



God's Love in Liberty

Expressed in the Fruits of the Spirit

Peter J. Scott . transcribed 2024

Introduction

I would like to share from Galatians chapter five this morning. But first I want to give you some background. This epistle that Paul wrote is the front line for the doctrine of **“justification by faith, not by works.”** This is so key to what the early church needed to learn. You would think that the Churches had already learned this but many had not. They still drift back into rules of law and tradition. It is interesting that the Galatians would be singled out for this.

Therefore I looked up some of the history of the Galatian people that would have been in that Church. By the time Paul wrote them this epistle they were probably speaking in Greek so John Mark would have been a good translator for Paul and likely was. However, these Galatians were an interesting people. Galatia was right in the middle of what now is the country of Turkey. They were part of the migration of the Gaulish Celts from Germany, France and around that area. Some went North. Some went South. Some went all the way to Asia Minor. But by the time Paul wrote to them, they were probably at least a mixed Church, meaning they weren't altogether Jewish. They were not all Greeks, although they

probably spoke that language. However the Celtic people in that time were a *warlike* people. They were noted as mercenaries. In fact you could hire them and they would fight on both sides of a war, whoever would be paying them.

These people were part of what that early Church was. They were almost like Antioch. That Church spoke Greek as well, probably Egyptian, Arab and a lot of other languages. But we see these Church members were off to another place that they shouldn't have been. ***Paul was furious!*** I do not use that lightly. Paul was furious with this doctrine they were involved in. He knew that the enemy was out there kicking off what God had planted. It was God who was planting the Church, not Paul. Yet Paul could see the enemy come in various ways.

1 Peter 5 ⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

We know that is still true today. The enemy has not changed his tactics. He will pick off whomever he can. This Galatian Church was “easy pickings,” so to speak, since they swallowed a line of doctrine that they should and could be justified by *works* that people *do*. Specifically Paul addresses the idea that circumcision was *a law found in the Old Testament*. He frees the Church from the idea of circumcision but also from the idea that *any* law is no longer valid. If you want to be beholding to one law, you have to be holding to all. You have to be fulfilling them all otherwise you are not going to be saved!

This whole chapter in 1 Peter five is the beginning of the understanding and the confrontation of the early Church and especially the ministry of Paul *against* the doctrine of *justification by works*. How quickly the Church fell into the doctrine of works again and again. So let's look at what that is. It can be circumcision, can be a lot of different things. In *today's* world it is not so much Jewish law from the Old Testament but it is traditions from denominational Churches that keep us from the freedom that God wants in our lives.

The love of God is there so that we can express the liberty that He has given us. Now liberty is something that is to be cherished . . . It is something to be expressed. It is expressed through the *fruit* of the Spirit. So let us look at that. I love Galatians chapter five.

It is for **freedom** that Christ has set us free. It was not so that we could obey the law. It is for **freedom**. It wasn't so that we could be trapped into traditions but for **freedom** that Christ has set us free. That is one of the reasons He died on the Cross.

Galatians 5: ¹Stand fast therefore in the liberty (freedom) by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

In 2 Corinthians 3: ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (freedom).

Wow I appreciated the prophetic word given this morning at the very beginning, *“the first light to shine forth in the darkness.”* I don’t know if there were too many rules. Light could not become matter and matter could become light. Light was light, separating light from darkness. Darkness could not be light and light could not be darkness. Later on we know via science, Albert Einstein said $E=mc^2$ which meant that energy actually has relationship with mass and mass with energy. You better be careful how you “play” with either one. I am always reminded that the core of the Sun is a reaction of the collision of the hydrogen atoms. They are so crushed that they become helium. During that process HUGE amounts of energy are released in protons, x-rays and other forms of energy. Those protons keep bouncing around in the core and it takes some of them 200,000 years before they reach the surface of the Sun. Much later it arrives here on earth and we can feel it. We say, *“What kind of energy 93 million miles away are we talking about? Huge in its origination.”*

Creation itself is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God, people who are not going to be bound up in law and tradition. They will obey only the Lord, their Master by and through the Holy Spirit. In that place we will have no guilt. No guilt. If you are under guilt today, I want you to come up for prayer later and ask for forgiveness and we will pray for you. You should not be accepting the condemnation of the enemy’s accusations against you. No Guilt. There is no list of “must do things.” There is no achievement that you have to attain. New York State will tell you that there are a lot of achievements that you have to attain in order to drive a car, license, before that a permit, etc. etc. After all that who knows what is going to come to poor people like me at 76 years old. They will probably start making me have another type of license. Who knows?!

