

The Purpose for Our Freedom

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[0 : 00] Galatians chapter 5. As we continue our sermon series this morning in Galatians, we are going to be devoting our attention to three verses.

! To the end of the year. Recently I was reading CNN online and I came across an article that talked about Australia's upcoming non-binding referendum.

It's a referendum on homosexual marriage. And the title of the article is The Simple Yes-No Question Dividing Australia's Suburbs.

The article was written by a lady by the name of Lucy Morris Marr. And photos that were contributed to the article were by Ted McDonald.

Well, CNN went into two areas of Australia. They went into the areas of Victoria and Melbourne. And they went to these two areas because the polls showed that voters were equally divided for and against homosexual marriage.

[1 : 33] And in each location they asked people how they were going to vote and why they were going to vote in that particular way. And the way the article was designed, it had the individual's picture or a couple's picture and then what they said.

So as I was reading it through, what I was doing was I was kind of looking at the couple or looking at the individual and trying to determine in my mind how I thought they would land on the issue. So if the person was older, I would guess, well, they're probably against homosexual marriage. If the younger, I'd say, well, they're probably for it. And the truth is I was wrong on most of them. I missed most of them. But of all the interviews, the one that stood out to me most was the very last one they put in the article.

It was an interview of a student by the name of Sharni Lee. She couldn't vote in the referendum because she was only 17.

[2 : 35] But they interviewed her anyway. She said, I wish I could vote so I could prove the point that it is not fair that others can have the choice to marry, but being gay, you can't.

How is it a free country if people can't love who they want? Her statement stood out to me, how is it a free country if people can't love who they want?

It stood out to me because many people do exactly what she did in that statement. What she did in that statement is she redefined freedom.

She redefined freedom to mean the ability to love who you want. And really, when you think even closer, that's not what she's doing.

She's not doing that. Because in Australia, homosexuals are certainly free to love who they want. What they're not free to do is they're not free to marry who they want.

[3 : 52] And so what she did was she redefined freedom by the ability to marry whomever you wish.

And the issue is not just related to her in terms of this redefinition. There are many people who take the same approach to words and what they mean.

They redefine them to suit their individual objective, the goal that they have. And truth be told, I don't think that she is alone. I think in Australia she would be in the majority.

I think around the world she would be in the majority. Because many people define freedom as being free to do whatever you want. There's some even in the church who take the view that since believers in Christ are under grace, they are free from any obligation to keep the law.

There's some in the church who not just espouse that, they loudly and boldly espouse that. They call it Christian liberty. For them it's Christian liberty.

[5 : 07] It's not to say that there is not something in Scripture that is called Christian liberty. But their Christian liberty is something different from what we see in Scripture. Some of them who

believe that because we're under grace, we have no obligation to keep God's moral law.

They believe that you can drink as much alcohol as you want, smoke as many cigars and as much marijuana as you want, wear whatever you want, watch whatever you want, listen to whatever you want, go wherever you want, and in essence do whatever you want because you're under grace. There's no obligation to keep the law. So for example, some people who profess to know Christ and claim Christian liberty would say, you're judging them.

If they decide to sleep at the home or the apartment of a member of the opposite sex, the home they're not married, even though they say we sleep in separate beds and even though they say we would not engage in sexual relations, you say, no, that's wrong.

You shouldn't do that. They would say, you're judging me. You're judging me. You're trying to curtail my liberty in Christ.

[6 : 29] And the truth is, that's not an exercise of Christian liberty. That's an exercise of license of the flesh. True Christian liberty is living for Christ in the manner that we ought, whereas false Christian liberty is living for our flesh in the manner that we want.

And the correct word for Christian liberty is what we would say is license. It's a feeling that you have a license to do whatever you want, that somehow you have gotten this license, and it's taking God's grace as a license to live however one wishes to live.

And the more technical word that theologians use is antinomianism, which literally means against law or to be lawless.

Antinomianism is the belief that Christians are released from grace, from any obligation to observe God's moral law. And a person who believes in antinomianism is an antinomian.

