

Freed for Freedom

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[0 : 0 0] My name is Dan Rocha. Thanks for being here this morning. It's a pleasure for me to be here. This is my first time at this building that you guys are in, and that was actually one of the things that I've been praying for. As a provisional elder of yours with Paul Buckley, we pray with Sean and just hear about all the things that you guys are doing and working on in Cambridge and really ministering in Cambridge. So we're supporting you as best as we can with our full-time jobs besides, and really, I think one of the most effective ways that we can pray for you, effective ways that we can serve you is to pray for you. And so that's what we do. We pray for this building for you, and we look forward to praying for other things and seeing God's answers to those prayers. As Matt mentioned earlier, I have my wife and four kids today. One extra, we're in the process of trying to adopt through foster care, a little girl, two years old, Shelby is her name, and it's an interesting process and sometimes trying in our patience and faith in some ways too. But looking to God for how he will move and if he will grant us the adoption.

So we're praying for that. If you would like to pray for me, that's how you can pray is that this little girl would be in a safe place and that we would get to adopt her. And yeah, so that's a little bit about me. Let's get into the text. People like choices. We like to choose from a variety of things. It's interesting, you go to the grocery store, you can choose all kinds of different toilet paper even. I mean, there's different types, there's different brands, napkins, napkins, all different kinds of napkins. Now if you go into the cereal aisle, there is an entire wall of different cereals. So many choices. Apples, apples, there used to be just like a couple of kinds of apples. And now there are countless apples at the store and at the orchard you can go to.

And I'm thankful for many of those choices. But people even like having choices for religion too. You know, you have Buddhism, you have Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Atheism. You know, you have your path and I have my path. And that's kind of how our culture is, that we get to choose our own things and what's good for you is good for you and what's good for me is good for me. But really, the Apostle Paul here is revealing to us that there are really only two choices in life. One of slavery and one of freedom. There's legalism or promise. There's flesh or spirit. Now let me pray and ask God to work in our hearts as we examine this text. Well, Father, we thank you for Galatians. We thank you for this book that you've given to us, Lord, that we can trust what you have written to us, that it is truth.

And we ask that you would help us to see in our own lives where we are choosing slavery or or we are choosing freedom and following you. Point out to us, may your Holy Spirit empower us to put off those things that tempt us into sin and tempt us to that path of slavery, but to free our minds and to free our souls through Christ. So we ask that you would do that in us this morning. Amen.

As part of the scriptures that we read this morning, before we read this particular passage, what I think was from Romans, and it talked about being adopted as sons into God's family. So we have been adopted and we're not living in a family as like a bond servant or as a slave or a servant, but we are adopted as sons and daughters. So we are no longer slaves to sin. We are slaves. We're no longer slaves to the law. We're no longer slaves to any kind of spiritual or ethical oppression.

[4 : 5 1] So we must, what our place is in the family of God is to stand firm in the gospel. If we've been freed by Christ, then why would we submit ourselves again to slavery and slavery to the law?

And so how I would summarize this particular text would be this. Stand firm for Christ has set us free and do not submit to slavery again. Stand firm for Christ has set us free and do not submit to slavery again. And Paul begins here by pitting the law against the law. That is, he's pitting the commandments of God or just commandments in general versus the first five books of the Bible. So the books that were written by Moses are often referred to as the Pentateuch today. But in scripture, in the Jews of Paul's day, it was called the law. The law is the first five books of the Bible.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. That's the law that, that, that, uh, or one way that, that he's using.

So he says in verse 21, tell me you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? He's making a play on words. Really? He's saying, tell me you who desire to be under the commandments, do you not listen to the first five books of Moses? This, this play on words using the law against the law illustrates how ridiculous it is trying to, to return to the Mosaic law in order to be righteous.

Because if you read those five first, first five books, you realize that God has not dealt with us according to the law, but according to grace. And so he traces the story of Abraham and his sons as an example, using part of those books that Moses wrote, Genesis.

So let's read 22 and 23 of chapter four. For it is written that Abraham, Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman.

[7 : 13] But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh while the son of the free woman was born through promise. And so you have two sons. This is my first point, two sons, one by slavery, one by freedom.

Now, first you might be questioning how Abraham could have slaves. And to our modern ears, that sounds abominable. Or why, you know, why would God permit slavery?

So, so first I'm going to address, this isn't the message, but I have to address this. First is not to make excuses or make it any more acceptable, but to help you understand it was a different culture in that they didn't see the huge difference that we see between a servant and a slave.

