Paul writes his letter to the Galatians with a theme of freedom. The Judaizers in Galatia were insistent that the newly converted Christians needed to abide by the traditional customs of the Old Testament. Paul addresses these heretical teachings by stating that true freedom does not come from obedience to the law, but that the obedience to the law comes after the freedom from it. This was something the Judaizers did not want to hear. They wanted their freedom to be a part of what they contributed to it. There were “two features about the legalistic ‘gospel’ of the Judaizers that made it so appealing and acceptable to the Galatians. One is, that it appealed to their reason and pride, in that it credited them with at least being able to contribute something to their salvation; the other, that it operated with the Word of God.”¹ Paul clearly and rightly emphasizes that freedom is by grace alone, through faith alone, and without any merit of our own.

It is our intention here to address the heresy of the Judaizers and the tendency among people and churches today to place restrictions on freedom. We will specifically turn our attention to Paul’s words in Galatians 3:23-25 and 5:1-15 in the Greek. It is with these words of the gracious God inspired through Paul that we will not only address this heinous heresy, but see how Christ has completely freed us so that we may love to serve him and others out of faith.

Galatians 3:23-25

23 Πρ’ τοῦ δὲ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν ὑπὸ νόμου ἐφρουροῦμεθα συγκλειόμενοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθήναι, 24 δοθεὶς ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν. 25 ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγὸν ἔσμεν.

My Translation - 23- Before this faith came, we were held supervised under the law being bound up till faith is about to be revealed, 24- so the law became babysitter for us to Christ, that we might be declared righteous by faith. 25- Faith having come, we are no longer under the babysitter.

We need some immediate context here to understand the law and faith that Paul is talking about. In the verses immediately preceding, Paul is talking about the covenant God had given to Abraham and to his seed (σπέρματι αὐτοῦ). The Seed (singular) is Christ. Paul then asks, “What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come….Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so

¹ Hoenecke - The Law as Paidagogos eis Christon in Galatians 3, p. 3
that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe” (Galatians 3:19, 21, 22).

“The Law of Moses is in force only for a specific time and therefore does not have independent significance. At the same time the remark about the seed implies that the Law exists only to help the Promise along.”² So the Law has its purpose, and the seed has its purpose. They are not separate from each other, but both work towards one common goal. Sins were still present, and that is why the law was necessary, “but Paul is quick to state that ‘it was added till the seed should come,’ thus marking a God-intended limitation of time for its special function in God’s Old Testament economy.”³

Therefore with the verses at hand there is quite a discrepancy on how to translate the function of the law. The first difficult discrepancy is ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουροῦμεθα συγκλειόμενοι. Hoenecke translates it as, “kept in custody under the law.” Koehler translates it as, “kept under guard by the law.”

**ἐφρουροῦμεθα συγκλειόμενοι**

συγκλειόμενοι is an Attributive Participle. It connects to the verb ἐφρουροῦμεθα before it.

The imperfect form presents this as a condition which obtained throughout the period spoken of. συγκλειόμενοι, a form of the verb also used in verse 22, which literally means ‘to enclose something, stresses the idea of confinement already contained in ἐφρουροῦμεθα. Burton, commenting on ἐφρουροῦμεθα, says: ‘…the participle συγκλειόμενοι compels us to understand it here of a restrictive guarding.’⁴

It is of this special, temporary function of the law in the Old Testament that Paul comes to speak in the verses under consideration. The temporary nature of this function, in line with the words ‘till the seed should come,’ is once more emphasized when Paul begins, ‘But before faith came, we were kept under the law,’ and concludes the section, ‘But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.’ For, regardless how one understands the word ‘faith,’ it must be obvious that whatever function is here ascribed to the law, it is pictured as limited in time.⁵

Luther says, “Therefore this custody under the Law should not be forever but should last only until faith.”⁶ When faith comes, no longer is the Law functioning as a custodian, a schoolmaster, a guardian, or whatever other translation might be used. When faith comes, this function of the Law ceases. The function of the Law was in the past and functioning until the Seed (Christ), the source of faith, is revealed.

By no means is Paul saying that there is no more sin and therefore no more need for the Law. There still is sin and “the Law does not delight in sin. But it elicits sin with the purpose, to the

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² Koehler, p. 94f
³ Hoenecke - The Law as Paidagogos eis Christon in Galatians 3, p. 4
⁴ Ibid, p. 7
⁵ Ibid, p. 4f
⁶ Luther, p. 339
end, that the preaching of the Gospel be served. It was to help in order that faith might be
brought to light in the time of the New Testament, that in the whole world it might now be said
that salvation could be obtained only by faith." 7 No works, no obedience to any laws, no self-
righteous acts may obtain salvation with God, but the Law which seeks obedience points us to
the one who fulfills the Law and laws for us. This leads us to the second discrepancy of how to
interpret Paul’s meaning of the law.

