

The Freedom of the Gospel (Session 4)

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[0 : 00] Let us read the word of the Lord, Galatians 5, verse 1 to 15. It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.

Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by the yoke of slavery. Mark my words. I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.

Again, I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ.

You have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value.

The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. You are running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth?

[1 : 04] That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough. I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view.

The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted?

In that case, the offence of the cross has been abolished. As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves. You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free, but do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh.

Rather, serve one another humbly in love, for the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command. Love your neighbor as yourself. If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

Amen. This is a lot worth a lot. Thank you, Kok Peng. Good morning, everyone. Hope you had a good night's sleep last night.

[2 : 15] Okay. Let me ask that again. Did you have a good night's sleep last night? Okay. Great. Now we come to the last talk that we have on Galatians, and we are going to look at the topic of freedom.

But before that, can I just invite you once again, we go to God together in prayer, and ask our Heavenly Father to grant us soft hearts, that we may hear Him, and may be truly walking in the freedom that Christ has come to give us.

Let's pray. Father, we come now again once before you, and we pray, O Lord, that Father, speak to us, O Lord.

Show us Christ. And your word tells us that let him who has ears hear the words of the Spirit is speaking to the churches.

And indeed, what we have this morning in Galatians is your word by your Spirit to all your people.

So we ask, O Lord, help us to have ears to hear. And more than that, won't your word come to our hearts in such a way that our hearts are melted to receive it, that our life, O Lord, may be shaped by it, that truly we may learn what it means to walk in the freedom they have given to us.

[3 : 37] Amen. Amen. So, as I introduced myself a couple of days ago, I'm born in Sarawak, but I actually spent most of my time in my life in Singapore.

So, I actually had no idea that yesterday was Sarawak Day until I came this week and I saw a lot of banners around in Kuching.

And I also saw one of the banners writing, Sarawak Independence Day. And that strikes me as a little bit strange because I didn't understand the politics but I've been advised before I come to this camp not to talk about politics.

So, that's not what I wanted to really talk about. But I do wonder, I mean, when you read the word independence, do you actually also kind of read the word freedom into that word?

After all, I have a good brother in Singapore that when he preached on freedom, whatever comes, the theme of freedom, the scene that comes to his mind is actually Mel Gibson in Braveheart.

[4 : 44] When he comes, right, and it's Scotland, right, crying, freedom, freedom, right? We've got independence for Scotland, that kind of stuff. But I think all these ideas kind of actually informs us of what freedom is about.

But I think it's actually a little bit different from what the Bible says. But let's explore a bit more.

Because how is the word freedom being used nowadays? I'm just using examples that are probably, you won't use the same terms, but you will probably understand what I'm saying.

So some of us, for example, what you seek in your life is called financial freedom. What's financial freedom? It's to be able to reach the point in my life where I buy anything, right, or I go to any concert, right, I don't even think twice about it.

That's financial freedom. Right? And in another case, you want to have what? Relational freedom. I love to, I just want to be with anyone who I want to.

Or actually, in other words, sexual freedom. I like to sleep with anyone that I want to. And if you think about it this way, right, what am I talking about in freedom? A lot of people's idea about freedom is essentially this.

[5 : 56] It's actually to reach the stage or the state where you are able to do whatever you want to do. I just do whatever I want.

And that is your definition. And that's a very common definition of freedom. So whether it's actually freedom from worries of money or even freedom from responsibilities of family, right, that we tend to imagine and fantasize about, right, and to do whatever I like to do.

And that's what we often think about freedom. But if that's the way you think about freedom, I want to give you some caution. Because if you think deeper about it, freedom is not just your ability to do whatever you want.

For example, in some sense, do I have the freedom, I know this is controversial, right, to enjoy Chun Hui Laksa this morning? I guess I do have that freedom.

I can drive all the way down to Kuching and come back. I spend three hours on the trip, right? But once I spend that freedom doing that, I probably risk the freedom of, I'll actually be cutting short of freedom, actually, because I will, you'll not have a speaker this morning.

[7 : 10] Or I cut short, Brian's freedom, he'll have to come and speak this morning. Or rather, or in other way, I really love Laksa. If I actually indulge in eating, in giving all my all to eat Laksa, you'll find that at the long run, I actually diminish my freedom to eat Laksa.

Because why? Because my health reached a point where it's no longer viable for me to eat more Laksa anymore. I'm clogging out all my vessels, right?