That doesn't make it acceptable, but that goes into my second point about that, is that not everything that the heroes of the Bible did were good things. Note Abraham lying to Pharaoh about Sarah being his, his sister. And, and a number of other examples, you can see, that, that point that, that all of these kind of savior figures, hero figures in the Bible, they're flawed. They're flawed, just like you and me. And flawed in some ways that are even greater than us sometimes. And yet they did greater things as well for God. And so I'm thankful for Abraham, even amidst all his failures. But this sermon isn't about that. But I wanted to make it clear that the Bible does not in any way promote slavery of any kind. In fact, it, it speaks against spiritual slavery. And so we extrapolate that it would also speak against any kind of slavery. So back to the text. When Abraham was told by God, remember in Genesis, the story that Abraham was told by God that he would have a son and he and his wife, Sarah, were very old. They had not been able to conceive for their however many years, 90 more or more years. Then they became impatient. Sarah ended up offering her slave Hagar to Abraham so that he could have a son. And of course, that didn't turn out very well. Of course, he had a son, Ishmael. But whenever you involve more than one woman in a marriage, it doesn't go well. So verse 23, the son of the slave was born according to the flesh.

[9 : 59] And here, here's, he's opposing the flesh and the spirit. So God made this promise to Abraham, but Abraham took matters into his own hands. That's, that's the fleshly way, taking matters into your own hands. God's way is very different. Instead of striving to fulfill the promise that was given to him, Abraham could have rested in the knowledge that he simply needed to follow God and God would have kept his promise.

God fulfills his promise. So if you follow him, he will give those promises. It's not for you to accomplish in a kind of worldly fleshly way, but for God to accomplish. And of course, later on, Abraham did learn to put his trust in God. The end of verse 23. So the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. This son of the free woman, Sarah, was born through promise. Isaac, the son, gained all the inheritance and all the promises that were made to Abraham. In Genesis 26, three to four, he says this to Isaac, I will be with you and bless you for to you and to your offspring. I will give you all these lands and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham, your father. I will multiply your offspring as the stars of the heaven and I will give your offspring all these lands and in your offspring, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. If you're familiar with what God promised to

Abraham in chapters 12 and a couple of other chapters, that sounds very familiar. Those are all the promises that God had made to Abraham. Now Isaac gets all of those promises. He gains all that inheritance. So Ishmael, born of the flesh, does not get these. And so then Paul gets into talking about the covenants. So verse 24. Now this may be interpreted allegorically. These women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai bearing children for slavery. She is Hagar. So again, I have to address this language of interpreting these women allegorically. Typically we think of allegory as a

kind of fiction. Pilgrim's progress where each character in each place and event represents an idea or a deeper spiritual truth.

And it's fiction. But we're not talking about fiction here. Abraham and Sarah and Hagar, Ishmael, Isaac, these are all people that really actually lived in history. And these things, these events really did take place. And so what he means here is not our typical imagination of fiction, allegory as fiction, but a deeper spiritual understanding of these events of history. And these are themes that the Bible hits on over and over and over and puts these two women as the point for these two sons. And these two sons as the representations of these two different covenants. And two really two different religions. Two paths to walk down. One son born according to the flesh. One son born according to the promise. The spirit.

And so what is a covenant though? A very simple definition is that a covenant is a binding agreement that God makes with his people. They can be as simple as the Ten Commandments.

[13:51] The Ten Commandments that's part of a covenant. Or the commands to Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Or the New Covenant in Christ's blood that we celebrate at the Lord's Supper that we'll do later.

So it can be simple. The Ten Commandments. It's very short. Or the New Covenant. The New Covenant is full of promises. It involves the story of Christ in the gospel.

That's part of the covenant. How God deals with his people. And so, there are two covenants really. Two overarching covenants. There are lots of kind of sub-covenants in between there. But there are really two big covenants. One of works. And one of grace.

And so, these two overarching covenants, which govern all the other covenants God has made with his people. One is law. The other is grace. One is flesh. The other is spirit. And God gave the covenant of works to Adam and Eve.

[15:00] He said, don't eat from this tree. You can eat from every other tree. You can't eat from that tree. And they failed, of course. They ate from the tree. They sinned.

But, then right afterwards, God gives them a covenant of grace and promising them that from Eve will come one who would crush the serpent's head. And while God has given us rules to follow, he's been continuing to deal with his people in the way of grace and not of works.