παιδαγωγὸς

Koehler translates παιδαγωγὸς as guardian or tutor while Hoenecke translates παιδαγωγὸς as
supervisor or custodian. All four suggestions by Koehler and Hoenecke are very similar in
meaning, but they all have a little different flavor. The problem in translating παιδαγωγὸς is that
it really has no English equivalent.

Lindke states, παιδαγωγὸς has no equivalent in the English language; ‘pedagogue,’ ‘schoolmaster,’ ‘tutor,’
guardian,’ are all inadequate, covering each one an area of thought more or less quite
different. ‘Tutor,’ as the masculine of ‘governess’ comes perhaps nearest, but a tutor to a
gentleman’s children is generally an educated man, and often of like rank in life with those
he is with; whereas a παιδαγωγὸς was usually a slave - an element of thought probably very
near to the apostle’s consciousness in his present use of the term….Teaching, except possibly
of the very first rudiments, was not the παιδαγωγὸς’ business, but only the general care and
superintendence of his charge-taking him to and back from his teachers’ houses or the
schools of physical training, looking after him in his play hours, and the like. In applying to
the Law the figure of παιδαγωγὸς, the features which the apostle had in view were these: the
childhood or non-age of those under its tutelage; their withdrawal from free parental
intercourse; their degraded condition as being under servile management; the exercise over
them of unsympathizing hardness (comp. 1 Cor. 4:15, ‘Though ye have ten thousand tutors in
Christ, yet have ye not many fathers’); coercive discipline; the rudimentary character of their
instruction (this particular, however, is of questionable application); the temporary and
purely provisional nature of the condition under which they were placed; its termination in
the full enjoyment of freedom and of participation in their father’s inheritance. 8

Hoeneke says of παιδαγωγὸς:
Literally the word means ‘boy-leader,’ and to this the Arndt-Gingrich Greek-English Lexicon
adds ‘the man, usually a slave, whose duty it was to conduct the boy or youth to and from
school and to superintend his conduct generally; he was not a teacher (despite the present
meaning of the derivative ‘pedagogue’). When the young man became of age the
παιδαγωγὸς was no longer needed.’ Of Paul’s use of the word with reference to the law this
lexicon continues: ‘Paul evaluates the Mosaic Law as a παιδαγωγὸς εἰς Χριστόν Galatians
3:24. Humankind remains under its authority, ὑπὸ παιδαγωγὸν verse 25, until God declares,
by sending His Son, that it has come of age. 9

7 Koehler, p. 99
8 Lindke, p. 29f
9 Hoenecke - The Law as Paidagogos eis Christon in Galatians 3, p. 6
And Koehler says παιδαγωγὸς “designates the slave who brought the minor child of wealthy parents to school and to the playground. Neither the idea of jailer or educator is implied in this word…We must center our attention solely upon the outward servile work of the παιδαγωγὸς.”

This use of the law as a παιδαγωγὸς creates an interesting picture for the Judaizers of Galatia and for anyone trying to be saved by the law. παιδαγωγὸς is not an easy word to translate because the American society that we live in and the English language that we use doesn’t really have such a term. The closest term that this writer is able to come up with is, babysitter. Babysitters have temporary positions. The babysitter is given tasks to carry out, most importantly to restrain the children under their care from getting out of control. That situation is only temporary, and the babysitter still needs to report back to the parents when they return. The babysitter is not fully in control, the parents are. Even though the children may feel like they may get away with so much more when the babysitter is around it is only temporary. The goal of the parents hiring the babysitter is to be able to return to a somewhat controlled situation and continue life as normal. So also “the Law is not the equal of the Gospel. It performs minor external services for the Gospel…They have Christ as their goal…The Law performs certain external menial services so that the Gospel may reach the hard heart of man, in order that man may be justified by faith.”

There is one more important word to emphasize and that is γέγονεν.

γέγονεν is a perfect form and its subject is ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς.

Hoeneke quotes Prof. C.F.D. Moule in regards to this phrase saying, “It has been said that graphically Perfects can be described, some as a point followed by a line (---), and some as a line followed by a point (---).”

With the εἰς Χριστόν it is easy to take this as the graphically perfect with a point followed by a line and the line followed by a point. The purpose of God giving the νόμος παιδαγωγὸς was to point to Christ. So it served as this temporary babysitter until Christ would come. Christ has come and is the point that was preceded by the line where the νόμος παιδαγωγὸς served. “It (God’s Law) is designed to create a longing for the liberty in Christ and the larger opportunities that liberty implies.”

“Faith having come, we are no longer under the babysitter.”

