

Galations #2

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[0 : 00] Well, this is our second study of the new year. This is our January 8 class, and we appreciate your presence. We just recently embarked upon a consideration of Paul's letter to the Galatians.

And this is, I guess you could call it, a kind of a landmark epistle, because in this particular letter, he is going to spell out the liberty that we have in Christ.

And it is something that, in many ways, has escaped a great part of the Christian community. It is tragic, but it is real. And it is honest to say that the Christian community, for the most part, has never really begun to live up to the liberty and freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.

There are multitudes of believers who remain in some kind of spiritual bondage, and they do not realize the extent of the death of Christ and what it really purchased for them.

Later on in this epistle, as well as in Romans, Paul is going to make statements like that. It was for liberty wherewith Christ set us free. And what really does that mean?

[1 : 11] We live in a country that has really emphasized the subject of liberty for so long. And this is because we are a country of immigrants that previously lived under a lot of oppression in different areas, political repression, religious repression, etc.

And when our forefathers came over here and birthed this great nation, it was liberty and freedom that was uppermost in their mind, because this is something that had been deprived them in Great Britain and in other places of Europe.

So it is an issue that goes all the way back, because Paul was talking about liberty and freedom.

Only his is more along a spiritual line. And it is proof positive that it is an issue that has existed from time immemorial.

And this is the reason for it. Let me just inject this, if I may, because it is very pertinent to the whole subject. And that is, we find ourselves, as humanity, engaged in an ongoing struggle to maintain, if already obtained, or to obtain, if not already obtained, to maintain freedom and liberty and the freedom of conscience.

And the reason it is an ongoing struggle is because there is always somebody who wants to take it from you.

[2 : 49] Because in their opinion, their view of what you should be and what you should be doing is superior to your view of what you should be and what you should be doing.

And they will try their best to impose it on you without a struggle or without a fight, if necessary, or with a fight, if necessary.

And this is because part of our fallenness involves man's desire to dominate his fellow man, to make you subservient to my will.

And if you don't want to be, then we have a conflict. We have a struggle. Sometimes it takes place between individuals. Sometimes it takes place between nations.

Sometimes it takes place between multiple nations, in which case you're talking about a world war.

And we've already had a couple of those, haven't we?

[3 : 48] So freedom is a very, very precious commodity. And actually, what is really behind this has to do with the volition, the ability to exercise a will, to make choices, rightly or wrongly, to make choices.

The capacity that God has given us, this thing called volition, is tied to the freedom of conscience.

And this is very, very important. This is so basic. It's amazing how it escapes people. But, fellas, what we're talking about now lies at the very root of this thing.

And what I am saying is that because God has given to each of us individually this thing called volition, we are to operate out of a freedom of conscience.

That means that every person should be free to follow the dictates of their own conscience. And admittedly, it may lead them down a wrong path.

[5 : 02] But that's their decision. All of life, virtually, is made up of making decisions. And we make some good ones and we make some bad ones. And then there are consequences to suffer from those decisions.

But when we insist on taking another person's freedom of conscience from them so that they cannot do what they want to do, but they have to do what I want them to do, that's where tyranny really begins.

It is a person or a group of people imposing their will upon others. Now, to a certain extent, this is legitimate and has to be done because it's one of the basic demands of government.

And if you do not have a government involved in orderliness and control of society, then you've got absolute chaos.

And you've got anarchy, where everybody does their own thing. So, you've got to have some semblance of an imposition of a greater will upon a lesser will, and we call that government.

[6 : 17] And Scripture makes it quite clear in Romans 13 that every person ought to be subject to the powers that be. We have to have a certain amount of government in order to have an orderly society.

Otherwise, you've got, like I said, chaos and anarchy, and that's even worse. So, we've got to have a respect whereby we allow people to impose their will upon us, and we call this government, and we allow them to install a traffic signal at an intersection and hold us accountable for submitting our will, submitting our will to that traffic light, not going through it when it's red.

This is just a minor example, of course, but it's part and parcel of what we're talking about. And we've got people who are always so confident of their will and their agenda, and they know it is superior to yours, and they're going to impose theirs upon you.

And here's where the arrogance thing comes in, and we were just talking about this a little bit ago.

Arrogance is ignorance on steroids. They are going to impose their will upon you, but they justify doing that in their own mind and heart because they know it is superior to yours.

And that's where the arrogance comes in. And then they further justify it by this, I know you're going to chafe under this, and you're not going to want to submit to my will, but I'm going to make you do it, and eventually you'll thank me for it.

[8 : 09] This is the attitude behind communism. It's the attitude behind the Nazi influence, where Hitler set out, and communism set out to conquer the world because they know their way of life is better than yours.