God promised Abraham he would become the father of a multitude and bless all nations. God promised Israel that they would receive the promised land. God will keep those promises because God is the one doing these things.

God never meant for the Ten Commandments given at Mount Sinai and all the subcommands that followed to be the way to earn salvation. He never intended that. These are commands.

These are how you're supposed to live. These aren't how to get in my good graces. And that should have been clear in how God dealt with his people and in reading these five books of Moses.

[16:13] Especially if you read Genesis or Exodus. You see the people of God fail over and over and over. And they sin over and over and over. And God gets angry.

Yes. He deals with some of those people. There's punishment. Yes, for some. But still, he was gracious.

He could have wiped them all out because that's what they deserved. But he was gracious. He was patient. He was kind. When Abraham sinned in taking Hagar and in being impatient with the whole process of promising an heir, God could have said, Well, you know what?

You broke my covenant and so you don't get any heirs. But that's not what God did. God restored Abraham. Brought him to faith again.

That's the way of grace. That's the way of the Spirit. The law that God gave to Israel, it's wonderful and beautiful. But the law makes a poor God. And when you make the law your God, you become a slave of the law.

[17:24] And this was true of the Israelites in Moses' day. It was true of Paul, true of the Jews in Paul's day. When faced with promises, they chose the path of the flesh.

So let's get into this a little bit more. Verse 25. Now, Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia. She corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear. Break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor.

For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband. So here we have two Jerusalems. This is my second point. Two Jerusalems. One present and one above.

Now, remember, present, I'm talking about back in Jesus' day, back in Paul's day. Jerusalem now is a little different. Paul is asking the Galatians, and I'm asking you this.

[18:38] Do you think that God on Mount Sinai, when He gave those Ten Commandments, the God that brought the Israelites out of slavery to Pharaoh, do you think that God meant for these Ten Commandments to then enslave the Israelites so that they would become slaves again?

Did God want the Israelites to make the law their God? And serving the law their God?

And yet, that was their tendency. They tended to either make the law their God or to shrug that off entirely and complain and do whatever they wanted.

But instead, God shows them grace over and over. They failed in many ways, and yet God continued to make them into His people.

I don't know about you, but that sounds familiar in my own life. I sin in even the same ways over and over, and yet God continues to bring me into a place of faith, a place of obedience, a place of worship of Him.

[19:50] And the Jews of Paul's day, especially the Pharisees, had made the law their God. And in fact, they had made a hedge around the law so that they had law upon law, and that was the commandments.

And if you didn't follow those commandments too, you weren't serving God. That's what they would say. And really, they had made themselves slaves.

They couldn't see past that. They couldn't see past that to see that Jesus died for them. They couldn't see that God was dealing with them in a way of grace.

He was trying to deal with them in a way of grace, and yet they rejected it. And so they were encouraging others to join them in their slavery by forcing them to keep the trials and keeping the rituals, really, that no longer bound them.

And they were even trying to force the Gentiles, if you really want to be a Jew, you really want to follow God, you've got to keep these rituals too. But those rituals never bound them in the first place.

[21:03] And it was as if the Judaizers and the Pharisees and the Jews of Paul's day had isolated Mount Sinai. Here we have Mount Sinai. That's the Ten Commandments is where we get the law of God.

And then they forget about the rest of God's dealing with His people. You read the Old Testament and it is God dealing with His people in a gracious way.

They are sometimes idiots in how they rebel against God over and over and over. And yet God deals with them with grace.

Did the Pharisees not read this? And yet we can do the same thing. So God had already promised them that He would be their God and that they would be His people.

He promised that He would deliver them out of the hands of their enemies. These were promises that the Jews of Paul's day still had. And yet they adopted a legalistic observation of the law and of the Old Testament.

[22:17] And that's what Paul's talking about. The present day Jerusalem that Paul speaks about is full of this ritualistic allegiance not to God but to the law. And Jerusalem in Paul's day represented slavery of God's people.

Slavery to the law. Slavery to the flesh. And all who are children of Hagar, children of Jerusalem in Jesus' day, they are all slaves. But there is another reality to Jerusalem.

There is another Jerusalem. One that is the fulfillment of all things to come. One where Christ reigns on His throne. One where Jesus is the temple. One where the kingdom of God brings freedom, not slavery.

One where the law is not a God but a guide. A Jerusalem where instead of being many barriers and hurdles to cross in order to commune with God, the Jerusalem above is one where we commune with God because the dividing wall has been broken down by Christ.