Paul states clearly here in Galatians 3:25 that the use for παιδαγωγὸς is gone. It is done because faith has come. Is it really that simple? It should be, but because of sinful nature even these words of Paul are difficult for many to swallow. It was difficult for the Galatians because they were engrained in the teachings of the Judaizers.

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10 Koehler, p. 99
11 Ibid, p. 99f
12 Hoenecke - The Law as Paidagogos eis Christon in Galatians 3, p. 6
13 Lindke, p. 31
It is the time of the New Testament, when Christ has fulfilled the promised work of redemption; the time when, therefore, the blessed mystery which had been concealed from the foundation of the world and hitherto had only been promised, has openly appeared and calls the whole world to faith, and faith, this truth that we can be saved only through faith, now stands revealed. Now we are no longer under a tutor. He exists only for minor children, only for a limited time.  

Hoenecke quoting Luther addresses what seems to be the contradiction in the life of a Christian. We are under the law and yet not under the law,’ and goes on to explain, ‘i.e., though we live under the law, we nevertheless are not in subjection under the law, but remain free and unmoved by it. This occurs when I in faith live under the law and perform the works of the law voluntarily and with delight, not by coercion of the commandment or with the thought of being saved by works. On the contrary, I move entirely in the atmosphere of faith; through faith I have all I need, am rich and blessed. The works, however, I would do even though there were no law, with pleasure and with a happy, willing heart, yes, all that the law might ask of me, which formerly I could not do when I had no faith. But I do not rest on this, nor do I trust in my works, but my life flows entirely from faith. Thus I live under the law and yet am not under the law: for the works I do, I do not because the law demands them; no, I am free from the law through faith, which does not let itself be bound by any law or work. Faith, however, is by no means idle, but produces really good works; still it does not put its trust in the works, but alone in the grace of God, Galatians 2:20.  

There is now no longer any babysitter, tutor, guardian, schoolmaster over us by the law. Faith has come and this part of the law is gone. This does not mean that we do not follow the law. The law is no longer a burden for us. By faith one naturally carries out the law and loves the law because Christ is the fulfilment of the law. We are free, free at last. We are liberated from the law!  

The Galatians were free too. They were enjoying this liberty from the law and yet look at what Paul needs to continue to address. Our next section for consideration begins in chapter five of Galatians. Even though the Galatians were free, Paul needed to address their willingness and even eagerness to jump back under the νόμος παιδαγωγὸς. This was the law that the Old Testament believers could not stand. They felt so overpowered and burdened by it, and now the Galatians were trying to get back under it.  

**Galatians 5:1-6**  

5 Τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἠμᾶς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν· στήκετε οὖν καὶ μὴ πάλιν ζυγῷ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε.  
2 Ἔδει Ἡλένας Παύλου λέγων, ὅτι ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε, Ἰησοῦς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει.  
3 μαρτύρομαι δὲ πάλιν παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ περιτεμνομένῳ ὅτι ὁμολογεῖν ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι.  
4 κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ, ὦτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε, τῆς χάριτος ἐξεπέσατε.  

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14 Koehler, p. 100  
15 Hoenecke - The Law as Paidagogos eis Christon in Galatians 3, p. 9
ἡμεῖς γὰρ πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα. 6 ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὐτὲ περιτομὴ τι ἴσχυε οὐτὲ ἄκρυβος ἡμῶν ἅπασα πίστις δι᾽ ἀγάπης ἐνεργοῦμένη.

My Translation - 5:1 For freedom, Christ set us free; stand firm then and do not again be under the control of the yoke of slavery. 2- Behold, I Paul say to you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no use to you. 3- I testify again to every man who is circumcised that he is one who is obligated to perform the whole law. 4- You have been released from association with Christ, anyone of you who are declared righteous by the law, you have fallen from grace. 5- But we eagerly await for the Spirit by faith, the hope of righteousness. 6- For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision are powerful but faith working through love (is).

Τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ is a dative of purpose. It is at the beginning of the verse and the chapter for extra emphasis. Paul’s whole purpose in this chapter is to emphasize the freedom that the Galatians had. He emphasizes the freedom for us too. Therefore, he begins the chapter with Τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ, for freedom, so that there may be no second-guessing what Paul’s main point of writing is.

ἠλευθέρωσεν - (Aorist Active Indicative)
All of Christ’s redemptive work, His active as well as His passive obedience, His holy life as well as His vicarious suffering and death, is embraced in the term ἠλευθέρωσεν. This verb reminds us that we were formerly slaves. But Christ is our great Emancipator. No slave who has tasted the heady wine of liberty would without a struggle submit once again to the cruel shackles of involuntary servitude. But this is just the danger that threatens us! If we are not to be reenslaved, we must stand firm. We must be on our guard. We must recognize and resist the ever-present threat to our liberty.16

Freedom! This is the heading that Paul uses for this chapter. ἐλευθερία is the entire purpose of Christ. Christ has set us free all for freedom. Why in the world would anyone want something different? One may balk at anyone who would want something different. We must remember that this is Christ’s purpose. We want it to be our purpose too, and by faith it is. Anytime we start to believe that faith is not enough and attach more to it then we are headed in the same false path that Paul saw the Galatians were treading.