And eventually you will thank me for making you bend to my will. That's where the arrogance thing comes in. This mentality has permeated humanity from the very beginning.

It goes all the way back to the book of Genesis. So there's nothing new about it. And this is exactly what mankind is struggling with all over the world.

So a freedom that Paul is speaking about here is a spiritual freedom, a spiritual liberty, whereby God sets the individual free from the demands of the law, or the law of Moses, or from the demands that human nature place upon him.

Because when the gospel is preached, and people receive the gospel, they become regenerated in their inner man. And this involves a complete reworking, a divine reworking of the individual's heart and mind and motives and everything else so that we are a new person in Christ.

[9 : 48] And really this is something that goes even beyond the political and that kind of freedom that we've been talking about.

This is even that which undergirds the political freedom. It's the spiritual freedom wherewith Christ has made us free. Andy, did you have a comment on that? Yeah. Okay. Do you put the media in that category?

How do you mean? The talk radio, you know, the persuasion. Yeah. I mean, you know, try to either side.

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, you know. Yeah, in a sense, in a sense, talk radio is involved in that. In fact, the whole media is involved in that. Right, yeah. And the thing that really ought to separate this item, the idea of influencing people, is a difference between the imposition of one's will upon another as opposed to the persuasion by an individual upon another.

And Christians are called to the latter. We have a responsibility to do that. We have a responsibility to try and persuade men regarding the claims of Christ and the gospel.

[11:17] We do not have the right to impose our views or even the Bible's views upon anyone. Because to do so is a violation of the volition and the freedom of conscience and will that God has given to every one of us.

And I cannot emphasize too much how this is a very critical baseline issue. Matter of fact, we're dealing with the situation right now worldwide with the radical Muslim issue.

And the distinction between Islam and Christianity is like night and day. Because Christians are called upon to proclaim the gospel to people in such a way that we do not compel people to believe, but we invite people to believe.

We encourage people to believe. We plead with people to believe. Because we know that really is in their best interest because we have the authority of Scripture that makes it clear that this is so. But we do not have the right to impose our belief, to demand that people believe, to require people to believe, to persecute people for not believing, or to somehow incentivize people to believe by promising them something that we do not have the right to promise, like a better job or hiring or something like that.

[13:03] We have a couple of questions. Bob first and then Joe. Yeah. Early, many years ago in one of your sermons, you started off with words have meaning, and the internet and the media, they have a flashy headline to get your attention.

Usually there was one where a person that was in state government was fired. He claimed to be fired because of his Christian religion. Yeah. And it had to do with gay people.

Yeah. And he did not impose his religion on them. He was talking about his religion on another website.

Yeah. And then they took that and they fired him for it because he had a belief that was contrary to the state's belief. Yeah. Yet they fired him.

But he was not trying to change anyone. No. He was just stating his belief over here. Yeah. And they fired him for it because of his religion. Yeah. This is a combination of political correctness and intolerance.

[14:10] Uh-huh. And we can expect more of this. We can expect more of this. It's coming. Yeah. Joe. Back to religious freedom.

I had the concept, and this is the way I believe, that religious freedom gave me to, I don't have to worry about things happening to me because God's taking care of them.

He does what's best for me. Uh-huh. And sin no longer, you know, there's sin in the world. And it's coming. I know it's there. It's, yeah. It's Adam from Adam.

And, but, uh, he's, I, he's guiding me now. And my life is under his control. And so I don't have to worry about it. I have the freedom not to worry anymore.

That's right. I'm going to heaven. That's right. I don't have to worry about that anymore. So I got this freedom in that sense. Absolutely. That's the kind of freedom I felt, feel in my life. Yeah. Yeah.

[15:06] That, uh, you know, things happen in the world, but they happen. God let them happen, so they're all right. And the good will come out of it sometime or whatever, you know. He let it happen for a reason. So I don't have to feel that I did it or I could have caused it or done something more than I might have it as long as I'm doing what I think he wants me to do.

Yeah. That's a spiritual freedom. That's the kind of freedom that a man who lives in a prison cell 24-7, who has no physical freedom at all, that he can be free on the inside.

That's the kind of freedom that you're talking about. And that's the ultimate freedom. That is, the freedom wherewith Christ has set us free. And we are free from the demands of the law of sin and death.

We are free from that. We know God is sovereign and our case is in his hands. And God doesn't do anything without considering everything. And you can simply rest in that.

That's a wonderful freedom. That's the rest. That's the spiritual rest of which Hebrews is talking about. Roger. What do we do as followers of our God, the God, and how do we react to a religion that says submit or die?

[16:20] Yeah. Well, that's the second part of this volition thing that I was talking about and how it radically, how radical Islam radically separates its agenda from the biblical agenda.

And that is, they take the position that they, that it is God through them, that is, Islam, it is God through them imposing his will, God's will, upon you.

