

St Mary's 10am Thursday 21st July 2016

Galatians 1 v1-10; Galatians 1 v11-24 Galatians 2 v15-21
Galatians 2 v17-21 Galatians 3 v23-4 v7;

Galatians 4 v28 to 5 v1 + 13-25;

GALATIANS SS6

We continue our series in Galatians and this week we look at HOW TO USE OUR FREEDOM.

We have got to the end of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 and the great statement of faith of 5 v1 is:

"IT IS FOR FREEDOM THAT CHRIST HAS SET US FREE"

Christ is a liberator. PTL!

Abraham is our spiritual Father and we are heirs of Abraham. But from which of his children are we his heirs? Abraham had a son by a slave woman, Hagar and a son, Isaac, from a free woman, his wife Sarah. And these two women (4v24) represent two covenants of the Law and the Promise.

Paul ends Galatians chapter 4 saying that we, through Isaac, are children of Promise. The slave woman's son (4v30) *'never shares an inheritance with the son of a free woman'*. (Genesis 21 v10)

And Jesus is of the line of Isaac, therefore, JESUS sets us free.

And we are NOT set free so we may engage in arguments about circumcision and food laws! Paul says that we are set free for something far more significant.

Verse 6 says, *"Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love"*

WE ARE SET FREE FOR THE GOOD OF OUR NEIGHBOURS & SOCIETY. "Faith expressing itself in love"

There are TWO WAYS to live.

One way is v16 *"to gratify the desires of the flesh"*

NOT meaning just immorality but also focusing on 'things' -idolatry, focusing on 'pleasure' -drunkenness and carousing, and also bad relationships -strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, factions, envy. The *'desires of the flesh'* are as much about disordered ambitions and nurtured bitterness as they are about guilty pleasures.

Many choose to live according to the flesh. But v21, says those who live like this *'will not inherit the kingdom of God'*.

(2)

The second way to live is v16 *"to live by the Spirit"*

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (5 v22,23)

Now the "fruit of the Spirit" is NOT the way we make ourselves right with God. No! It is the way The Justified, the Spirit-filled, live BECAUSE they are right with God, because they are Spirit-filled and living for God.

Jerome, one of the first great Bible translators, and son of Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, wrote 1,600 years ago, *"Paul has spoken elegantly by allotting WORKS to the flesh and FRUIT to the Spirit"*

So I will NOT preach a Nine-Point Sermon on the "Fruit of the Spirit" as if we can pick-and-choose which of the nine fruits of the Spirit we will choose to focus on this week BECAUSE the word "FRUIT" is singular and not plural and so the Christian life is a life which embodies ALL the fruit.

IT IS FOR FREEDOM THAT CHRIST HAS SET US FREE

So, express your freedom not in works of the flesh but fruit of the Spirit:

Love, joy, peace,
Patience, kindness, goodness,
Faithfulness, gentleness and self-control

Verses 24 and 25 sum it all up:

"Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, LET US KEEP IN TOUCH with the Spirit"