The Galatians wanted to emphasize works. They did not understand that circumcision was a work. They did not understand that what the Gospel does is actually frees them, liberates them from the law. This is the danger of relying on works and emotions. Once people feel like they are not doing enough, or feels like someone else isn’t doing enough, they add on requirements, yokes, that are not necessary. These yokes that one places on themselves or on others are counterproductive.

We are free from those yokes. We don’t need those yokes anymore. Christ has set us free. “Freedom, not slavery; faith, not servile doing -- that is the essence of Christianity. In this Christians are to stand fast and are not to submit again to a servile yoke, as some had already begun to do in Galatia.”17 “At His coming Christ, the Giver of the law, fully met all of its demands. He is therefore ‘the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth’

16 Gawrisch, p. 3
17 Koehler, p. 128
If we listen closely, we may also hear what Paul does not say, namely, that they themselves are operating with the Law when they imagine they are preaching the Gospel. ‘To preach the Gospel’ means, in the mouth of many people who use this phrase, nothing else than to operate with the Law. That is frequently the case, too, when people say, ‘One must believe on the Lord Jesus.’ That is often said in an imperious, overly-insistent manner; it is not meant evangelically at all, but very legalistically, although the words themselves sound correct. Thus the Gospel itself is often perverted into Law, even among those who call themselves orthodox. This is the true, exalted wisdom—to understand what it means that we are free children of God. And this can only then be grasped completely if it is not done with the head, but with the heart.  

Here it is important to look back at the final verse of chapter four, verse 31. It helps us complete the picture of what freedom Paul is talking about.

31 διό, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐσμέν παιδίσκης τέκνα ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐλευθέρας.  
Therefore, my beloved, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.  

παιδίσκης - maidservant, slave girl  
ἐλευθέρας - free woman

What a reminder it is for us to not turn the Gospel into the Law! It is so easy to do and it is so prevalently done today. Verse two of chapter five emphasizes this. The ὅτι ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε clause translated, “that if you let yourselves be circumcised” leads to a then clause. The result will be Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει, “Christ will be of no use, no benefit to you.” “περιτέμνησθε is the causative or permissive passive: ‘if you let yourselves be circumcised,’ that is in response to the demands of the Judaizers. Circumcision for non-religious reasons is, of course, not under consideration.”  

When we add any slight addition to the teaching and preaching of the Gospel, Christ is of no use. This is a powerful statement preached by Paul. Paul uses circumcision here as the example because it was applicable to the Galatians, but really circumcision is a fill-in-the-blank. Anything that we allow to come into our lives and be in addition to the Gospel or subtraction from the Gospel because Gospel is not good enough cancels out Christ. It is pretty clear that anytime we add anything as a requirement we are puffing ourselves up and saying we don’t need Christ, because we know better.

“If salvation is to be gained by obeying the law, selective obedience will not do. Nothing less than perfect obedience to all of the law’s requirements will be necessary.”  

This is not only impossible, but it is condemning. Through any attempt to keep the law for purpose of keeping the Law cancels out the work of Christ. One who submits himself to obeying the law, “have
been released from association with Christ, anyone of you who are declared righteous by the law, you have fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4).

All men by nature desire to be justified by the Law. The revelation concerning salvation was not necessary for that purpose. But all that the Law brought was the curse. The bankruptcy of heathenism proved that. Indeed, even the Law of Sinai, which God Himself had given, brought only the curse; Pharisaism and Sadduceeism showed that. For God had not given the Law for this purpose at all that man should be justified by it. On the contrary, through the Law the Jews were to recognize their own bankruptcy and that of all men. Then it might have performed a secondary, though a necessary secondary, service for salvation for them as a tutor. But now they had remained under the curse. Here God reveals to them something totally different, something new, which, however, was nothing else than the mystery of godliness, the mystery since the foundation of the world that men are saved freely by Christ, yea, that their guilt has been expiated and the atonement accepted by God. That is something entirely different.22

δικαιοῦσθε - (Present Passive Indicative), translated, “you (pl.) being justified.” Gawrisch indicates this verb as conative. There are three parts of the brain, affective, cognitive, and conative. The affective portion of the brain deals with emotions. The cognitive portion deals with intelligence. The conative portion of the brain is what drives how one might respond or act according to the intelligence and emotions.23 Translating as conative brings out the main purpose of Paul’s letter. The Galatians and the Judaizers were trying to justify themselves by the law. That was their purpose. That was their drive. Paul was trying to turn their thinking around and have their minds driven by the Gospel, not the Law.