My heart is failing and I can no longer enjoy the Laksa that I want to have. So you see, freedom is not actually really freedom from all kinds of constraints. It's not actually really about doing whatever you want to do, even though the world tells us that and in some sense, freedom is not really even independence.

Let me ask you a question. Just in terms of freedom of movement, right? If you launch an astronaut into space, you've seen that before, in space, well, you really envy them.

You're able to go to space, you're able to look at the planets and stars, but they are now moving in space in the astronaut suit without gravity. In terms of freedom of movement, all right, okay, the guy who is in the astronaut suit in space compared to us on Earth with our feet firmly stuck and being drawn to gravity, who has more freedom of movement?

[8 : 42] surely it's us. Even though we are kind of stuck to gravity, but gravity helps us.

Friction helps us to move around. That's just common physics. And so, by that, what I want to submit to you is that the idea that freedom is actually just doing whatever you want, being free from all kind of constraints and restraints is not actual true freedom.

What is actual true freedom? Actual true freedom is like the example I talk about having being stuck, being on Earth and being stuck to gravity is actually a kind of what? Having proper and good relationship with God, with the world, and with the others around you.

That is true freedom. True freedom is not consisting just doing whatever my heart wishes. It actually consists in what? Having proper and good relationship with God, with the world around you, and

also with others, especially with God's people.

So, for example, back to a laksa example. Sorry, if this, I'm just for an analogy. If I maintain a good relationship with my body, so to speak, right, it actually increases my freedom to eat laksa in the long run.

[10:03] You see what I'm trying to say? Right? So, and in fact, I can tell you, this is actually part, this is really part of what is wrong in the world today. Because everyone thinks about freedom in this way.

The freedom is the freedom to be myself, to be authentic, to be true to what my heart really desires. And if you look at other countries, the reason why they fight so much is because both sides are talking about the same kind of freedom.

You are restricting my freedom to be who I really am. And you are also restricting my freedom to determine who you are. and they quarrel and fight. But you see, the freedom of Christ that He has come to give us, in chapter 5 it says this, right?

That it's for freedom that Christ has come to set us free. It's much better than all of these. It's much better than all of these. It's actually a freedom that restores us in the right relationship with God, in the right relationship with the world, and of course in the right relationship with each other.

True freedom is actually having all of us to flourish together and not just having the expressiveness of being myself in the individualistic sense.

[11:25] and this kind of freedom is actually what the passage in Galatians is coming to talk about. Now, the whole pericope or the whole passage we just read just now in chapter 5 is really reminding us of freedom.

Because one way you can tell that is that actually in the ancient days, they don't really have chapter numbers and all that and the headings. actually, I know you're probably hitting something like Christ has set us free in our Bible, but that's not in the original, I'm afraid.

But you can tell that because the author often put what devices like includes you. So in verse 1, it says for freedom that Christ has set us free. Now turn over the page and look at verse 12, right?

Sorry, verse 13. It says that for you were called to freedom, brothers, and do not just use your freedom as opportunity for the flesh.

So with these key words like freedom, it means that actually this whole section that we're reading in from verse 1 to 15, I'll submit to you, is actually telling us something about the freedom that Christ has come to give us.

[12:35] So I can actually remind you again of the context of Galatians, right? What are they facing at the time? They're facing the problem that these false teachers, the false teachers come in and say, look, if you trust in Jesus, just that alone is not enough.

It's not enough. In order to be truly somebody, in order to be someone who is actually truly worthy, you need to be circumcised. You need to obey the Mosaic laws.

You need to actually even keep the festivals. That's what actually part of chapter 4 is saying, for example. And to Paul, this is not just a mere theoretical and doctrinal kind of controversy.

It's not as if just check the box, that's what I believe in, justify my faith alone, and we can go on living our married life. No. For Paul, he said, if you actually submit to this, it's tantamount, it's the equivalence of actually losing your freedom.

It's losing what it means to have a healthy and proper relationship with God, with the world, and with others. So, if you do not actually walk in this freedom, so to speak, you are essentially just despising what Christ has done.

[13:54] Because what Christ has come is not just merely to forgive our sins. What has come is a lot more than that. He has come, as verse 1 tells us, to actually give us freedom that we may be walking in it.

So, that's all to tell you that true freedom only comes with the gospel of Jesus Christ. And the freedom that the gospel offers to us is true freedom.

And by that, the implication is that we need to hold on, stand firm in that freedom, and we need to live out that freedom.

