exhorted them not to lord over the flock, but they lead by example. These false teachers were not true shepherds. They were in it for themselves and were not seeking the welfare of the flock. They had not been sent by God, whereas true shepherds have been called, anointed, and gifted by God to serve the flock.

(1 Pe 5:2–3) “shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of* God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; {3} nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”

3. The Decision (Gal 5:1)

Paul began by telling the Galatians that “It was for freedom that Christ set us free.” Then he exhorted them, “Keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.” That is the decision that he wants the Galatians to make.

(Ga 5:1) “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”

Conclusion and Applications

In verse ten, he wrote, “I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view.” He has defended the message of the gospel, his own calling and ministry. He has explained the law, the purpose of the law, and the consequences of being under the law, slavery. He has warned them if they receive circumcision, they will be under obligation to keep the entire Law.

(Ga 5:10) “I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.”

Paul exposed the truth about these false teachers, the Judaizers. They have not been sent by God. They have hindered their walk. Their sin spreads like leaven. They disturb and upset the faith of believers. They are only concerned about themselves; they do not have the best interest of the sheep in mind. And they persecute the true workers, like Paul.

Paul has exhorted them to make the right choice, to choose freedom. He is confident in the Lord that they will make the right choice and adopt no other view.

Paul is not done talking about freedom. Beginning in verse thirteen, he again tells them that they were called to freedom, and then he tells them not to turn their freedom into an opportunity for the flesh. God wants us free from legalism and the Law. He wants us free from sin. It was for freedom that Christ set us free. That is where we will begin next week.

Closing Prayer

Father God, thank You for Paul’s exhortation to us to stand firm and to walk in freedom. Help us to be on guard against legalism. Help us to be obedient to You and Your word, but not to be legalistic. Help us to focus on love, which is the new commandment that you gave us. Help us to be on guard against false teachers. Give us wisdom and discernment. As a shepherd, help me to be selfless, humble, and caring. Help me to always look out for the best interest of the flock. Help me to encourage people in their walk, not hinder them. Help me to build up the faith of the flock. Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd and the Chief Shepherd, and You are our example of how we are to shepherd Your flock. Thank You again for this word. This morning, we choose freedom. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- Is the church free of legalism today? If not, what are some examples?
- Does the church walk in freedom today?
- What is the difference between keeping God’s commandments and being free from the Law?
- What safeguards do we have today to stop false teachers (See Titus 1:5)

- False teachers hinder the walk of believers. What should good pastors do? What are things that good teachers should emphasize?
- In searching for a church home, what are some of the best indicators or factors to look at?

Introduction (Ga 5:1-12)**1. Consequences of choosing the Law?** (Gal 5:2-6)

Consequence 1 (Gal 5:2):

Consequence 2 (Gal 5:3):

Consequence 3 (Gal 5:4-6, Eph 1:13, Jn 10:27-29, 2 Pe 1:10, 2 Co 13:5, Mt 7:21-23, 1 Jn 5:12-13, 2 Co 5:17, He 3:12, 1 Ti 4:1):

2. A look at false teachers (Gal 5:7-12, Mt 7:15-20)

A. They hinder people from obeying the truth (Gal 5:7)

B. They are not sent by God (Gal 5:8)

C. Their sin spreads throughout the body (Gal 5:9, 1 Cor 5:6-7)

D. They disturb people (Gal 5:10, 1:7, Tt 1:5-11)

E. They will bear their judgment (Gal 5:10, Mt 25:30-46)

F. They persecute true workers (Gal 5:11)

G. They have no concern for the flock, only themselves (Gal 5:12, Mt 23:1-4, Jn 10:11, 1 Pe 5:2-3)

3. The Decision (Gal 5:1)**Conclusion and Applications** (Ga 5:10)