

Galatians 5:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Analysis

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Paul's battle cry for freedom! "Stand fast" (τε eleutheria hēmin Christos ēleutherōsen; stēkete)—literally "For freedom Christ set us free; stand firm!" Stēkō (στήκω) is military term: hold your ground, don't retreat. "In the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" emphasizes that Christ accomplished our liberation. Eleutheria (ἐλευθερία) is freedom, liberty from slavery. Christ freed us from law's condemnation, sin's mastery, death's terror, Satan's dominion.

"And be not entangled again" (καὶ μὴ πάλιν ζυγῷ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε)—don't be held fast again, don't be ensnared. "With the yoke of bondage" uses zygos (ζυγός), the wooden yoke on oxen for plowing—symbol of heavy burden and slavery. Peter called the law "a yoke...which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts 15:10). To embrace law-righteousness after experiencing grace-liberation is to voluntarily re-enslave yourself. Paul commands: resist! Stand firm in Christ-won freedom!

Historical Context

This verse became Reformation battle cry and remains controversial. Luther's commentary on Galatians sparked his breakthrough understanding of justification by faith alone. "Christian liberty" has been misunderstood as license (addressed in

5:13), but Paul means freedom from law as grounds of acceptance with God. Believers aren't under law's condemnation or obligation to keep it for righteousness. This freed Protestant conscience from medieval penitential system while challenging cheap grace and antinomianism.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What specific freedoms has Christ won for you that you're failing to enjoy because you've returned to bondage?
2. How do you distinguish between standing fast in liberty and falling into license or lawlessness?
3. What contemporary 'yokes of bondage' tempt Christians to exchange Christ-won freedom for religious slavery?

Interlinear Text

τῇ	ἐλευθερίᾳ	οὖν	ἢ	Χριστὸς	ἡμᾶς	ἡλευθέρωσεν·
G3588	in the liberty	therefore	wherewith	Christ	us	free
	G1657	G3767	G3739	G5547	G2248	G1659
στήκετε	καὶ	μὴ	πάλιν	ζυγῷ	δουλείας	ἐνέχεσθε
Stand fast	and	not	again	with the yoke	of bondage	be
G4739	G2532	G3361	G3825	G2218	G1397	G1758

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 3:17 (Parallel theme): Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Galatians 5:13 (Parallel theme): For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

1 Peter 2:16 (Parallel theme): As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

Romans 6:14 (Parallel theme): For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Romans 8:2 (Creation): For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Galatians 4:9 (Parallel theme): But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Hebrews 10:23 (Parallel theme): Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

Galatians 2:4 (References Christ): And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

Galatians 4:31 (Parallel theme): So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Revelation 3:3 (Parallel theme): Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.