And if you do not recognize this as coming from God or coming from Allah, as they call their God, then we will force you to submit.

And if you will not submit, then we are under obligation to kill you, to simply eliminate you, because you are an obstacle to the worldwide rule of Islam, which Allah intends for the whole globe.

And if you will not submit, then you are an obstacle. You are an obstruction. And they are obligated, according to the Koran, they are obligated to remove you as an obstacle to worldwide Islam.

[17 : 44] This is their rationale. And they are convinced that this is what their God requires. Now, the Christian position is such that we see the same objective.

We see the same objective. And that is for worldwide domination by Jesus Christ, the Messiah, over which he will rule and reign this entire world, from Jerusalem, if you will.

And yet, in order to bring this about, we do not have the liberty to impose or demand that people believe that, or submit to that, or get in line with that. But we do have the responsibility to plead with them that they embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, and eventually, that is going to be the outcome.

Christ will rule and reign over the entire world. And it will be, in the final analysis, when he does forcefully put down those who oppose him, and that will be a worldwide thing.

Okay, Dana, and then Joe. My understanding, and who knows where that's at, but I've heard Muslims speaking, saying that, and I've not read the Koreans, I don't really know, but Muslims speaking, saying that to kill infidels is a misinterpretation of the Korean.

[19 : 13] My understanding is it's the fundamentalist Muslims that are the ones we're seeing, the extreme ones, and the average Muslim doesn't believe that.

We're seeing the radical fringes of it. Well, I appreciate your comment. I have read the Koran, and the Koran makes it very, very clear that the faithful are under an obligation to force the submission of the infidel.

And an infidel is anyone who is not Muslim. It doesn't make any difference what he is. If he's an atheist, he's an infidel. If he's a Christian, he's an infidel. If he's Roman Catholic or Protestant, he's an infidel.

If he is a Buddhist or a Hindu, he is an infidel. And their responsibility is to submit all infidels to the concept of Allah.

Now, this needs to be explained, too. By the way, the Koran spells that out. The Koran spells that out very clearly. In fact, I've got a couple of copies of the Koran, and I can, you know, bring them next week and show you chapter and verse.

[20 : 25] But here's where part of the misunderstanding comes in. And I know we've got just about every one of these incidents that happen, like the one in France just yesterday, is almost always referred to as radical Muslim or extreme Muslim.

And in one sense, that is true. So let me explain something about jihad, because it needs a little bit of clarification. Jihad, J-I-H-A-D.

Jihad means, literally, holy war. It means holy war. Well, the holy war has to be declared and carried out against someone who constitutes the opposition of the holy war.

Well, there are two elements. One is spiritual, one is physical. And a spiritual jihad is like a counterpart to Christianity that is dealing with the flesh versus the spirit.

And in the minds of Muslims, at least some Muslims, jihad means dealing with the inner conflict that is in the heart of man, moving him to what is good and right from what is bad and evil.

[21 : 54] So it's a struggle internally with the flesh inside. But with Islam, it is kind of like a self-improvement thing, and you do it strictly through human willpower.

You do not have a Holy Spirit to aid you or anything like that. You just strive inwardly to be a better person. That is jihad to the minds of many Muslims.

But there is another level of jihad, and it is physical and material. And the holy war means a war against infidels.

And it is external. It has nothing to do with the heart of the individual. So there are two kinds of jihad. One is spiritual and inward, and the other is outward and physical. And it is the outward and the physical that the radical Muslims are pursuing.

And it is the inward, spiritual, and immaterial that the so-called moderate Muslims would prefer to pursue. So it all has to do in how you interpret the Koran, because both are found there.

[23 : 08] And the jihadists, the terrorists that are involved now, that the world has been dealing with for literally the last 50 years.

And by the way, do you realize that this conflict really goes back to the 1700s? Actually, it goes back further than that.

It goes all the way back to the 8th century with the surfacing of Muhammad. You see, Islam did not even come into existence until Christianity had been up and running for 700 years.

It well predates Islam. And this started in the 700s under Muhammad when he literally subdued the whole Middle East to Islam by the sword.

It was not through preaching and persuasion. It was through intimidation and that physical jihad which simply made people submit to Islam or die.

[24 : 31] That was their choice. And as a result... And most of these people... Most of these people were pure pagans to start with. So, for the most part, all they were giving up was the idea of multiple gods and polytheism.

And I've done a certain amount of research on this, not extensive, but I am persuaded, and I know, of course, that Muslims would deny this.

Oh, boy, would they ever deny it. They would consider this an insult to Islam, by the way. But I am convinced personally from my limited investigation of the history that much of Islam is patterned and copied after Judaism.