They are against law. But in these three verses that we have come to this morning, the Apostle Paul refutes that view. The Apostle Paul refutes antinomianism.

[7 : 56] He rejects it. Now up to this point in his letter to the church of Galatia, the Apostle Paul has been laboring to show and to teach the Galatians that they cannot be justified by keeping the law, and they must be justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

The only means by which we can be justified. Faith in Jesus Christ alone. Separate and apart from works.

And so one of the charges leveled at the Apostle Paul was that he was teaching people to ignore the law altogether, saying they were free to live as they pleased, because the law no longer applies. And so having shown them that the law has no place for their justification, what the Apostle Paul proceeds to do in these three verses is he helps them to see that the law still does have a place in how we live.

It doesn't apply in terms of justifying us, because the law can't justify. can't justify us. The law will condemn us, because when we try to fulfill the law, we fall short of the law, and Scripture says, cursed is everyone who does not abide by everything in the law.

[9 : 22] So every single time we make an attempt to be justified by the law, instead of justification, we get his condemnation. And what Jesus did was, Jesus died, hung on the cross, he became the curse, so that we would be redeemed from that, and that we'd be justified through him and by his death.

And so what the Apostle Paul now seeks to do in these three verses is he seeks to show that though the law has no relevance to you, though for justification, the law is still relevant to you in terms of how you live before God.

So please follow along as I read Galatians chapter 5, verses 13 through 15. For you are called to freedom, brothers.

Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself, but if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

[10 : 41] Let's pray. Father, we thank you this morning for the privilege of being able to gather. Thank you now for the privilege of being able to sit under the preaching of your word.

Lord, give us ears to hear. Give us hearts to receive. Give us minds to obey. And Father, grant me grace to be faithful to proclaim your word to your people.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. We consider these three verses that we just read in light of the letter as a whole, in light of all that Paul has been teaching in the book of Galatians about grace and

freedom from the law.

Here's what I believe is a faithful summary of these three verses. God has freed us in Christ not to please the flesh, but to serve one another.

God has freed us in Christ not to please the flesh, but to serve one another. That, brothers and sisters, is the purpose for our freedom.

[11 : 53] We sang about that freedom this morning. That's why Christ has set us free not to indulge our flesh, not to do whatever we want, but to serve one another. And truth be told, without that freedom, we would still remain slaves to sin, slaves to our fleshy desires, and we will serve those fleshy desires.

Two simple points this morning. Number one, misusing our freedom to please the flesh. Number two, using our freedom to serve one another.

So let's consider the first point, misusing our freedom to please the flesh. Now once again, this section of Paul's letter to the Galatians marks a transition in the letter.

Paul is transitioning from instructing the Galatians about the theological underpinning of their justification, how they are saved by grace and through faith in Christ and not by the law.

And he is now beginning to give ethical instructions in terms of how we are to live. Pointing out how those who have been justified are now supposed to live before the Lord.

[13 : 11] And in these three verses, Paul is addressing a common error, a common misunderstanding of the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, separate and apart from the law.

Because as I said earlier, some wrongly conclude that since we are saved by grace, separate and apart from works, separate and apart from keeping the law, then it doesn't matter how we live. Connected to this idea that we are saved by grace is also the conviction and the teaching of Scripture that because God is the one who begins our salvation, that he is the one who will finish our salvation.

And it starts by grace and it finishes by grace. So he assures us that from start to finish, he will bring us from time into glory.

He will bring us safely home and we will be safely secure in our salvation. And so there are some who would say, well, if I'm secure in that way, well then, what I do really doesn't matter.

[14 : 23] I'll always be saved so it really doesn't matter how I live. Again, that's an erroneous understanding of what it means to be saved by grace alone.

It is an erroneous understanding of what it means that God's people will persevere to the end and nothing, absolutely nothing, can take them away from God's loving here.