So, in the way we are looking at this, if you look at your headings, I think, in your booklet, there's actually three ways, which is freedom, true freedom, is based on grace.

The second is that true freedom requires us to stand. And I'm going to show you that. That means there's relationship with the world. Freedom is based on grace, means we have a right relationship

with God.

[14:59] But when we stand in freedom, standing firm in freedom, we have a proper relationship with the world. And finally, freedom requires us to love. That means that we actually have a proper relationship with one another.

But first, let's look at what it means that freedom actually is based on grace. Now, freedom of grace means actually this, that when the gospel comes to us, the reason that it's justified by faith alone is that when something is freely given to you, when something is accomplished and done by another, the only thing you can say or do is thank you and can trust and rely on it.

You can only receive it by faith. That's a correspondence between faith and grace. So, there's only two possible states, actually.

You're in a state of freedom when you're receiving grace in Christ by faith alone, or you're in a state of slavery. That's what Paul contrasts between in verse 1, which is then we're going to see later on. That means they'll be falling away from grace and to be separated from Christ. So, how do we see this? Come with me to chapter 5 and we'll look at verse 2 to 4.

[16:18] Paul here in these verses, in 2 to 4, is clearly showing us something to the Galatians. He's showing the Galatians too. It's like, if you accept the law, Christ has nothing to do with you, or in his words in verse 2, which has no advantage to you.

And in verse 4, it says you're served from Christ. That's in my version. And who are these? Who are these to whom? Christ has no advantage and to whom? And who are those who are actually served from Christ?

It's the one in the middle. It's a person who actually accepts circumcision and actually wants to be justified by the law. And why is it that justification by the law does not work?

We have seen many, many different reasons and now here we see another one. For why? He says he's obligated, he's obliged to keep the whole law. Keep the whole law.

Because the law works in this way. You cannot just be technical about it. You must keep the entire thing all the way down. It must be a whole stack. It cannot just be on the surface.

[17:22] Right? And some of us, sometimes we rationalize ourselves and fool ourselves in thinking that we can do something and be technically correct where in fact we're actually wrong. A very classic example would be in workplace that, you know, I don't know whether this is actually only my experience.

When your boss asks you, how's that project coming along? And you answer, I'm working on it. That's a very smart answer.

I'm working on it. Because you have not reviewed, when did you start working on it? It can be an hour ago, it can be yesterday, it can be last week, it can be last month, but I'm working on it.

So it's going, the project is going. Sorry, am I using a Alex laughing? It's a typical IT example. Okay, how's it going?

You see, what's happening here? I have, I'm working on it, it's kind of like technically true, but when you peel the layers underneath, you'll discover that we are not entirely blameless.

[18:29] And that's what the Galatians are trying to do. They're trying to say, hey, I got my circumcision to show that I'm actually keeping all this mosaic law. But Paul says, no, if you want to give them one part aspect of it, keep the whole thing, even right down to the depths of your heart, and you cannot.

And that's the point. That's part of the point that Paul is trying to make. But Paul has a bigger point, really, and there's a point I'm eager to show you, which is, not only that you can't keep the whole law, but actually to submit to law is to be in the yoke of slavery again.

That's actually back to verse 1. And how do we see that? I want you to see that actually because there's a very curious thing in chapter 4 which we did not cover, but if you turn back in your Bible to chapter 4, and we are reading from chapter 4, verse 8 to 9.

I apologize that I'm reading from ESV. I know that's not the version you have, and I'm so unrepentant that I've not changed my Bible version yet, so you have to bear with me. So it says here, I hope it's more or less the same, in chapter 4, verse 8, it says here about the Galatians, formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved by nature, but it says to those that by nature are not God's.

So Galatians is actually a church that's planted by Paul in Acts chapter 11. And if you don't have to turn over that, it's probably like, it's called Lystra, it's actually an area, and where Lystra is one of

the towns there, and they actually mistook Paul and Barnabas to be Zeus and Herms, for example, Greek gods.

[20 : 07] So these are actually polytheists, people who are actually paipai, you know, kind of other gods, right? Yeah. And these are people who actually formerly, you know, yeah, they're paipai kong and all that. And then now, but that's who they were, but in verse 9, it says, but now you have come to know God, or rather be known by God, they're not in the right relationship with God, but now, that's interesting, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?

I don't know if you'll detect what I'm trying to say over here, because, look, they were used to be idol worshippers, they used to be, you know, worshippers of and whatever, you know, I think there's also in Coching or something, right?