In verse five we see a transition from Paul emphasizing the champions of the law to those who act out of faith not the law. “But we eagerly await for the Spirit by faith, the hope of righteousness.”

We wait. The believers wait. The legalist wants something tangible, and he wants it at once. We wait in the Spirit through faith. Legalism is according to the flesh. There everything is done according to human intelligence and judgment. It is performed with the hand, with externally visible works. To believe in Christ is a matter of the Spirit, the secret, quiet, inner life created by God, which has its vital principle in faith.24

Faith starts with the internal and moves to the external. If we start first by judging the external without looking at the internal we have become a legalist. Naturally flowing from the faith that God works through us in the internal will result in external deeds. But we are not to base our faith on the external. We base our faith on the Spirit, for it is the Spirit who has created our faith.

It is this faith, the internal, created by the Spirit faith that frees us to wait in eager anticipation for the hope of righteousness. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for.”25 ἀπεκδεχόμεθα is in

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22 Koehler, p. 130
23 Gawrisch, p. 4
24 Koehler, p. 131
25 Ibid, p. 131
present tense emphasizing that this is an on-going waiting in expectation to receive that which is the goal of our faith, the salvation of our souls (1 Peter 1:9).

Therefore hoping is an activity from which a Christian never ceases until he comes to seeing. He already is in possession here by faith; he is satisfied with this possession as his greatest treasure. It is his Savior, with whom he desires to be. But he continues to wait and to hope, and in this way he differs from the self-sufficient manner of the legalistic, self-made man who knows nothing higher than what he himself has and can do and is. The Christian, however, hopes and waits for a righteousness which is a possession outside of himself, which Jesus has given him, and which He will perfect for him through the revelation of the glorious liberty of the children of God in and after the resurrection.26

The power is not in works. The power is the faith. Paul says in Galatians 5:6, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision are powerful but faith working through love (is).” οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυσσία ‒ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision are powerful. One who claims to have something better than faith because of what they have done is not powerful. Nor is anyone who claims that since they are better because they haven’t done something is powerful. The only power is in faith that works through love and that love is through Christ Jesus.

The phrase, πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη, is translated, “faith expressing (or working) itself through love.” “The Romanists have tried to translate these words: ‘faith brought about through love.’ The Greek language does not allow this translation. The facts do not allow it either.”27 This is an important distinction and it all comes down to the preposition διά. Here’s a quick summation of the use of διά:

διά - with the Genitive
by, through = a marker of agency
by, with = a marker which shows instrument
through = a marker of means between two events

διά - with the Accusative
on behalf of, for the sake of = a marker of benefaction
because of, on account of = a marker of participant being the reason for an event or state
on account of = a marker of cause or reason28

In this case διά is followed by ἀγάπης which is in the genitive. Therefore, love is a result of faith and not a cause of faith.

The only thing that counts is faith in Christ Jesus. Faith is the organon leptikon by which the sinner appropriates Christ’s righteousness…A living faith manifests itself in sanctified, Christian living. Such a life is a ‘new creation’ (Galatians 6:15)… ἐνεργουμένη is a middle participle, not a passive as Rome has claimed, although even the Vulgate translated it ‘fides quae per caritatem operatur’ (‘faith which works through love’ --operatur is a deponent verb). Through the years Rome has cited this passage as support for its doctrine of fides caritate

26 Ibid, p. 131f
27 Ibid, p. 132
28 Bauer, p. 223f
formata (faith which is perfected by love). This doctrine makes salvation dependent ultimately on love or works rather than on faith.\(^\text{29}\)

True faith is trusting and believing in the object of that faith and with Christianity our faith is in Christ Jesus. It is Christ who won salvation for us and has caused us to believe in him as our only Savior. It is only as a result of this faith that we express it in works of love. That is the truth. Now Paul continues with how for some, including the Galatians, they have changed the truth to be something else.

**Galatians 5:7-12**

7 Ἐτρέχετε καλῶς· τίς ὑμᾶς ἐνέκοψεν [τῇ] ἀληθείᾳ μὴ πείθεσθαι; 8 ἢ πεισμονὴ οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς. 9 μικρὰ ζύμη ὄλον τὸ φύραμα ζυμοὶ. 10 ἐγὼ πέποιθα εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι οὐδὲν ἄλλο φρονήσετε· ὁ δὲ ταράσσον ὑμᾶς βαστάσει τὸ κρίμα, ὅστις ἢ ἣν ἤ. 11 Ἐγὼ δὲ, ἀδελφοί, εἰ περιτομὴν ἐτί κηρύσσω, τί ἐτί διώκομαι; ἢ ἐὰν κατήργηται τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ. 12 Ὁφελον καὶ ἀποκόψονται οἱ ἀναστατοῦντες ὑμᾶς.