So notice what the Apostle Paul does to start. In verse 13, he begins by affirming our freedom in Christ. He writes, for you were called to freedom, brothers.

You were called to freedom. God has called you into freedom in Christ. But then he quickly adds, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh.

Paul urges us against the erroneous conclusion that some make that since we are free in Christ, we can live however we wish.

[15 : 29] We can indulge and we can please our flesh. I mean, Paul talks about flesh. He's not talking about the flesh on our skeletal frame. This is the word used in Scripture for our fallen nature, for that sin nature that we all have, that we are all born with.

And what this statement helps us to see is that the sinful nature does not disappear when we come to Christ. Paul would not have to tell us not to use our freedom as an opportunity for the flesh if the flesh, the sinful nature, went away when we came to Christ.

But it doesn't. The sinful nature is still very much there. The difference is when we come to Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to have victory over our flesh.

As we become aware of spiritual realities, we learn how to feed our souls and starve our flesh. and we gain victory over our sinful nature.

But our sinful nature doesn't go anywhere. It will be with us until the day we die, until the day the Lord returns. And so, brothers and sisters, the truth is that those of us who have been saved by God's grace, separate and apart from works, God calls us to live as debtors to mercy.

[17 : 04] It's not to be smug and to become confident and feel that what I do doesn't matter and how I live doesn't matter. And we exercise license because we know we're saved by grace and we know that Scripture says that God will keep to the very end all those who belong to Him and they

can never be lost.

We know those things. And sometimes what some do in error is they lay a hold of that as the basis for disregarding any obligation to please the Lord and how they live.

And they throw off restraint and they do whatever they want and say whatever they want and live however they want and they become careless and indifferent. No, what the witness of Scripture that we see is that God's great mercy towards us should cause us in response to be grateful.

to live as debtors to mercy. And when you consider what Paul is writing, Paul is writing in the context of community.

And if we have an attitude that we can do whatever we want, say whatever we want, conduct ourselves however we want because we are saved then we will always be saved.

[18 : 25] That spills over into community. And that affects how we relate to one another. It affects how we relate to brothers and sisters in Christ.

And notice what Paul says in verse 15. He says, but if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

Paul is addressing, he's getting at something in the heart of community that when people live in this licentious way, when they live in this antinomian way, where they live with this conviction that my salvation is secure and God accepts me not based on what I do or what I do not do and they begin to live careless lives, Paul says that's going to affect community.

It's going to affect how you relate to one another. You're going to bite and you're going to devour one another. And what is clear is Paul has in view the reality of saved sinners living in community. See, when saved sinners live in community, they sin. They sin against one another in word and deed and others sin against them. And Paul is calling us in these community settings, calling us to serve one another in love as opposed to indulging our flesh and pleasing ourselves.

[19 : 57] And so what happens in community is when we are sinned against and others sin against us, we have two options. We can use our freedom in Christ to respond as Christ would have us to respond.

Serving one another in love forbearing one another in love, being patient with one another, forgiving one another, or we can respond in the flesh.

We can respond to please our flesh, to satisfy our own sinful desires. and sometimes it can be done in a very clear and calculated manner where we are aware that what we're doing is wrong, but we are so smug in our salvation, we are so confident in our salvation that we live without any regard for how Christ would have us to live.

I'm sure you've heard people say, well, child, I lay down my Christianity for her. I lay down my religion for him. And what they're saying is, I consciously sinned.

In my smug, arrogant way, I consciously sinned. The Apostle Paul says, don't do that. He says, instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

[21 : 20] Deceased British theologian and pastor John Stott expresses it this way. Here's what he writes. Christian freedom is freedom from sin, not freedom to sin.

It is an unrestricted liberty of approach to God as his children, not an unrestricted liberty to wallow in our selfishness.

true Christian freedom, brothers and sisters, is a freedom from sin, not a freedom to sin.

Not a freedom to sin because we know that we are God's children. And at the end of the day, he's going to take care of us. He's going to preserve us to the end. That's a dangerous way to live.