I think I had the laksa across the road from there as well. So, yeah, sorry if I'm offending you by naming all these so-called deities. But Paul here is making something very interesting. He's saying, look, you have not become a Christian, good, but then now, they want to obey Mosaic law, and do you know what?

You want to obey all the food laws and all the circumcision laws and all the festivals, and do you know what Paul says to them? Paul says that if you do that, if you do that, you are enslaving yourself once again to the same kind of idols that you used to before.

Now, that's very strange. You ought to feel strange. Hey, surely they are still worshipping Yahweh, surely they are still worshipping God, they are still believing in Jesus.

[21 : 40] What do you mean by doing this Mosaic law thing? They are actually going back to idolatry, going back to slavery. slavery. Are you following me now?

Okay. So, I'm going to try to unpack why. And really, Paul is saying this, I'm just coming back to just summarise the point.

It's really this, if you don't get it, there are only two states, two possible states. You're either in freedom, under grace, in Christ, or you're in slavery to idols.

There's no in-between. But, I want to show you why. How come? What's the logic here? Why is it that idol worshipping and obeying the Mosaic law, trying to justify ourselves in this way, are actually kind of the same thing?

Okay? So, here's where I need Alex to show the slides. So, first of all, what's idolatry? Idolatry really, is the act of what?

[22 : 46] You burn incense, right? And you offer sacrifices, we are the one who initiates. Okay? We appease the idol, right? Okay? I'm showing the dynamics of it.

I don't care what idol is named, right? Okay? And the idol in returns, will offer me blessings. And of course, when I pray to an idol, if I really want to pray, I really want to offer sacrifices and offerings, I want blessings that gives me justification for my life.

I want blessings. That's why I want the promotion. That's why I pray for the children that I want, right? Because this justifies my life. This makes me props myself up and I be able to face people and in some sense, face God.

Now, this dynamic is actually very similar to obeying the law for your justification, which is next slide. Because, again, who is the one initiating?

I'm the one initiating. I'm the one who is going to obey the law. I'm the one who is going to make sacrifices. I am the one who is going to, you know, in a sense, restrict myself so much that I can actually earn the favour of God, even though, yes, you can say the object is different because God is not an idol, which is true, but here's the thing, you can treat God like an idol as well because in your relationship to Him, it's more transactional.

[24 : 02] I'm giving to God all this obedience in order to hope that He will justify me. He will give me justification. I earn my salvation. Now, having said this, this is not just merely a religious thing, as if like, you know, oh, it's only those people who are Christians that are going to be guilty of this, trying to work ourselves up to something, to gain something from our deities, right?

Whether it's true offerings or sacrifices or it's actually just by what, for example, serving hard in church so that I hope that God can grant me the promotion or serving hard in church so that in the end, I pray hard this week or I read my Bible every day this week in hope that actually somehow God will give me that what I truly, really want.

No, it's not only just religious people actually, there's also some kind of something when you desire a kind of freedom, whether it's financial freedom or whether it's actually relationship freedom or anything, you are still the same kind of cycle.

Next slide. Because you see, when you want these things, right, so whatever is career, whether it's love or whether it's relationship, what is it, what is it, what is it one of you, we sacrifice our time, our sleep, and our money to these things in order to receive again whatever you're looking for, whether it's power, whether it's comfort, any one of these things that actually would justify your existence. Idols do not actually need to be named topekong or laoyaking or laoyaking.

[26 : 01] It doesn't have to. Idols can come in the name of career, can come in the name of promotion, can come in the name of just that relationship, someone loving me, someone actually wanting me and needing me, for example.

And for those things, we are willing to actually give up our time, our money, even our sleep. But the order of grace, grace with God is completely reversed.

Last slide. That in grace, you see, it is not we who take initiative to reach out. It's not based on who we are, it's based on God.

It is God who first come to us, freely bestowing grace to us, and we in response, live out our faith. It's a totally different dynamic and relationship when you think about it, in how you relate to idols, or whether you're trying to justify yourself through works, or whether you're relating to God by grace.

[27 : 11] And you've come back to Galatians. Most of the words that Paul used seem to be often more on the passive side. For example, what did he say in chapter 5, verse 1?

It is for freedom that Christ has come to set us free. Then, what did he say? Fight for freedom. Did he say that? No. What did he say?