It seems like in everything we do we have to jump through a “hoop” to achieve something. If we don’t have anything to achieve they will make things up! That’s what the Galatians were doing. Nobody told them that they had to be circumcised, at least from Paul’s ministry. But there were other men who went around, itinerate speakers and letter writers, that were spreading the gospel of salvation by “doing,” salvation by “doing things,” achieving things, etc. You can be forgiven by saying,

“ten ‘Hail Marys.’” But if you want to be forgiven you have to “do this,” and “do that,” light a candle, etc. etc.

But now the Lord has freed you from all that. You are now going to become something totally different, not what *you* want but what the Holy Spirit wants. You are going to be taught if you don’t know how to seek the will of the Lord through and in the Holy Spirit. When you do, there will be no holding back! You cannot somehow obey Him “slightly.” How do you do that to the Holy Spirit? No. It is like the light saying, “*I will just be partially a proton today.*” No, not going to happen. It is going to be as bright as He is meant to be! You are going to be able to walk away from all the bad habits you have had. So let’s start:

Christian Liberty

Galatians 5: ¹Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. ²Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.

He is not mixing words here. He is putting the target right in front of them and stabbing.

³ And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law (not just one commandment but all of them). ⁴ You have become estranged from Christ, . . .

He is really getting into it, “*You have lost it! You have become not even known by the Lord!*”

*. . . you who attempt to be justified by law; you **have fallen from grace.***

What a word of warning! If you are justified by the law you have fallen from grace. Anybody want to join that team?!!

⁵ For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Love Fulfills the Law

Love is really the key. I am going to say there is another “key” word that is not mentioned here, but it is key as in the *motivation* behind

what we do. That is what love talks about, “*What is your motivation? Is your motivation to get accepted by your fellow Christians by your own doing?*” Or is it the **love** that God has put into your heart? Sometimes that love can take a lot out of you that you didn’t want to give up. But Love is the motivation behind what we should be doing. In your job, the reason you work is not because you get paid. It is because you **love** the Lord. If it isn’t, find a job that is. If you go to work today, quit your job and find one that is motivating you to have love!

I was sharing with my grandson yesterday how that is what motivated me to switch jobs and go over and work in a hospital, to find people that couldn’t walk, quadriplegics and paraplegics, both. It was a wonderful thing and I didn’t have to worry about my paycheck. Why?! Because I wasn’t motivated by my paycheck.

Now this love is very important.

⁷ You ran well. . . .

Past tense that’s almost what Apostle John was saying in Revelation.

Revelation 2: ¹“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: ² “I know your works, your labor, your patience, . . .

Now what are those? Those are **WORKS**.

. . . and that you cannot bear those who are evil. . .

That is a good thing to be said about you. I’d like to have that on my grave stone.

And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

We know that Matthew says that also. . . that we should test those who come and preach, prophesy or whatever. If you find something that is wrong, you are going to catch it.

. . . ³ and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.

How many times I have exhorted people, “*Don’t be weary of doing good, not just doing good works but doing good works that **God** has prepared for you. Not the dead works done on your own initiative.*”

⁴ *Nevertheless I have this against you, . . .*

After all those things?! That should have been enough to justify that particular Church. They should all go to Heaven. **No.**

. . . that you have left your first love . . .

Their motivation has dissipated; it has died. It is faded.

⁵ *Remember therefore from where you have fallen; **repent** and do the first works, . . .*

What are the “first works?” The first works are the ones motivated by **love**. In my one of my “first works”, I can remember calling my future wife on the phone. I was in Northern Vermont and below zero weather. One had to get as many quarters as possible. In those days wall phones only took quarters. You used quarters or you had nothing. And she was going to school in Holland, Michigan which is also a very cold place to live. So I got about three dollars and seventy cents worth of quarters and called her. It was a work of love. It wasn’t a work where I somehow felt pressured in any way to do this. I could easily have just written a letter saying, “*I still love you honey. Keep the fires burning, blah, blah, blah.*” But there was something in my heart that wanted more, not for achievement sake but because I LOVED her.

So do the works you first had for the Lord. Oh, when you worshipped the Lord it was not because you *had* to. When you sang it was not because you had to; it is because you WANTED to. Amen.