That's a dangerous attitude to employ. And so I believe we all need to consider this morning, how am I using my Christian freedom?

[22 : 26] How am I using my freedom in Christ? How are you using it? Have you bought into antinomianism, believing that you can live however you want, you're not obligated to keep God's law, his moral law to fulfill it?

Because you don't need it for justification, and Christ has set you free from it? How are you using your freedom at home when you're sinned against, when you're disappointed?

How are you using your freedom at work? How are you using your freedom in community with brothers and sisters? Or are you abusing your freedom?

smugly because, like the Galatians, like they were being taught, like the way Paul was being accused to say, oh, since you're saved by grace, it doesn't matter how you live.

Paul says, no. That's what I call you to. You are called to use your freedom as an opportunity to serve one another. But Paul not only tells us how we must not use our freedom, he also tells us how we are to use our freedom.

[23 : 51] And this brings you to my second and final point. He tells us we are to use our freedom to serve one another. Notice again how Paul says it in verse 13.

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Notice what Paul is saying. He's saying, you're free, but don't use your freedom to indulge your flesh, to please your sinful nature.

Instead, use your freedom to serve one another. Now, we aren't able to see it in our English Bibles, but those who heard the Apostle Paul in Galatian church, they saw that Paul was actually doing a play on words.

Because this word, serve, where in our English Bible it says serve, in the original language, this is a word that means to be a slave.

[24 : 53] So what Paul was saying to them is, brothers, you're free. Only don't use your freedom to please yourself and to indulge your flesh. Instead, use your freedom to become a slave.

A slave of love to serve one another. That's what he's saying to them. He says, you are to voluntarily take your freedom and become a slave.

Most slaves are slaves against their will. But this slavery that we are being invited to is a slavery of freedom.

It is a free choice that one makes to become a slave. In Old Testament culture, in Jewish culture, slaves had a set time to be slaves.

You couldn't have a slave in perpetuity. In the year of Jubilee, that slave had to go free. You let all the slaves go free in the year of Jubilee. But there were some slaves who had good masters.

[26 : 02] And when those masters would sometimes release them, because the slave loved his master, the slave would want to stay with the master. And what the practice was to show that this was a slave who was not just being kept beyond the year of Jubilee and being made a slave forever, the requirement was that the owner of that slave was to take the slave to a doorpost in the house and was to take the lobe of his heir and to bore a hole in it and nail it to the doorpost.

And so when you saw this slave with this hole in his heir, this ring in his heir, you would recognize that's a love slave. That's a slave who had the opportunity to go free, but he loved his master so much, he said, I want to be with you.

I will stay with you as your slave voluntarily. You're not forcing me. I want to do this. Paul says, though Christ has made us free, though we are free in Christ, what we are to do is we are to make ourselves slaves to serve one another.

In verse 14, Paul writes, for the whole law is fulfilled in one word. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Paul seems to be saying to the Galatians, okay, you are so enticed by the law, you love the law so much, here's how to fulfill the law.

Fulfill the law by loving your neighbor as you love yourself. That seems to be the point that he's making to them. You are captivated by these Judaizers who are telling you to keep the law.

[27 : 44] Here's how you keep the law, the whole law. Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Now, this statement is among one of the most misinterpreted and abused statements in all of scripture.

Just a few weeks ago, this statement was abused in the House of Assembly. Reverend Frederick McElpine, the member of parliament for Pine Ridge, misrepresented this scripture when he made a very disappointing attempt to justify his small heartedness, his stinginess, his lack of compassion towards the people of Dominica.

When the government announced that they would be allowing some of them who have relatives here to come, to school, the island was devastated and he used this verse to justify why the government was wrong for doing what they did because what he said was, we have people in Grand Bahama whose houses have not been fixed yet.

And then he said, and the Bible says, he said, scripture says, we have to love our neighbor as we love ourselves and we have to love ourselves first before we go and love those other people.

So you have to deal with Grand Bahama first before you deal with those other people. And that is a misinterpretation of this scripture. Scripture presumes that we already love ourselves, because we

do.

