



The Great Paradox of Freedom—Living the Gospel Galatians 6: 1-6

Galatians is an amazing book. It is filled with revolutionary ideas about what it really means to *live* as a believer. Paul shakes up our thinking at every point. If you haven't figured it out yet, Paul talks a lot about grace. This is a familiar concept for most of us, but Paul continues to reveal new facets to us while challenging us to adjust the way we think about it. Ben's sermon this week presented us with another of Paul's challenges. We are faced with the paradox of freedom. Let's begin our study.

Getting Started

The title of Ben's sermon introduced us to the paradox we face as Christians. He included a quote from John Piper, talking about the paradox we face when considering grace. Read it aloud and discuss your thoughts about it as a group.

"Grace is not simply leniency when we have sinned. Grace is the enabling gift of God not to sin. Grace is power, not just pardon . . . Therefore the effort we make to obey God is not an effort done in our own strength, but in the strength which God supplies (1 Pet. 4:11) . . . Therefore obedience which gives God pleasure is by grace through faith. It is the obedience of faith.

What are your first impressions re the quote?
What about grace as power—how does this work?

What do you think about being enabled not to sin?
Talk about the different kinds of obedience.

Ben did a great job launching chapter 5. Before diving into discussion, briefly summarize what we've studied so far in Galatians.

As Christians, we are free . . . 5:1

. . . from slavery (to the Old Testament Law)
. . . from the guilt of sin

How does Paul's argument fit the rest of his letter?
How has your understanding changed?
How have you struggled accepting freedom from guilt?

. . . to stand in freedom (from the Law)
. . . to enjoy our favor from God

What is your understanding re the purpose of the Law?
How do you understand your freedom as a believer?
What areas of your life need to be emancipated?

Read the next three verses from different translations and look for any insights.

If you seek your own salvation ... verses 2-4

. . . you are trusting your own works
. . . you are returning to slavery

The point: Christ alone is sufficient for salvation

Why is it so easy for us to rely on our own works?
How do you see people doing this today?
How are we programmed to think we have to perform?

. . . you are not putting your faith in Christ
. . . you are not living in grace and truth

How do we rely on ourselves when not meaning to do so?
What is our cultural equivalent to circumcision?
What will it look like for us to change our thinking?

What is the good of knowing the gospel? verse 5-6

We wait for our God-given eternity
We wait having faith in our promised perfection

We live out this paradox not because we have to, but because in Christ . . . we're free to!

When does eternity begin: now or later? Why?
What does it mean to live a life of love?
How do our motives affect our actions?

We live in our God-given present
We live a life of love, reflecting the grace & glory of God

What difference does our understanding of this make?
How do we determine what it means to live in love?
What does it mean to work because God moves us to?

Application

Ben led us through a time of reflection while Logan played his guitar in the background. Let's read the verses under each heading and reflect on living the great paradox.

Waiting expectantly for God-given eternity.

Philippians 3:30
John 17:16
Philippians 1:6
Galatians 5:5

We live in our God-given present.

James 2:18
Philippians 2:12
Matthew 5:48
Galatians 5:6

Prayer

Praise for bringing wonderful people to our church. *Ask* Him to continue leading, guiding, and directing the lives of everyone at TCBC. *Ask* the Father to help us see how we can best serve the rest of the body with our gifts, abilities, and talents. *Praise* Him as you spend the rest of the month in prayer for the church. *Thank* Him for choosing us and loving us.