

**SHARING THE FAITH: WEEKLY EMAIL DEVOTION
FOR THE WEEK ENDING JUNE 27, 2010**

Readings for June 27, 2010, Fifth Sunday after Pentecost:

GALATIANS 5:1, 13–25

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

¹⁶Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

Faith Questions:

1. The words "freedom" and "slavery" have very specific meanings in the American culture. What do these words mean to you?
2. What do you think Paul, the author of Galatians, means when he talks about freedom and slavery? How is that similar or different to your understanding of these words?
3. What might it look like to use your freedom as an opportunity for self indulgence, as mentioned in verse 13? In your opinion, why might Paul think this is a bad idea?
4. This passage mentions both things we are enslaved to (desires of the flesh) and things that reflect the freedom we have in Christ (fruit of the Spirit). Which of desires of the flesh do you struggle with? Which fruit of the Spirit are your gifts? How can the freedom you find in Christ help you to continue to grow into a person who lives according to the Spirit?
5. What might it mean to live a life "guided by the Spirit", as mentioned in verse 25? What might your life look like if you were guided by the Spirit in everything you do? How might that affect your relationships with others and with God?

Let us pray:

Lord, teach me to live according to your Spirit. Show me the joys of being free in you, so that I may share that freedom with others.

For whom else, and for what else, shall we pray? (Insert your own prayer here)
Amen.

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