[29 : 30] We don't need to learn to love ourselves. ourselves. We came out of our mother's wombs loving ourselves. We have to be taught to share.

We didn't just naturally come and want to share. We have to be taught to share. We parents, you know it, we have to teach our children to share. Because we already love ourselves, and we want all for ourselves.

The smallest little child who can break a cookie, know it's how to break that cookie and keep the biggest part. Because we love ourselves.

We don't need to learn to love ourselves. We already love ourselves. What scripture is saying to us, we already love ourselves too much. And so what scripture says is the same way you love yourself so much, love your neighbor that way.

You don't need to learn it, you already know it. We know it all too well. Christ sets us free from that kind of selfishness.

[30 : 36] He sets us free to be able to love one another in a selfless kind of way. I'm sure you heard the saying that we had when we were growing up, of all my mother's children, I love myself the best.

We naturally do it. love ourselves. This scripture, love your neighbor as you love yourself, assumes and presumes. We love ourselves.

And truth be told, if a person does not, if a person hates him or herself, it's really a sign of illness. It's a sign of mental illness. It's a sign that a person isn't well.

We naturally love ourselves. Now, how does this love that we're being called to fulfill the whole law? Paul says it. He says it in verse 14. He says, for the whole law is fulfilled in one word. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

[31 : 46] How does that fulfill the whole law? Well, here's how. In Matthew 22, Jesus has this encounter with this lawyer.

And the lawyer asks him a question. The lawyer says to him, which is the greatest commandment? And the response that Jesus gives partially helps us to understand what Paul is getting at in verse 14.

So Matthew writes in Matthew 22, 34 through 40, 14. the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together.

And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. And he said to him, which is the greatest, sorry, teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? And he said to him, you should love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. this is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it. You should love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.

[33 : 02] Notice what Jesus says. Jesus says, all of the Old Testament scriptures, that's what law and the prophets mean. When you see that usage in the Bible, the law and the prophets, that's the entirety of the Old Testament.

Jesus says, all of the Old Testament depends on these two commandments. Love for God and love for neighbor. But Paul says, the second great commandment, that if we do that, we'll fulfill the whole law.

Now, how is that possible? Jesus says that, the law and the prophets, all of scripture at that time, rested or depended on these two.

Love God, love your neighbor. Paul now says, the whole thing is fulfilled. Love your neighbors, you love yourself. To see how that's possible, we need to turn to John, 1 John, sorry, 1 John chapter 4, and please turn there with me.

1 John chapter 4, and we want to start at verse 7. The letter of 1 John, that's towards the back of the Bible, after 2 Peter.

[34 : 24] The letter of 1 John chapter 4, starting in verse 7. Apostle John writes, Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God.

And whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

In this, the love of God was made manifest among us. that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.

And this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

That word propitiation, it means to turn away the wrath of another. It means to appease someone. So what God did was God sent His own Son to appease His own wrath.

[35 : 30] Jesus absorbed the wrath of God to turn that wrath away from sinners like us who deserved it. Verse 11, Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

No one has ever seen God if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. by this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

And we have seen and testified that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in Him and He in God.

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love, abides in God, and God abides in Him.

By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as He is, so also are we in this world.

[36 : 50] There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

We love because He first loved us. And I read all of that just to make sure that we have the context, but I really want to get to verse 20. Look at what it says in verse 20.

If anyone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he's a liar. For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has seen, has not seen.

And this commandment we have from him, whoever loves God must also love his brother. Let me read those two verses again, 20 and 21.

If anyone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he's a liar. For he who does not love his brother whom he has not seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

[38 : 07] He who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. So what's the point? The point is this.

What Paul is saying in Galatians 5, 14, is if you love your neighbor as you love yourself, if you truly love your neighbor as you love yourself, you'll fulfill the whole law.

And the reason is to truly love our neighbor, we have to truly love God. And if we don't truly love God, we cannot truly love our neighbor. So it comes right back to what Jesus said.