This is the Jerusalem that is our mother. If you are a Christian, you believe that Christ has died for you. The Jerusalem above is free.

[23:32] Verse 25. This Jerusalem, it really is, I think it's talking about the church. Not this building or this particular local church but the true universal church of Christ.

Belonging to that community. Belonging to the family of God. And if Jerusalem above is free and she's our mother, then we're free as well. And that is true.

If you are following God, you're accepting that Christ paid for your sin on the cross. Now, verse 27. You see how it's in a different format in your Bible probably? Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear. Break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor. For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband.

He's quoting Isaiah 54.1. And it's important to look. When the New Testament quotes in the Old Testament, you are supposed to know the context that that's quoting.

[24 : 42] So not just the text that's there but also the surrounding chapter in the Old Testament. And if you don't know it, and you're probably like me, I don't know it necessarily offhand, go look at the Old Testament.

You can see cross-references in your Bible. And go and look and turn to Isaiah 54 or 53. I'll read from there. You don't have to look, but you can if you want.

But it's important to look at that context because Paul's not just picking this random verse that proves his point. He's picking a particular context to prove his point and carries with it some amount of magnitude.

Let's read. I'll read from Isaiah 53.12. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many and he shall divide the spoil with the strong.

And he poured out his soul to death and he was numbered with the transgressors. Yet he bore the sin of many and makes intercession for the transgressors. Clearly that's talking about Jesus dying on the cross.

[25 : 47] And he continues. 54 verse 1. Sing, O barren one who did not bear. Break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor. For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married, says the Lord.

Enlarge the place of your tent and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out. Don't hold back. Lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left and your offspring will possess the nations.

It's Jesus' death on the cross for our sins and for the sins of all transgressors like us.

It's his death that leads us to possess the nations, to spread throughout the world. This is a promise.

This is a promise that the Galatians would be most encouraged by. At the time when Christianity was new, it may have felt like it was going to be snuffed out at any moment.

[27 : 00] So now we see Christianity has kind of exploded. It's worldwide. There's not that many countries out there that don't know the gospel, that haven't heard the gospel, that there aren't Bibles towards.

There's not missionaries. There's not churches. There's a few. And there's certainly persecution. But Christianity isn't going anywhere anytime soon.

It's not about to be snuffed out. And it's not something that you can kill with intellectualism or disprove with science because Christianity doesn't oppose those things. But when Paul was addressing the Galatians, they had experienced persecution.

Not many had heard about Jesus. And those who had thought it was some weird Jewish cult thing. they didn't understand. And those who had thought it would just, oh, it's a new thing, new trend, and it's going to go away pretty soon.

And many thought it wasn't going to go anywhere. And the Galatians were being pressured into becoming true Jews because the Jewish communities were recognized by Rome. They knew who the Jews were.

[28 : 09] They didn't know who the Christians were. That was some weird group. Yeah, they follow the Jewish law, but they do other things too. And so the Galatians were being pressured into becoming true Jews.

You have to be circumcised and you have to do this and you have to do that. Follow all the rituals in order to follow Christ. Or rather than following Christ.

And the Christians of Paul's day felt barren. They were desolate and desperate. Lonely in a world that seemed like it could stuff out Christianity any moment.

And today can feel like that, especially in here in New England sometimes, where maybe none of your coworkers are Christian. or maybe a couple say they are but don't really seem to ever go to church.

Or maybe they do but they don't seem to talk about it at all. Or they're Christian in maybe name only. Or maybe you can't even mention Jesus at your particular job or risk losing your job.

[29 : 24] And it seems like maybe there are less and less faithful churches every year, every decade. And so, though maybe the South and the U.S.

is booming with churches left and right here in New England, that used to be the case. And there are certainly church buildings but there aren't a lot of churches that are growing fast.

churches are growing very slowly and new converts are very slow. And so, it can feel lonely but we have a hope.

We are not in slavery. It is those who are around us and do not see their need for Christ.

They are slaves. They are slaves to sin. They are slaves slaves to false religions. Slaves to atheism or agnosticism. Slaves to legalism even.

[30 : 31] Trying to win their salvation whether they believe in God or not. This is the common thing of man is to try to win. Do more good than bad and whoever is out there will judge me well.

But that is not how it works. When we sin if we sin and every person has sinned.

Every person who has ever lived has sinned except for Jesus. And that one sin although you have committed many let's be honest.