My Translation - 7- You were running well; who impeded your progress to not obey the truth? 8- That persuasion is not from the one calling you. 9- A little yeast works through the whole batch. 10- I have confidence in the Lord that you will set your mind on nothing else; but the one causing great distress will bear the judgment, whoever he may be. 11- Brothers, if I will still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? As a result the scandal of the cross has been abolished. 12- How I wish that that those starting trouble for you would emasculate themselves.

The Bible is the truth. It is the Gospel. It is a means of grace. Faithful preachers and teachers share the truth of the Gospel and administer the sacraments. Then there are all the other avenues that try to distort the truth and try to persuade others on to the many paths to perdition. When the Gospel in word and sacraments are center, the truth is there. When the Gospel in word and sacraments are not the center and other things are allowed to slip into importance, the truth is impeded (ἐνέκοψεν), prevented, hindered, irritated, and/or offended.

The Christian though does not just sit around and think the Gospel will do everything because they do not want to accidentally impede it. Rather the Christian does everything they are able to do to protect the truth of the Gospel, waiting in eager expectation for it to be fulfilled.

Christianity is not dull inactivity. That is death. Christianity is life, active in all of its phases. All members, all muscles stretch forward to the one goal, the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:21), in longing, waiting, hoping, believing, and loving. But the vital principle which is driving the Christian onward is the truth, the truth of the Gospel. There is only one truth, namely, the truth of the Gospel. All that we know has its final basis in the eternal truth that God gave His Son to redeem the world from sin. For this reason He created the world and made it subject to man; for this reason He suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. For this reason He chose Israel; for this reason He sent His Son in the fullness of time and had His Gospel go out into all the lands of the earth.\(^\text{30}\)

\(^{29}\) Gawrisch, p. 4

\(^{30}\) Koehler, p. 134
Now, the Christian being free from the Law, loves to obey the law. But this is not the motivation. The law now fits naturally into the life of a Christian because of what Christ has done for them. Once the law is imposed on them, be it a practice, a tradition, or any other thing aside from the Gospel it is impeding the truth and is not a persuasion from the one calling (Gal. 5:8).

The Gospel is the principle of life which germinates from within, without Law and without rule, as sap rises in springtime in plants. That has now been hindered. A doltish (stupid) hand -- and all stressing of the Law is doltish -- has checked this course. The legalists accomplished this through their persuasion, with a very pious semblance, as though their doctrines were especially good, and came from God. But Paul warns that God is He who called us. Through what? Through the Gospel, of course, by the hearing of which they had received the Holy Ghost. From this fact they can recognize that whatever contradicts the Gospel is not of God. And they are not to allow themselves to be deceived because they still have the Gospel.31

The often quoted verse Gal. 5:9, “A little yeast works through the whole batch,” reminds us how easily the law and false things are able to creep into our lives and impede the truth. Paul uses the word, μικρὰ, which is where English gets its word, micro. Paul is saying the smallest of the small, the most microscopic portion of yeast works its way through the entire batch. So it is with heresy. Once a false teaching or practice, an extra law here, and an extra required practice there, once any smallest hint of these enter into our faith, it is nigh unto impossible to extract it.

Whatever is not of the truth of the Gospel must work as leaven, as a lie, and finally corrupt the Gospel and pervert it into its opposite. Paul simply will not allow himself to be drawn into striking such a bargain. In the case of such a man of convictions it can only be either -- or, because the Gospel is entirely different from all the quackery which in church life is put in its place.32

Rather than sitting on the bleachers and watching the deceitful schemes of the law and heresy wage war against the truth, the Christian boldly stands up and joins the battle. This is how the Christian acts in truth. We are free from the accusations of the law. We are free to bear the Gospel truth working in us to fight with love against the law and those imposing the law on us.

Paul says in verse ten, “I have confidence in the Lord that you will set your mind on nothing else; but the one causing great distress will bear the judgment, whoever he may be.” Paul’s confidence is in Christ. Paul’s confidence is in the freedom that Christ has won. Paul’s confidence is in the hope of righteousness that we so eagerly await. Paul’s confidence is in the cross that Christ bore.

It is that cross that causes so many to stumble. It is also that cross that brings confident freedom to Christians. Paul says, “Brothers, if I will still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? As a result the scandal of the cross has been abolished.”

31 Ibid, p. 135
32 Ibid, p. 136
τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ, translated the scandal of the cross.