Stand firm. Just stand firm in it. Stand firm in it. And if you turn back to, you turn to, glance down later in chapter 5, what does it say?

It says that as for us, as for us, through faith, through spirit by faith, that's in verse 5, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

Waiting and standing, right? Not exactly very active verbs. And that's part of what it means to be in relationship of grace to God.

[28 : 12] Because grace means that it's not something we can earn or exchange for anything in our lives. It's one that God freely gives unto us. And that's why true freedom, true proper relationship with God must be based on grace.

And that is that which we restore our relationship with God to normalcy and to health. So I'm going to ask you this. Are you free in respect to your relationship to God?

That's part of actually the big thing about discussing this whole weekend. Especially my brothers and sisters, when you find yourself that you have sinned, you have failed, what is your first instinct? Is your first instinct to say, I better get my Bible study in place. I better do my devotions. I better make sure that I serve in church. Or maybe at some point in time I feel better about myself and then I'll go to God.

Or do you actually simply run to Him? A child who has a proper relationship with their parents, right, is free.

[29 : 27] Because when a child falls down, he look at his parents and says, help. You know what that is? That is freedom. He cries out, help. And as a father, I go over and help my child because I love my child.

But a child that fell down and kept thinking, oh dear, my father is going to scold me for falling down again. That child doesn't have freedom. You see what I'm saying?

And how is our relationship with God? And on the flip side, are we still living in that dichotomy that we pay lip service to being justified by faith alone?

But yet again, we are still trying to justify ourselves, whether it's through our careers, our schools, our studies, our families, our relationships. No, we need Paul's exaltation.

That is going back to slavery. And it's only when we are restored to God that we have true freedom. But I'd like to, if you can indulge me a bit, one more thing I want to show you from this passage before we move on to our standing firm.

[30 : 37] Because I think there's something that you guys must want to talk about. Because it's pretty, pretty severe what Paul is saying, coming back to verse 2-4, which is, it's saying here that not only Christ is not advantaged to you, there's no profit to you in verse 2, but in verse 4 it says that

you're severed, you're separated from Christ.

You're fallen away from grace. And I don't want to actually dismiss the seriousness of all of this. I don't want to dismiss the seriousness of all of this.

Because if you truly in the hearts of your heart is trying, you are trying to justify yourself through performance, whether it's actually in doing the law, or whether it's actually business, or whether it's actually in family or in career, right?

To prove that you are worthy or you're justified, right? You will be ultimately, if that's what you're banking on, you will ultimately be found in this category, which is to be severed from Christ and to fall from grace.

Now, does that mean, does that mean that as Christians, you will never struggle with some form of idolatry, not the topic of what I trust, but then, for example, to idolize our careers and love and relationships and our children even.

[31 : 59] I think I submit to you that we do, we might struggle in those areas, but which is why I really love about that diagram that Brian was showing you last night. If you notice that, you transfer from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of a son, right?

And under that, do you know what that's heading there? Training, growing, and struggling, right? So as long as you understand there's a big problem that we should not actually submit to these idols, whether it's the seen idols or unseen ones, and you struggle and continue to want to repent and ask for God's help, you are walking in God's grace.

But those who will not heed Paul's warnings here are the ones who ultimately lose all true freedom, who cannot wait, who do not actually have the wait for the hope of righteousness that awaits us.

So, freedom, true freedom, must be based on grace. But does that then mean that, oh, okay, so it's just more passive, standing firm, it's waiting, then, you know, nothing to do?

No, I do not want you to hear that. And so that's why freedom requires us to stand and freedom requires us to love. But let's look at these two right now.

[33 : 16] So you may understand, you say, look, God's freedom grace is freely given and so it's not dependent on my behaviour or my works, right? So, maybe I just can do nothing, right?

No, not really. Because in verse 6, this is what Paul says, right? Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything.

That's very interesting. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision. You also cannot justify yourself by your uncircumcision. You cannot come to say to people, hey, hey, you want to justify yourself by obeying the Mosaic law.

You see, see how I am not obeying the Mosaic law. See, I'm more justified than you. That's not the point here. The point is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, but faith, trusting in Christ, and here it says what it says, working through love, expressing itself through love.

I think that's what in your version it says. But then you're not really capturing the essence of it. I prefer working through love. Do you know why? Because the original there is actually the word energior.

[34 : 20] What does it sound like to you? Energior. Faith, energy, love. Energy is a faith that energizes and produces love.