Back to Galatians

Galatians 5:7 *You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?*

So there are going to be people who are motivated by lies. And who is behind all those accusations? We know it is ultimately satan. However he gets you there really doesn’t matter. There are people and things that will persuade you.

⁸ *This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.* ⁹ *A little leaven leavens the whole lump.*

So they do not come from God. If a little bit of yeast is put into the flour, pretty soon the whole thing is infected with yeast (evil). So, when you let the enemy in, even if it is a little bit, the whole loaf gets spoiled. Ideas have a terrible way of expressing themselves fully and completely. One could say, “*What could it hurt? Abortions are not so bad for some?*” But that leavens the whole loaf.

¹⁰ I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

You can see Paul’s *vehemence* against this person and whatever it is that is leading this church astray

¹¹ And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision (the law), why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. ¹² I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!

This is pretty brutal language! Paul is not trying to make peace or be nice here. He is trying to separate evil from good. What he is saying here is that if you obey the law, that is evil with evil intent! You are no longer motivated by love but motivated by trying to “make the grade,” so you can make enough points to get your license so to speak. I know what that means because as a medical technologist and a microbiologist New York State required me to take a test almost every five years. I had to make sure that I knew what I was doing. Those days are over for me, thankfully.

*¹³ For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not **use** liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*

Love is going to take you places where you never imagined you would end up.

¹⁴ For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

We know that later on this is modified. Jesus says, “*You shall love your neighbor **as I have loved you.***”

¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

So this was really a conflict in the Galatian Church that wasn't like, *"I have this theory and we will live and let live."* This lie was putting people to the test! The choosing of sides so to speak, saying, *"I am going to be of the circumcision and you are not?! Well then I am going to leave and go to another Church!"*

Paul is very much aware of the conflict that freedom and liberty and love would cost.

1 Corinthians 10: ³¹Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Not by compulsion of law but . . .

³²Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the Church of God, ³³just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

This is from *another letter* but listen to Paul here. He is taking a different stance. I read that verse in comparison to the one in Galatians and it was like two different people! So we see that Paul was very much aware that the law and freedom would cause a lot of problems in the Church. In Corinthians he is really trying to confront the idea that if we are motivated by love and somebody else, for example, upholds the idea that the holidays of Christmas and Thanksgiving and all these other holidays, Advent, Lent etc., these people are not necessarily doing it by the law. They were just raised in a traditional Church atmosphere. It is not our business to confront them. The Holy Spirit can do that and give them the freedom they need.

You don't have to observe Christmas or any of those things. *Any day is like any other day* when not under the law as the Old Testament says. I believe that is true when you are a believer and led by the Holy Spirit. However I get a Christmas tree every year and put it into my house just because of tradition and because my family enjoys it. Those things are not necessarily bad. Walking in the Spirit though takes a little bit of "learning," doesn't it?

Okay, I say, *"I am filled with the Spirit now. I speak in tongues. I am good to go."* Well, be careful. *"Which way should I go, Lord, left or right?"* Actually it isn't a matter of left or right. Rather it is keeping the Holy Spirit in **front** of you. He will be a lamp to our feet, a light to our pathway. Some of us want to have a laserlight rather than just a pathway. But He says, *"I'll be there for you. I'll light it up for you."* The Holy Spirit is a wonderful Person. Isn't He?

Galatians 5: ¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; . . .

There is a war going on.

. . . and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

This is putting it very clearly. By being led by the Spirit you are NOT under the law. You may even keep the law, and/or traditions, but you are not under them. I can remember when the Pharisees were criticizing Jesus' disciples for eating the grain on the Sabbath. What did Jesus say? "*Even King David took the grain from the Holy Place.*" This is crazy. He was saying, when you are led by the Spirit, Holiness is in God, not in the things that we *do*. If we are motivated correctly, and that's really the key word, *motivated*, we are going to find the will of God.

We need to be reminded of what the works of the flesh are.

*¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who **practice** such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

This isn't the first time that Paul has brought up the fact that there is real evil out there. The key word here is "practice." Every one of us has fallen in at least one of these categories. **Envy** would be a good one. What motivates you to buy things? Sometimes it is just plain old envy. We are not going to inherit the Kingdom of God if we *practice* these things.

So how do we keep from doing that? First we identify them and then we walk away! We *purpose* to walk away! It doesn't always mean we are going to succeed but through the help of the Holy Spirit, He is the One who is responsible for changing our character into the likeness of Jesus Christ Himself. The Holy Spirit is the One responsible, not you. You purpose to do it but the Holy Spirit WILL do it.