Jesus said, all the law and the prophet depends on these two things, rests on these two things, love for God and love for neighbor. Loving our neighbor is evidence that we love God.

If we don't love our neighbor, it is evidence we don't love God. So we can't, on the one hand, hate our neighbor and then get up and raise our hands and sing praise the Lord and say, I love you Lord.

[39 : 18] John says, you're lying. John says, the truth is not in you. So what Paul says in Galatians 5.14 is the law is fulfilled, the whole law is fulfilled in this, that we love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

Because when we truly do that, we give evidence to the fact that we love God. And when we love God, we live in a particular way.

Let's read further on in 1 John chapter 5. Notice what John writes in verse 1. 1 John chapter 5 verse 1. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.

And let me just stick a pin here and say this. Paul is not saying, John is not saying everyone who mouths Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.

Our mouths can say anything. But if we truly believe this, truly believe this, the only way we can truly believe this is to be born of God.

[40 : 33] Only way. And see, one of the reasons that we may find this hard to understand is this. In order for a person to believe, he or she has to first be born of God.

When we talk about being born again, we like to think of born again as meaning saved. But that's not what the Bible calls born again. What the Bible calls born again is being raised from the dead, being quickened.

So what Scripture says is this. Scripture says we are dead in trespasses and sins before we came to Christ. We were dead in trespasses and sins. A dead person can't do anything for him or herself. A dead person can't respond to God. A dead person can't say, God, save me. God has to come to that dead person, that spiritual dead person, and he regenerates them.

It's the same thing. Regeneration, born again, begotten from above, God quickens them. And as a result of that quickening, they are able then, God will give them the gift of faith.

[41 : 43] Faith is a gift. Faith is a gift. It's God's gift. Repentance is a gift. Scripture says it. God grants the gifts of repentance and faith.

After he has given life, after he has brought from death to life to that individual, he gives the gifts of faith and repentance and that person is able to truly turn to Christ.

That's what John means in verse 1 when he says, everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God. You have been born of God in order to believe.

What we tend to think is we tend to think you believe to be born of God. You can't believe because you're dead. Dead and trespass and sin. Verse 2.

By this we know that we love the children of God. When we love God and obey his commandments. Underline it in your Bible.

[42 : 51] See, this is the issue of freedom. The issue of freedom is that we love God. We're free to serve our neighbors. We're free to love our neighbors. We love ourselves. Evidence that we love God and John says this.

John says if you love God you'll do what he says. You love God you'll keep his commandments. You love God you'll obey his commandments. Not because the commandments save us.

They cannot save us. Can never save us. But the evidence that we love God. Verse 2. By this we know.

By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments. And notice verse 3. And this is the love of God that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not burdensome.

God here's how John Stott explains it. He writes although we cannot gain acceptance by keeping the law yet once we have been accepted we shall keep the law out of love for him who accepted us and has given us his spirit to enable us to keep it.

[44 : 11] In New Testament terminology although our justification depends not on the law but on Christ crucified yet our sanctification consists in fulfillment of the law.

And see John Stott is interacting with two very important doctrines. The doctrine of justification that God does all alone by himself once and for all. sanctification is what we call a synergistic work. justification is by God alone. We say that's monergistic one, mono, one. Synergistic soon together we cooperate with the spirit of God obeying the word of God praying and repenting and confessing sin and as we do that we grow in holiness.

We grow in being more like Christ and less sinful. We grow in saying no to ungodliness and yes to righteousness. That's sanctification and it requires our cooperative effort.

And so the idea of keeping the commandments doesn't connect to justification, it connects to sanctification. This is the purpose of our freedom, brothers and sisters, that we may live in this way that is pleasing in God's sight.

[45 : 58] Now some Seventh Adventists, if there was a Seventh Adventist here, they would say, ah, but what about the fourth commandment? That's always the issue.