So a faith that is true faith is not simply only passive. It must come and grow up in something. And this living faith has two sides to it. Standing firm and loving.

So let's look at standing firm first. So standing firm probably is very similar to the verse in verse 5. Paul says, eagerly waiting for the righteousness that we hope for through the Spirit and by faith.

Now, hope is a very big word in the Bible.

The hope is not like a vain hope. I hope it's not going to rain when we go back later on, for example. That is kind of an uncertain kind of hope. The hope that's mentioned in the Bible is a much more sure kind of hope.

[35 : 23] This probably is going to do better in Singapore but I guess in Singapore we have something called CPF and you guys in here you call it EPF right? Yeah. I don't know whether it works but I guess it can be as well.

The hope is even more real than you be able to get your EPF back at the end of the day. That's actually the kind of hope that we have. And waiting means we have not actually received all the promises that we are going to be fulfilled.

See, I really think that this wait for the hope of the righteousness is really what I spoke about yesterday. That at the end of time God is going to vindicate his people right? And that proclamation of vindication is brought into the present and that is what justification means. But we are still waiting for the day we will finally be vindicated publicly before God and before man. And that's what we are patiently waiting for. But waiting can be very difficult. Waiting can be very difficult. I don't know if you have seen those experiments on the video, you know, where they put a candy in front of a child and say hey, you're going to be left here alone for 15 minutes, okay? [36 : 40] At the end of 15 minutes, you can have this candy. But in the 15 minutes, nobody, please don't eat that. And then they leave the room, right? And the kid with no one watching, camera watching but the kid doesn't know, right?

I have my children actually subject to that. And I wouldn't let you know, I wouldn't throw her under the bus by letting you know what happened. But you can imagine waiting, it's a definite promise, you get a candy at the end, right? Okay? It's kind of difficult, right? Because the difficulty of the waiting comes from a few things. First, our tendency towards idolatry, which we spoke of just now, but also resisting the voices that's coming on from the outside.

That's why Paul says in verse 7, you were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? Who hindered you from obeying the truth? The persuasion is not from him who calls you. you to see, and it gives this analogy over here, a little leaven or a little yeast, I think that's in your version, leavens the whole lump. [37 : 57] Anyone who's done baking before, I'm just pretending to know something here, which is you put some yeast into a dough, right? It's so that it just pops out and the yeast will work itself through the entire dough.

Is that right? false teaching, just even a little bit, saying, look, it's not enough for you to believe in Jesus, it's not enough to just be a Christian, but you'll be good, you'll be ready to be a wonderful and complete life if you can add something to this, right? That kind of thinking can work across a person's life, and of course, I think in this context, across the whole church, which is why Paul is saying that the one who is troubling you, right, will bear the penalty.

It's very unsure whether he's referring to God's final judgment on this person, or whether he's actually asking the Galatians to exercise church discipline on these false teachers, but whatever it is, he's asking them to resist, to resist this sort of thinking, to resist whatever voice that's leading you and luring you away from putting your whole weight and your hold on Christ and your only justification in him alone.

Now, I don't know what you're facing in KEC or in Kuching, but the voices that we meet in daily lives often comes to us in many ways like this.

[39 : 26] If you don't get married, you're not going to have a complete life. If you get married, you don't have children, you're not going to have a complete life.

Right? If your children grow up and they don't find good careers or they don't make a living for themselves or they somehow do not settle well, your life is not complete.

Your life is a failure. And you can, of course, multiply your examples here. And these voices are what? The false teachers you need to deal with.

Because what it really is saying is when you believe and trust in Jesus, when your relationship with God is restored by grace, your life really, in a sense, is complete.

You are a complete person in yourself. Because you have now been reconciled to God. And to actually stand firm means to resist, to resist all these sort of different false teachings and hold on to the truth.

[40 : 32] And that's the reason why. There's a price to pay for actually resisting these false teachers. That's probably why Paul continues to say this. He says, brothers and sisters in your version, right?

If I still preach circumcision, why am I being persecuted? In that case, the offense of the cross is removed. I wonder whether Paul is actually uncovering a little bit of even deeper reasons why the Galatians are actually tempted to go for circumcision.

Maybe they are being persecuted by the Jews in their area. Or maybe they feel the pressure to conform to them so they can be accepted by their community. But you see, what Paul is saying

here is this.

If I am still preaching circumcision, I won't be persecuted by the world. And Paul is saying this. It's actually impossible, my friends.

