

It is for FREEDOM that Christ has set us free Galatians 5:1
Sunday 26 June 2016

Ques: Why did Jesus come to earth, die, rise again to life? Discuss...

Ans: For our FREEDOM

For FREEDOM Christ has set us free.

Not might set us free... not one day in the future will set us free....

Not if we are good enough will set us free....

Christ HAS set us free

Remember: Paul is writing to the churches in the southern part of Galatia that had been founded on his first missionary journey

And these young Christians, the believers in these first churches struggled with their relationship to the Jewish laws, especially those who were of Gentile background

Paul is stressing to them that Christ came and was crucified on the cross and then rose from the dead so that these early Christians and all Christians since then may be free

Free from sin and free from the law and its regulations

The book of Galatians is a charter of Christian Freedom

A great, deep, secure freedom

It is for FREEDOM that Christ has set us free! No longer to be submitted to a yoke of slavery.

Christ has already done, on the cross, all that is needed for us to be free to be free from the works of the flesh.... sin

We need to walk in that freedom

How? through faith in Him Nothing more and nothing less

We cannot earn that freedom... we could never do enough to 'pay Him back'

it has been given to us as a free gift

We need to accept that gift of love and grace and walk in it

The key to our true, deepest, total liberation is depending on Gods grace

Story: of a rabbit that had lived its life in a hutch with a run.....

When the door was opened the rabbit was free to go

It didn't.... it stayed in the hutch

Freedom was there for it The rabbit failed to take the opportunity

Freedom can be scary!

The freedom Christ has secured for us is not for self indulgence Not for selfish ambition

Not just so that we can do just what we want to do and when we want to do it

Not for our own selfish satisfaction

Paul reminds us

'For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment

"You shall love your neighbour as yourself"

Our freedom is so that we can love and serve God and one another

After the last 48 hours those 7 words have more impact than maybe they have done at other times. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have said:

we must now unite in a common task to build a generous and forward looking country, contributing to human flourishing around the world. We must remain hospitable and compassionate, builders of bridges and not barriers. Many of those living among us and alongside us as neighbours, friends and work colleagues come from overseas and some will feel a deep sense of insecurity. We must respond by offering reassurance, by cherishing our wonderfully diverse society, and by affirming the unique contribution of each and every one.

We are called to freedom, and in that freedom to love of neighbour.

How can we engage with one another in ways that show respect and love?
Often, if our love is self orientated or self seeking, others see straight through it
If we do just what we want to do that so often ends up binding us, enslaving us rather than
freeing us because our selfishness and self obsession take over again
Desires of the flesh end up binding us rather than freeing us

We need to surrender ourselves to God and to live by the Spirit allowing God the Holy Spirit to
guide us

What sorts of things bind us? what do we get unhelpfully yoked with?

What works of the flesh do we find ourselves caught up in so that we are not walking in complete
freedom with Christ?

The list here is pretty spectacular

fornication, impurity, idolatry, strife, jealousy, anger, dissensions, envy, drunkenness....

We may relate to some of these... maybe not.... often so subtle

And maybe around us over the last week maybe not so subtle

So often easy to see in others

But harder to see or admit in ourselves.

What has a bit more control / influence / drive in us than is really good for us?

And stops us truly loving our neighbours and ourselves

God gives us desires, He has given us emotions, He has given us good things to enjoy

But some of these take over, begin to dominate us, mean that we give more importance to
these things than to God

And then before too long we are yoked up and not FREE

Disordered desires enslave us to our passions and can then gently destroy our freedom and our
community

Story: teenage girl in Co-op last week

Chatting to her friend in the queue behind me

Talking about her boyfriend... should she split up with him nothing too unusual there :-)

But then the conversation went on....Didn't want to split up with A in case B didn't split up with his
girlfriend

Because then she would have split up for A and then be without either!!!

I was so sad for her She was totally caught up, tied up in the need to have a boyfriend

Boyfriends are good, love and desire for another are gifts from God BUT...!

Other things that tie us up

Fear... health finances countries future

Lack of self worth.... strive to prove ourselves with possession or money or job...

Relationships... that are not good and healthy

Possessions

Our past

List can go on... personally and as a church. What are we fearful of here at St Georges?

As Christians our identity is that of a true child of God, in dwelt by the Holy Spirit

There is no other badge of membership

Once we have grasped that and surrendered ALL OF OURSELVES to Christs love we can live in
the freedom that He has already secured for us

When we are free we live with a different motivation Maybe doing the same things but with a
different heart and a freedom that means we actually do the same things differently!

No longer a slave to the things that ties us up in knots but as a child of God

Song.... 'I'm no longer a slave to fear' from Bethel church in America

We've been liberated from bondage.... live in that freedom

Christ freed us FROM the world so that we can be free FOR God

Not to take away our fun and pleasure but so that we can be free in them and for God

Christ died for our FREEDOM uncompromising, unrelenting indomitable freedom
Our freedom has been bought / enabled / secured already through cross and resurrection
Analogy: Like a huge deposit being put in to a bank account with our name on it
We are given the PIN in order to access it 32484 = FAITH
Do we access it or not?

Paper chains: write something on the chain that you know ties you up, that you know stops you from living completely free with Jesus or stops you loving your neighbour or even yourself
Join together extra ones on the end of the row so that we can make one big chain