How Do We Express Love

Galatians 5: 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

This is my favorite scripture in almost the whole Bible, outlining the fruit of the Spirit. So how do we express love? How does a photon express light? When it hits something (matter) it changes what is going on. It reflects what the matter might be. Red, brown, green or whatever. So when we have the love of God going forth, how does it go forth and what does it change? Primarily, its intent is to change something within us. You see God created time. God created space, time continuum. He created all these things so everybody could know that HIS motivation is love. God is love. That's why He did it.

He didn't do it just to show you how great He is. "I can do a galaxy better than anybody." Or, "I can do a black hole better than anyone." That is NOT why He did. The earth and all of its abundance, He did it so He could show us how much He *loves* us! Unfortunately Adam and Eve didn't quite understand the whole thing (Genesis). Otherwise they would not have been tempted to go their own way.

So the Lord gave me a mind. I should use it. Yes. But . . . He gave us the Holy Spirit also. We should be obedient to Him.

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

(1 LOVE)

If it isn't love it is nothing. You don't know if I am Spirit filled or not by what I am doing or how well I preach, how well I can pronounce a word, etc. But it is if I have the motivation of love or not. How do you know that? When somebody comes up for prayer. They are healed. You don't know if their motivation is love or not. Over time, one of the interesting things I have found is that it is almost impossible NOT to know. It didn't take me long to figure it out when somebody is not motivated by love. It is the *little* things that you notice. Not the big things necessarily but the little things you notice. For example, maybe they turned away when they shouldn't have turned away . . .

(2 JOY)

The enemy tries to steal your love and he also tries to get you out of the joy that belongs to you. Joy belongs to us. We were born there.

(3 PEACE

Peace! The enemy tries to steal my joy; he also tries to steal our peace. The accuser of the brethren does this by condemning us, mostly by using the law!

(4 LONG SUFFERING

That is persevering, long endurance. We can do that.

(5 KINDNESS

How often I have not been kind in what I have said. You see as a lab-tech people would monitor the blood sugar for a particular patient. I told them, *“It is 150.”* Then I would walk away without any debate. I did all the controls. Then the physician would look at me and say, *“It cannot be possible. This guy looks like he is really hurting. You must be wrong.”* I would repeat, ***“It is 150!”*** And then walk away. That was the wrong posture for me to display. The Lord told me that many times. *“Don’t just say it is 150 if you know there is a problem and they are not receiving it, go back and convince them.”* For instance I should more sympathetically say, *“Well, I am sorry doctor but I did all the controls. It was 150 yesterday and it is still 150. Your patient is in trouble but it has to be something else.”* Kindness.

(6 GOODNESS, (7 FAITHFULNESS

Over and over scripture points to faithfulness. King David was mostly faithful in everything he did. When he left his flock that his father gave to him to take care of, it says that he gave them to the under shepherds to watch while he was gone. That way he would know what was happening and know what to do. He was being faithful to what he had been given to do. You also are almost never divorced from the small things God has given you to do! So when I became a lab manager and I became administrative director of managed care and some employee doesn’t show up, particularly those who were supposed to clean the bathroom, and there is no toilet paper . . . guess who had an extra roll of toilet paper?! Me. I would go in and put it in there because I was still being faithful to the things that were put under my care.

(8 GENTLENESS, (9 SELF CONTROL

Here is an interesting statement:

. . . Against such there is no law.

So you can practice all of these fruits without going to prison. There is nobody who can put you in jail or say you have to stay in jail longer because you did “this or that.” No. These fruits will always be valid

in any human condition. Any government in the world would not divorce you for doing these things. They wouldn't put you in jail for any of these things! Amen.

²⁴ And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Earlier when we talked about Romans 8 we had this thought as well. **We have to crucify the flesh.** We put to death the deeds of the flesh. Now the Holy Spirit says, *"Look at what you just did! You turned away from somebody who really needed an encouraging prayer and you didn't respond! I told you to but you turned away from it."*

Now here is the enemy saying, *"You will never be conformed to Christ."* The Lord says, *"No, PURPOSE that next time this situation arises that you will go to that person and pray with them."* How about that?! That is not the enemy accusing but rather it is the voice of the Lord affirming your behavior and if you are led by the Spirit, that's how it happens.