I have too. that one sin one sin is enough to send you to death and to eternal death. To not reach heaven to not be with God.

Because you're declaring by your sin you're declaring I want to be my own boss. I want to be my own king. I want to be my own God. And so what God gives you is just that.

[31 : 39] You want to be your own God you will see what it is really like without Him. And yet God has rescued us out of that.

Out of making our our own selves our God. It's making our idols our God. God has rescued us and given us faith.

And He has paid for all of our sin upon the cross. And so we're now part of this promise and we know that God's kingdom will ever increase here on earth.

Jesus will possess the nations and the church will spread to all nations every tribe and tongue and nation. We have hope.

We're children of promise so we should expect opposition from the world we should expect the enemy to tempt us with legalism and tempt us with falling back into slavery.

[32 : 41] And Paul addresses this in the next section in verse 28 beginning. Verse 28 Now you brothers like Isaac are children of promise but just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the spirit so also it is now.

But what does the scripture say? Cast out the slave woman and her son for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman. So brothers we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.

So there's two paths really. That's my third and final point. There's two paths. One of flesh and one of promise. Two paths.

One of flesh and one of promise. There's no middle road. There's no path out here. There's no third choice. You're either on a path of flesh or a path of promise.

But being a child of promise as you are if you believe in Christ you believe that he died and rose again for your sin. If you're part of that it's not all sunshine and roses.

[33 : 51] You know that. Verse 29 those born of the flesh persecute those born of the spirit. We will encounter opposition. We will encounter persecution.

We will experience pressure not only from those outside the church but even from within the church like Paul is addressing in the church of Galatians that it's a mix of people who are pressuring in the wrong ways into temptation with legalism and slavery.

There are those who wish to add rules for how to live the Christian life. Let's say you can't do this or can't do that that aren't clearly laid out in scripture.

and the world doesn't understand Christianity. Every other religion in the world is about doing enough good to outweigh the bad.

Even those who don't believe in God believe that we should leave the world having done more good than bad. And they're trying to achieve whether they know it or not they're trying to achieve something they cannot possibly achieve is to outweigh your good to outweigh the bad with the good.

[35 : 07] You can't do that. The scale is already at the bottom. If you have sinned you cannot reach God. There is a you know from if you're the worst of sinners it's like you're down in the depths of a mind and the best of sinners is at the mountaintop but neither can reach God.

You can't reach the heavens still stuck on the ground. We need Christ to do that. The point here is not about persecution but that you should know that the path of promise is opposed on every side and so we must oppose the path of the flesh of legalism and of slavery.

Don't allow it to linger in your own life. When you see it creeping into your own life put it to death and return to the freedom that's in Christ. Return to trusting in Christ.

That his sacrifice is enough to cover not only all your sin but sufficient for all your righteousness. All that you would need to appear good before God. God and this also hits us a little bit more subtly sometimes.

I don't know about you, but I am not particularly tempted to engage in all the ritualistic practices of Judaism. That's not the thing that really assaults this church, I don't think.

[36 : 36] not in our modern day, but people can often face choices that also become a kind of slavery.

There's one, there's legalism, yes. We can be tempted by a legalism of our own making. When we think or act like God loves us less when we sin, or that he will vindictively punish us, or because we didn't do this or that, or because we sinned in this way or that way, God's not going to do good to us.

That's a kind of legalism, that's a kind of slavery that I'm talking about. We need to reject that. And as well, you can have stress and pressure and worry because of a legalistic view of the world, whether at your job or in your relationship, that you feel like you're not up to what you should be. And the fact is that no, you're probably not. You're probably not making it well as a parent or husband or wife or a worker.

You're not perfect. You make mistakes, right? You shirk responsibility here and there. You sin in ways.

[38 : 00] You're not the best father. You're not the best parent. Not the best husband. And that can weigh on you. And instead of confessing that sin and going to God and receiving forgiveness, you can just carry that guilt with you.

A little low-lying guilt. Just feel like you're not up to the task. You're not doing well in that. And you can carry that around. And it can become a kind of legalistic slavery.

But you feel this little bit of guilt. guilt. Not enough to actually go to Christ and to ask for forgiveness to help him to change you. But enough so that it weighs on you. But that's not what Christianity is supposed to be like.

That's not what Jesus wants for you. He doesn't want you to have really any guilt. guilt. Because that's all been paid for on the cross. And so if you're aware of your guilt, you are aware of your sin, confess it before God.