It is strange, but true: the only objection against the teaching of the cross of Christ is this that it does not leave to man the glory of being of some importance for his salvation. Hardly ever has an enemy of the Gospel said something against Jesus and His person. All praise His words and His martyrdom. But people are incensed to hear that we are to be saved by the cross because by nature we are damned.33

One with faith in Jesus and his cross find it revolting to think that salvation may come by any other means. But that is the glaring godlessness of unbelief trying to tear apart the truth. Sinful nature wants to uplift itself. Selfishness roars its ugly head in all of us. Selfishness then stirs up legalism which “is something so base that Paul ascribes it directly to the devil.”34 Which is why Paul goes as far as to say in verse twelve, “How I wish that those starting trouble for you would emasculate themselves.” This is how devastating and revolting legalism and selfishness are to the truth. To the believer it is not the cross that is a scandal, it is the law which leads to legalism and selfishness.

Galatians 5:13-15

13 Ὑμεῖς γὰρ ἐπ’ ἐλευθερία ἐκλήθητε, ἀδελφοί· μόνον μὴ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν εἰς ἄφορμὴν τῇ σαρκί, ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἁγίας δούλευετε ἀλλήλους. 14 ὁ γὰρ ποιεῖ νόμος ἐν ἑνὶ λόγῳ πεπλήρωται, ἐν τῷ ἁγιασμίῳ τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν. 15 εἰ δὲ ἀλλήλους δάκνετε καὶ κατεσθίετε, βλέπετε μὴ ὑπ’ ἀλλήλων ἀναλωθῆτε.

My Translation - 13- For you were called to be free, brothers; do not use your freedom for excuse of the flesh, but according to love serve one another. 14- The entire law has been made complete in one command, in this; you love your neighbor as yourself. 15- If you continue to harm and destroy each other, watch out that you may not be consumed by each other.

In our closing verses under consideration Paul reminds us of our liberty. ἐκλήθητε is an aorist passive emphasizing how the Galatians that Paul is talking to and really all believers were called. This calling which was done by God and not by our choosing has been done. Paul adds ἐλευθερίας to complete the picture of what believers are called to. We are called to be free.

They were called by God to liberty. He does not want servants or slaves, but free children. They have been made free children by the Holy Spirit who called them and brought them to faith through the preaching of the Gospel. The Apostle does not say so expressly, for it is not implied in the word called. But the Apostle calls them brethren; this word implies that he considers them believers and free children of God. It was not necessary to say so expressly because for his admonition, the force of which he takes from the Gospel, he merely wishes to point to the purpose which God has in His actions toward us. To express this, the word called suits Paul better than any other word which he might have used just as well.35

33 Ibid, p. 138
34 Ibid, p. 138
35 Ibid, p. 139
With this freedom comes the criticism from the legalist and pharisaical camps. Their argument is that anyone who says that they are completely free will just keep on sinning because they are free. But that is exactly the opposite of why God calls them to freedom. There is the danger to let the flesh get the best of us in this freedom and feel like we might as well indulge the sinful flesh because God will or even has already forgiven us, making us free.

Christians are called to be free, but they still have the flesh and therefore need the admonition and instruction in order that they do not use liberty as an occasion for the flesh. Since faith has come, there are two kinds of minds in the soul of the Christian: flesh and spirit. And because these are together in the one soul, in the one soul which is the Christian himself, the Christian is exposed to the danger of not always distinguishing between spirit and flesh. Of himself he cannot do so either. For this reason he needs not only evangelical admonition, but also the preaching of the Law which is to mortify the flesh.\textsuperscript{36}

This evangelical admonition is an important part of the Christian life. No longer is the Law preached to him as fire and brimstone, but now it preaches to the new, free man that a Christian is.

To him, it is true, the words of the Law are still pronounced in the course of evangelical admonition, but for him that is not a strange, painful will, which he possibly obeys reluctantly like a slave, but he loves it as the will of his dear Lord and is happy to learn it and is eager to do it. Therefore evangelical admonition does not serve as a testimony against sin and as a preaching of the judgment, but as instruction regarding the glorious ways of God which desire only our well-being. This admonition always goes back to the Gospel, to liberty, to the love which Christ showed us, in order to obtain there its strength and its impulse. This impulse acts, not as a goad, but as the life-principle, i.e., the Christian’s spirit cannot but follow the salutary will of his dear Lord and Father.\textsuperscript{37}

A Christian loves to obey his Father. God summarizes his commands into the two great commands to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself. Paul emphasizes the second great commandment here and even though he doesn’t specifically mention the first great commandment the second naturally flows from the first. \textquote{The Apostle selects the second table of the Law because it becomes of special importance in the daily living together of the Christians and because through it their love to God is shown (1 John 2 and 3).}\textsuperscript{38} If you love God, you will love your neighbor. If you do not love your neighbor, you are not fulfilling loving God. The liberty that Christ has won for the Christian sparks and fosters the desire to obey and love God and his neighbor.