Crucify the flesh. It doesn't want to do it; so follow the Spirit.

²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

That means we don't just do things when it is convenient to us. Our "walk" means that in everything we do, we do according to the Holy Spirit, His direction. Wow. This just doesn't sound like freedom to me! It sounds like more bondage than I left. Well, yes and no. The intent of the bondage you left was evil not just for those around you *but for you*. This new "bondage" is one that you have voluntarily given to God as a bondsman saying, *"I want to be your slave, Lord Jesus. I want to call You Master because of what I have seen in you that is complete liberty and love and mercy and lovingkindness. Nothing else. There is no expression of evil."*

The true expression of love is in liberty and can only be in liberty. Think about this. God gives us creative ways to express His love. How do I know that? Well, by observation. I don't need to set up a scientific experiment. Somebody might say, *"Well what is the scientific evidence?"* The sky is blue because it is! ***The creative love of God is expressed in His creation. It just is creative!***

I've only had to have been scuba diving for a few weeks before I realized there were a lot of really "crazy" things that He put down under water. I had no idea what they did or how they lived their life! He is just

so creative in expressing His love. He most certainly is in ways we cannot even understand.

I was listening to a farmer in northern Vermont who had around 200 cows that she was milking at the time. However one of her animals was a donkey. What is the difference between the cow and the donkey? The donkey is more stubborn. So she starts to describe in some Vermont farm language. *“Donkeys are stubborn because God gave that donkey the ability to think outside of the herd mentality and think on its own free will. That is why he is so stubborn.”* Immediately the Holy Spirit within me said, *“Yeah and that’s probably why you are so stubborn also.”* God has given all of us our own free will to be able to make our own decisions. Sometimes we are going to stand by it no matter what!

The Holy Spirit says, *“O, I don’t know about that. I am changing you from glory to glory into the image of Jesus Christ.”* Amen

The outcome for all of this in Galatians is the fruit of the Spirit being manifest within you. You are going to have MORE freedom not less. More freedom. You are going to have it. You are going to express more love in ways you didn’t know before. Your marriage will be better. Your love towards others will be better! You will be fulfilled in those things. You won’t feel a want and a lack of something. You will be overflowing. When you are baptized in the Holy Spirit, it means you are overflowing with the love of the Holy Ghost so that you cannot contain it anymore. It is leaking out all over. . . it is on the floor. It is in the Church no matter where you go.

You are going to be fulfilled. You are going to have dreams but they won’t be the ones the enemy gives you. They won’t be nightmares. Your dreams will be ones that you would never have even considered, visions you never knew.

God’s Spirit Poured Out

Joel 2: ²⁸And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. ²⁹And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

This is not just talking ethereally about history. God is also talking about you personally. Not the dreams of the enemy. You are going to

dream dreams that are going to be really wondrous. You are going to wake up and say, *“Wow. That is the best dream I’ve ever had!”* That’s our inheritance. When we go to bed, pray that prayer. When you get up from a nightmare, pray that prayer, *“Wait a minute. I’m going to dream a different dream!!”*

I always thought the young men would have dreams and the old men would see visions. But that is not true. The dreams that you have as older men create an obligation for you to share with those who are younger than yourselves. Those dreams are not for just the old guys. They are for the whole church. Amen.

So, Lord, we come against the accuser of the brethren. Father, we know him for who he is, the one who divides us, the one who is our adversary, the one who is like the “roaring lion” just waiting for a weakness. But we are not going to show any weakness except, Lord, through what You have done in us, by Your works in us and through us. We do not stand by the works, even if they are “good works.” We stand in You and under the covering of Your wing, by Your blood. It is not by the works that we have done but by Your work on the cross, by Your work by pouring out the Holy Spirit upon us, Lord God! And even though the Galatian Church knew how to fight with a sword, even though they knew so much intellectually, they did not really understand what Paul was saying.

But we come against the schemes that were against that Church and against the Church of today, that You would wake us up, that we would be full of the motivation of love and mercy towards one another, that kindness that would go out from our heart.

O Father, forgive us for not being that way. Forgive us for selling ourselves short saying, “Well we are just us. I am just me.” We are not “just us,” or “just me.” God has called you to be one of Gideon’s 300 armed men, the ones to take the land.

“I will speak through you,” says the Lord. “I will speak through your daughters and your sons. And you will dream dreams and see visions.” Amen.