It's impossible for us to look good in front of the world at the same time and look good in front of God. If that is actually your dream, you're trying to balance these two in your life, you do not understand what Paul means here, that the offense of the cross is removed.

[41 : 49] Because to tell the world, to preach to them, to share the message that only Jesus alone justifies, only Jesus alone gives me meaning of life, is to challenge the very essence and the foundation of all of their lives.

And no wonder, Jesus says, the world will hate you, but no worries, they hated me first. And so, I'd like to ask, what are the voices that you listen to?

What are the false teachings that you believe in, that take away your freedom, that you're inclined to believe? Because I think for some of us, even though you're Christians for many years, you may still be functionally living in slavery.

That all your life, you're living according to the expectations of the world. That's why you do the things you do. That's why you live the way you live. Or maybe you feel maybe the world is calling you and you feel that you, I don't know, maybe that's what young people may struggle with.

You feel that maybe I should go out of coaching. I may find a better living for myself. I can justify myself in the outside world. but maybe what it looks like to stand firm sometimes is to resist even some opportunities.

[43 : 14] To say no even to promotion sometimes so that you may not need to shift countries or shift towns so that you can still be faithful where God is calling you to serve.

So where are you actually most likely to compromise in your life? And that's where you will find that that's where God wants you to learn how to stand. True freedom is based on grace.

True freedom requires you to stand. But finally true freedom also requires us to love. Because freedom is not only about right relationship with God that now we consult to God through grace. Freedom is not only just having right relationship with the world. The world doesn't longer have its sway over us. We may not look good to them. We may even be persecuted or hated by them or despised by them or something.

rejected by them but yet we are not under them anymore. We indeed can really be free from them and we can love them truly. But now finally freedom means that we are brought into this church into relationship with one another that we should love one another.

[44 : 21] It's a healthy relationship all the way around. And that's actually really a turning point in Galatians because Paul has been talking about the truth of justification by faith alone and now in verse 11 sorry verse 13 right Paul now turns to talk about something that's more practical working out in the life of the church.

We don't have time really now to talk unpack the rest of the entire Galatians but that's where Paul is turning to. And it says here in verse 13 you were called to freedom brothers do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh but through love serve one another.

Through love serve one another. And that's contrasted with verse 15 that says what? If you abide and devour another watch out that you're not consumed by one another.

Remember I talked about earlier that in verse 6 Paul talks about how there's a love that's energized by faith or that's worked out by faith or expressed through faith. Right? And that love is to practice where?

In the community in church. In church. So true faith is not just knowing about the doctrine. True faith is not just agreeing with this.

[45 : 37] True faith is when you put your heart and mind and trust in Jesus it produces something that now our disposition is changed. But Paul contrasts very interesting.

It says here if you bite and devour one another in contrast to serving one another. Again we see another only two possibilities in relationships. When I come to you right you may not think of this there's only two possibilities I may want to eat you and maybe that's why you're sitting so far away or I want to serve you.

Now I know that you don't think of yourself as man eaters that word has some connotations outside other cannibalism or some kind of women man eaters but I submit to you that actually all of us are kind of man eaters.

We don't eat of course we don't eat their flesh but what do we eat? I come to you I want you to be impressed with me. I come to you I want you to love me.

I come to you I want you to do good things to me. I come to you I want to get things from you. Do you see what I'm trying to say? And that's actually what Paul means by eating and consuming one another.

[46 : 50] And do you know why we do that? Because we are not finding our justification in Christ alone. Because we are not finding our justification in something else. You're always not going to be satisfied. You're always going to be glory craving.

Somebody else will give you glory. Somebody will give you become someone that's very difficult to live with. And no wonder if this mentality brought into church it destroys the relationship. But if you are truly justified by faith alone you can actually serve one another through love. Because I am coming to you without saying I need something for you.

Without expecting you to serve me. Someone actually gave me a very wonderful picture of heaven. Which is that when they go to hell they say they just deep wells of water and all these very long spoons.

And all the people in hell are dying of thirst because they cannot feed themselves with the long spoons. They get the water and then they are unable to drink it. So they keep on unable to do so.

[48 : 02] And lo and behold he went to heaven and it's exactly the same thing. Deep wells and long spoons. But everyone is very happy because they are using long spoons to serve one another.

And there's another thing about serving as well. I wonder why it's like your culture.

Because I think Paul is saying that you can only serve each other through love. So we are all servers in a sense. We serve but it's actually the heart of serving we're talking about what is our love for one another.