Now the whole Law as such (Mosaic Law), is abrogated, and we are free of it. In Gal. 2:20, Paul showed that this fact does not promote licentiousness. For through the new creation of the spirit in the Christians, through faith, He created anew the image which is Christ in His holy essence. That is now the principle of life in the Christian, the Spirit in whom we walk. Paul and the entire Scripture tell us in many passages what this holy relationship is. That is our instruction which we as Christians still need in evangelical admonition. We no longer

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, p. 140
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, p. 140f
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, p. 143
need the Law for this. Therefore we do not derive our knowledge of this primarily from the Ten Commandments as they were given to the Jews. E.g., upon the express instruction of Paul, we exempt out of the Third Commandment the Sabbath law because it was a provision for Israel only (Col. 2:16).39

Paul’s evangelical admonition continues in verse fourteen. He uses vivid imagery that progresses throughout the short verse. The first word Paul uses to describe the damaging nature of the law is δάκνετε. δάκνετε means to harm or bite. Then Paul advances to κατεσθίετε which means to eat up, devour, or destroy. Finally Paul concludes the picture with ἀναλωθῆτε which means to destroy or consume. So Paul advances from bite to eat up and then finally to consume. This is the nature of the law. It may not seem too harmful at first, but as the bite of the law gets bigger and bigger it will ultimately consume. The law does not save it destroys. When individuals emphasize the law for advancement in faith it may not seem harmful at first, but the law’s consuming nature will lead to a consuming death of those that believe they are saved by it. This is the danger of the law. This is a reminder that all need to hear and heed.

Even under freedom and liberty there is still a need for a Christian to heed Paul’s warning. All around the law may produce outward results and may even look attractive to many, but the law is destructive. It does not cancel the truth of what Christ has already accomplished by removing the chains of the law on the believer, but it tries to rear its ugly head all the time. That is why even as completely free as we are from the law we need to remind ourselves of the law’s tendencies and power.

Therefore Paul pointed out to them that liberty is not license, but the discipline of the Spirit in love. Only he knows truly what liberty is who uses it in love. Only in this way is liberty retained. The thought can be illustrated through an example from physical life. The life of a member of the human body depends on its freedom. No pressure must be put upon it. Pressure will disturb the circulation of blood which is vital for life. Pressure checks the movement which is necessary for the circulation of blood. At first it may be possible to move, but the motions are no longer natural. They become forced; they become grimaces, imitations of the natural movements, and they do not profit. Finally they cease completely, and the member dies. Then artificial movements or other remedies, like massaging, no longer help either. The member is and remains dead.

But if the pressure is taken off from the member so that the blood can circulate freely, then it dare not be inactive again. Life is movement. Through work, physical life is preserved, and through such work as is characteristic of the member according to its nature. A substitute for this activity can perhaps for a time be found in artificial means, e.g., massage. But, in the first place, that is of itself nonsense; secondly, this will only serve in time to stop the natural circulation and kill the ability to move. Even so, the member dies. If there is life in the member, then this life must be active through the natural functions of the member. In this way life is preserved.40

39 Ibid, p. 142f
40 Ibid, p. 144
Here in Galatians Paul reminds us how absolutely free from the law the believer is. Because we live in freedom there is no sense in going back to the law. The problem is that our flesh desires the law. It wants to prove that it is able to accomplish all things. Paul rightly then reminds us that we need admonition, not based on the law, but that stems from and proceeds out of the Gospel. “Therefore it is so necessary that, not by artificial means, by a kind of spiritual massage, all sorts of imitations of love be produced, but that love itself, which is the life of the Holy Spirit, be produced by the correct preaching of the Gospel.”

Anything else that produces works is not good in God’s eyes because these works are produced from the law. They are so harmful that they may consume an individual tearing them away from the Gospel for good.

The Christian is free. You are free. Christ has set you free and has liberated you to live under the Gospel. You now see the law not as a crutch or a consuming fire, but as a heartrate monitor in the Gospel. It checks your pulse to remind you that it is the Gospel that motivates you to live your life out of love for Jesus and others. It is in that Gospel that you are free, are blessed, and are of the Spirit.

Liberty is a blessing which the Gospel gives together with an evangelical spirit. It belongs only to those who are of the Spirit. Such people Paul can continue to instruct and admonish in this evangelical tone. He does so simply by placing the lusts of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit side by side. Against the dark background of the former the beauty of the latter shines in glorious brilliance. By bringing these fruits of the Spirit, the Christian on his part preserves freedom. It is completely self-evident that in this case, too, no vainglory can result; for the life of the Christian is the life of the Holy Ghost or of Christ (Gal. 2:20).

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41 Ibid, p. 145
42 Ibid, p. 145
References