Receive that forgiveness. Receive the freedom that he brings. And as well, we can encounter licentiousness, license, kind of the opposite of legalism.

[39 : 12] That there are plenty of things that we know that are dangerous and addicting. There's drugs and alcohol, pornography. There's addiction to smartphones. That's a common one now. And I see it in the younger generations as well.

That instead of talking with people, they'll just look on their smartphones. They don't talk to each other anymore. And that can become a kind of slavery. I've heard in popular media that they've categorized that as an addiction, a smartphone addiction.

Maybe that's not your thing. But those are things that can really, anything that can control you, that you don't have control over, becomes slavery to you.

So whether it's anger to overeating to materialism, it's not just the drugs and alcohol, things that we need to worry about as addicting behaviors and controlling behaviors.

But anything that you are controlled by, you cannot control your anger. Well, if you can't control your anger, you are controlled by it. You are a slave of that. But the reality of Christ is this, that the Holy Spirit gives you power over those sins.

[40 : 38] So don't deny that. Receive that power. Ask for that power to put off that sin and to follow God without being controlled by that.

And another, one more, culture. I think culture can shape our minds in certain ways. And we become a slave of the culture's way of thinking things. And it holds up captives. So rather than God's word being our key to freedom in our thinking, we can kind of think of this as a backwards, regressive book.

Oh, that's so old. What is it? 2,000 years old. What does that have to say about today? And then we can think culture's way of thinking. That's so much better.

It's so enlightened. I mean, it's been informed by many, many years of study. And it goes from a wide range of things.

[41 : 38] What you think about immigration policy to abortion or to roles in marriage or in the church. There are a number of ways that there are assaults on scripture.

And scripture is good, although sometimes counterintuitive way of thinking about things. And I would just offer this, that if you follow the Bible, you follow what God says in his word, it will grant you freedom.

It will grant you freedom not only in living but in thinking. Far from being this being slavery. No, this is our path to freedom.

There are really two paths. One of flesh and legalism and slavery and one of spirit and of freedom and of promise. And so let's remember that Christ came to bring us freedom, to forgive us, to lift our burdens by dying on the cross.

He gave us life. In concluding chapter 5, verse 1, I included this because it is a good capstone. It summarizes this passage.

[42 : 49] For freedom, Christ has set us free. Stand firm therefore and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. If you don't know Christ this morning or you haven't experienced that freedom in Christ, haven't trusted him for your salvation, you can do that now.

Believe that he died on the cross for your sins and you will start to have that freedom, freedom in your life, freedom in your thinking, freedom in the way of not feeling guilty anymore.

You can stand before God clean, holy, and pure. And that's a good reminder for us too that if you have already believed, you've been a Christian for 20 years, 30 years, that's a good reminder that we do not have to feel guilty before God.

We confess our sin and we receive that forgiveness, that full pardon, that full righteousness from him. And we ask him, we ask him for help in those areas that we're tempted, we ask him for help. Because there are really two paths. Which path are you on? And two questions for you that I'll leave you with. What area of your life are you tempted to walk the path of legalism and of slavery and of flesh?

[44 : 22] Maybe it's legalism, maybe it's license, maybe it's you're captive in the way of thinking to the culture or to something else. So that's question one.

What area in your life are you tempted to do that? I'm not saying are you walking down the whole path and that's going to lead you away from God? Well, it can.

I've seen it happen. It doesn't mean that if you're a child, a promise that anyone can snatch you away. But I've seen people that thought they were Christian and then are led towards a path of destruction.

destruction. I don't want that for you. And it is a danger. And so we want to put that off. And I'll ask you this second question.

How can you better walk in the freedom Christ has given you? How can you remember to walk in freedom? Maybe it's as simple as reading your scripture, praying every day.

[45 : 25] Maybe it's really putting off that particular addicting sin and following God, replacing it with something good, something that God has called us to.

Well, let me pray for you and pray for us as we think about these things and ask God for strength. Father, we thank you for today. Thank you for your scripture that you have given us clear picture of the path that leads to death and the path that leads to life.

We want to be on that path that leads to life. And Lord, you have set us on that path. Help us not to turn back. Help us not to be tempted, Lord.

And where we are tempted, help us to conquer that sin. Give us your Holy Spirit. Give us your power to conquer that sin and to follow you into freedom. Help our minds.

[46 : 29] Help our spirit. That we would not give into sin. We would not give into legalism or sin or slavery. but that we would follow you and desire to follow you and to rejoice in the freedom that we

have in Christ.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.