And that reminds me of traffic because let me explain this a little bit. Me and my wife we come from very different kind of families.

In my family I will not do more than what I'm told. If my dad tells me keep the dishes wash the dishes I'll wash the dishes I'll not do any more than that because that's my role.

[49 : 02] My wife comes from a family where everyone just see what is needed to be done and it's a bit like traffics.

I know traffics are very different because Malaysia traffic is slightly more chaotic than Singapore if I may say so especially West Malaysia I think Kuching is very nice actually I'm sorry about West Malaysians but of course there's nothing compared to some other countries I wouldn't want to name them but I can see videos of them where it's amazing there's no traffic lights there's a lot of cars there's a lot of animals there's a lot of people crossing the road and they are all what flowing around each other in perfect harmony right okay wow you're getting what I'm saying so you see often I'll say that in my household is Singapore traffic and my wife's household is that other country's traffic and I struggle because when I go over there I don't know what but when it comes to church my friends I wonder whether our serving in church should really be more like the other country's traffic and not just centrally controlled traffic if you know what I'm trying to say what would it look like for KAC if everyone takes initiative right to do the word ministry with one another like what Brian was talking about last night what it look like what things will change what if your conversations after service is not just about what laksa is good I mean it's a very fantastic conversation I must run through that but you can also talk about the sermon what you learn you can share about your week your struggles you can say I learned this in my devotion this week do you think I must learn the Bible correctly what if that is happening across the entire way and people are truly speaking the truth in love to one another serving to one another in love because that's what it means from the heart I just do it because I see the need in others now where do we find that motivation to love each other in this way this is really really the last part sorry guys

I'm not very lost so this morning but verse 14 for the whole law is fulfilled in one word you shall love your neighbor as yourself that's what my version says now if you read your Bible at this point you should actually be a little bit surprised Paul you went on and on and on and on and talking about all this Mosaic law the whole law needs to be needs to be observed and then you come here and you quote Leviticus 18 and so at the end you're giving you a rule based thing serve one another in love why because you should love your neighbor as yourself go and do it the second greatest commandment I think there's something more than that if you take a closer look at this verse it says the whole law is fulfilled is fulfilled that means I think Douglas Moore pointed this out that some you

should ask a question who fulfilled this word that you shall love your neighbor as yourself who fulfilled this because there's one who is truly free who is truly free there's only one in this world not actually from this world who created this world who is truly free to do whatever he wants to do is the God who does as he pleases as the Psalms declare the God who doesn't have a body who spirit in himself who is eternal and yet how does he exercise that freedom he came in the form of a human being he who he was eternal in spirit became limited and he took on a body for whose sake for our sake they have come to take on flesh and as Galatians in chapter 3 says as we read yesterday chapter 4 says he's born under the law to redeem those who are under the law he used his freedom to resist the false teachers the Pharisees and the Sadducees even to the point of death he stood firm even though he was suffering the ridicule of this world and so that on that cross he may accomplish that salvation for us as the gospel of Mark says the son of man he has come not to be served but to serve as the ransom for many and that my friends is a story that if you bank on and if you trust in that will give you that true freedom the whole law is fulfilled in this there's one who fulfilled that he has loved us as himself he has restored us to a right relationship with God he has restored us to a right relationship with the world that we no longer need to subject to the their scorns and their despise should no longer harm us it can hurt us a bit but shouldn't harm us finally and finally gives us that true freedom that now we can come to each other we are not taking things from one another but rather we freely give that God which God has given to us that we serve each other in love can't give us some time to consider what was shared

[55 : 00] I wonder if something hit you and you'd like to pray and respond to God in where you're sitting and after that I'll lead all of us to pray in response to God we'd can't all that know that will it let the zm to love tooly Lord Jesus, we love you.

We love you. We love you because, Lord, you first loved us. Because you are the one who truly took pity in our helpless state. You have come and rescued us.

You came to serve us when we have nothing, oh Lord, to give to you. And whatever we have even now, with the strength that we serve you, are nothing but actually which you have given to us in the first place.

And yet, Lord Jesus, we love you. We thank you for this freedom you have given to us. We ask, oh God, Lord, to help us exercise this freedom in loving one another.

Help us not to love the world, but help us to stand in right relationship with it. That we may, for your sake, hold on to the gospel and proclaim it.

[56 : 36] According to your holy will. I pray and ask this in Jesus' name. Thank you.