Much of it is. Even in the five principles that they instill as being the five pillars of Islam. And I am convinced that Muhammad saw the working of the unifying factor in the nation of Israel with the worship of the one true God.

And you know, fellas, Israel had a real problem with this. They had a real problem with idolatry and polytheism because they were influenced by all of their neighbors.

[25 : 56] And you read this in the Old Testament and it surfaces time and time and time again. And it goes all the way back to Genesis when even Jacob, and remember Jacob's wives, Leah and Rachel, when they left their father's house with Uncle Laban, remember, to Jacob, they stole the household gods.

Well, what is that all about? That is pure paganism. And here they were hanging on to it. And these were supposedly the people of God. And this idea of paganism and idolatry goes all the way back. And as you read all of the prophets, minor and major prophets, they are all dealing with idolatrous issues in Israel and in Judah and calling upon the people to repent and turn away from their idols and all of the worship that was accompanying them and turn back to the true God.

And Jeremiah says, because if you don't, God is going to bring those very pagans that you so idolize. He's going to bring them against you and He's going to ruin the city and carry you into captivity, blah, blah, blah.

And that's, of course, exactly what happened. Israel was first in 722 carried away by Aserbanipal and the Assyrians to the north, the ten tribes, and then the south, a hundred and some years later, carried away by Babylonian captivity in Nebuchadnezzar.

[27 : 31] They were there for 70 years and finally returned. And all of that was because of idolatry. So the Jew was really cured of idolatry as a result of the Babylonian captivity.

That really got the idolatry out of their system, if you will. And they settled in on recognition of the one true God.

And what it resulted in, not only religiously and spiritually, it corrected a lot of error, but it served as a real unifying factor for the whole nation to rally around this one deity, Jehovah.

He is the true God. And Deuteronomy 6.4 became the motto, the word for Israel.

It was the Shema. Shema. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And they really emphasized that. They taught that to their children before they learned their ABCs.

[28 : 37] And that unifying factor, I think, was coveted by Muhammad. And he saw how it served the cause of Judaism, how it united the people, etc.

And the whole Arab world at the time Muhammad came on the scene was so splintered and split and disorganized and everything, and they were all into idolatry, all kinds of worship.

And he virtually did away with idolatry by force. By forcing the people under the sword, under the threat of death.

And it was usually by beheading. Way back then. It was usually by beheading. There's some really historically verified stories of just out-and-out massacres.

And there's nothing else you can call them of people who did not submit to Allah. And whole cities were massacred. And they were terrorized. They were terrorized.

[29 : 47] All they had to do was see the Muslim horde coming. And they were all ready to change their minds. But what were they changing them from? Just the worship of these many deities and idols to what Muhammad wanted them to worship.

Allah. And in many cases, it wasn't that much of a sacrifice that they were making. So, the Islamic world became very pronounced. And by the way, eventually, all of Asia Minor was taken over. You know, Asia Minor is modern-day Turkey. And Turkey is where the churches of Galatia are located that Paul is writing to.

This is Lystra and Derbe and Antioch of Pisidia. They are all Galatian churches where the Apostle Paul had been on his first and second missionary journey and had proclaimed the gospel and established those churches there.

Churches at Ephesus and so on. And today, they are all Islamic. The Christian influence in Asia Minor is minor.

[30 : 55] Very minor as compared to what it was when the Apostle Paul was there. So, yeah. I've kind of always been under the impression that the rip actually dates back to the fraud that occurred between Esau's brother over the first time.

Yeah, well, that's part of it. That's where, but that was, that well predated Islam. All that did was produce a number of people who are going to be designated as Arabs.

And the people of Esau, the descendants of Esau are today in Jordan, in southern Jordan.

They are his, they are his literal descendants. So, what you're talking about was actually the beginning of the conflict between Arab and Jew, but it was also long before Islam came on the scene.

Because Islam had no actual involvement or presence at all until the 700s. And we're talking about A.D., not B.C.

[32 : 11] So, it is, it is relatively late. But what you're talking about is actually the seedling of that. Goes all the way back to that. Definitely does. I guess I've always thought that all Arabs were Islam.

And that's not the case. Well, generally speaking, Arabs are Islamic. Yes. But there are Christian Arabs. And I met a number of them in a Bible school in Bethlehem.

And these Christian Arabs love the Lord just as much as you and I do. So, being an Arab does not automatically make one a Muslim.

Not at all. And not all, not all Muslims are Arabs. Because Egyptians are not Arabs. And they're Muslim. Iran, Iran is not Arab.

Iran is Persian. But they are Islamic. So, it's a checkered, checkered history in the past. But, fascinating.

[33 : 17] And most people don't, don't know enough about history to make any kind of distinction. And that's too bad. But, as this conflict goes on with, with radical Islam, people will become more and more educated as to what's involved.

But these things take time.