




OPENING UP: This week's discussion is about freedom. Specifically, the freedom that Christ's sacrifice on the cross issues to every Christian. As you begin your discussion think through the following: What are some of the burdens in life or perhaps even responsibilities you carry that you have wished you could be free from?


1 Think about what people actually mean when they talk about wanting freedom. What are some of the things that they are actually wanting?

 Read John 8:36, Romans 6:22. Christ offers a deeper and more meaningful kind of freedom—freedom from sin and death. True freedom in Christ doesn't mean the absence of authority, but living under the good and gracious authority of God, which leads to peace, joy, and righteousness. How does this idea of freedom challenge or reshape our typical understanding?


 Contrast how "freedom" in the world's sense leads to bondage and how Christ's freedom leads to life. How are you thankful for the freedom that Christ offers you?

 Think of a time recently where you were striving for freedom and it was motivated by selfish desires. How did that work out? What lessons did you learn? How did you get a right compass heading after that?

2 We all basically have 1 of 3 different consciences at any given time--we are either relaxed (we don't see our sin), obsessed (we are too focused on our sin), or liberated (we are resting in Christ). Survey the following passages and look for each: 1 John 1:8, Psalm 32:3-4, Rom. 8:1-3.

 Most of us naturally tend towards losing or abusing Christian freedom--in an obsessed or relaxed conscience. Some of us like to rigidly follow the "rules" of Christianity and we take pride in that. Others of us feel foot-loose and fancy free without regard of rules or how our freedom affects others. Which one do you tend toward? What are you doing about that tendency?

 What makes it so difficult to stay in that place of liberation?

 How can we remind ourselves daily to rest in Christ and avoid the extremes of either ignorance or obsession over sin?

3 **Galatians 5:5 says that Christians are those who “through the Spirit, by faith...eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.”** In a sense, everyone--religious and irreligious alike--are “waiting for eternity.” People wait in many different ways. How would you describe the way that people naturally wait?

📖 *Read Rom 8:23; Heb 9:27-28; 2 Tim 4:8, Titus 2:11-14. What makes Christianity unique in how we wait for eternity?*

📖 *In Galatians 5, there are several pictures/metaphors for “anxious waiting” that trusts in ourselves for righteousness. Can you find them? (See verses 1&3, 4, 7, 8, 9) Which of these do you connect with most and why?*

♥ *How should the unique assurance that the gospel offers shape how we live today? How can we cultivate this hopeful waiting in our daily lives?*

4 **When Christian liberty is rightly understood and properly lived out, it leads to a life of fruitful service to God and others.** However, if it is abused it leads to a life of frustrating selfishness. In what practical everyday ways would you say Christian liberty is abused? Think of some of the natural ways liberty can be viewed apart from what God’s word teaches.

📖 *According to Galatians 5:13-14, what is the goal and end result of Christian liberty?*

📖 *How does Romans 13:8-10 describe this “new law” under which believers are able to operate?*

📖 *The Protestant Reformer Martin Luther said “God doesn’t need our works; our neighbor does.” How does this lead to better obedience and service in the Christian life? Instead of trying to “score points” with God, we should see our good works as ways to reflect God’s love to others. What are some ways in which this might change how you practice your relationship with God and others?*

PRAYER REQUESTS