What about the fourth commandment that says that you have to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy? You're not doing that. You're worshiping on a Sunday. You worked yesterday. You did whatever else yesterday. That's the objection that they would give us.

Time doesn't allow me to get into that this one, but let me say this. Of the Ten Commandments, the fourth commandment is the only commandment that is not reaffirmed to be kept in the New Testament.

As a matter of fact, Scripture explicitly says it's a conscience issue. If you want to obey it, obey it. You don't want to obey it, don't obey it.

Let's look at Romans chapter 14. I want you to see this for yourself. I encourage you, commit this to memory. Here's the reason I share this this morning. This is a little off topic. I share this morning because they want to be a good pastor.

[47 : 03] I'm aware of what's happening in our community. I'm aware that Seventh-day Adventists are very strategic in a lot of what they're doing.

They're growing. They're probably the fastest growing denomination in this country. Would you believe it? They are the fastest and largest in Jamaica. They rule everything in Jamaica.

I believe that if the trend continues, it'll be the same here in this country as well. I want to say this to you so that you understand why you do what you do and that there's a scriptural basis for why we do this.

Look at Romans chapter 14. Paul writes, as for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.

One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.

[48 : 25] Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. and he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Notice in verse five, one person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike.

Notice, each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. the one who observes the day observes it in honor of the Lord.

The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

So, to the Adventists, it's fine to worship on Saturday. No issues with it. It's not wrong to do it. What is wrong is to try to say to somebody else, you must do that.

[49 : 35] Paul says don't do that. He says you have no place to do that. You have no grounds to do that. Let everyone be convinced in his own mind. If you don't want to eat pork, that's probably a good healthy decision.

But, don't say to everybody else, you can't eat pork, and if you eat pork, you're going to hell. You eat lobster, you're going to hell. Paul says no, let each one be convinced in his own mind.

If you eat the pork, eat it in honor of the Lord. And if you do, you'll probably see him pretty soon.

And, if you don't eat it, don't eat it in honor of the Lord, but don't judge one another.

Don't judge one another. Look at Colossians chapter 2. Colossians 2, verses 16 and 17.

Even more explicit than what we just read. Colossians 2, 16 and 17. Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival, or a new moon, or a Sabbath.

[50 : 53] Notice, these are a shadow of things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. So, brothers and sisters, don't allow militant Seventh-day Adventists to cause you to believe that you're doing something wrong because you don't worship on a Saturday.

And if you choose to be in the Seventh-day Adventist church, don't do so believing that if you weren't, it's going to affect your salvation. Do it out of convenience. Do it out of convenience.

Do it out of whatever else you want to do it for. But don't do it because you think there's some salvific benefit to doing it. There is none. And I say this this morning again because I know what is happening on the ground.

I know what's going on out there. And you need to be aware that this is the reason that we will say to you, you are to love God by keeping those other nine commandments.

but what you do with the four is between you and God. Brothers and sisters, Christ has set us free to voluntarily become another kind of slave.

[52 : 06] A slave of love to brothers and sisters. And see, the whole idea is that if we live this way, we will be a compelling community to the world.

Because the world does not operate this way. But if we are living selfishly, if we are indulging our flesh, if we are biting and devouring one another in community in the same way that they do it in the world, how compelling would that be to the world?

But it is a compelling picture when God brings together people from different backgrounds and different races and different strata in society. with all kinds of differences, he brings them and they will humble themselves and they will become loved slaves to one another.

They will serve one another instead of serving themselves. That becomes very compelling to the world. And the reason it becomes compelling is the world knows we couldn't do that on our own.

We need God's grace to do that. We need God's help to be able to love one another in this way.

And so my prayer for us is that we would be a company of former slaves to self and sin, to be slaves of love to one another.

[53 : 32] As we close this morning, I want to encourage us. We have many opportunities in this local church to serve one another.

Pray and ask the Lord, Lord, of all these opportunities that I'm aware of, how can I serve? Show me how I can serve a brother or a sister who's in need.

And just some practical advice, if you find that you don't think you're hearing from God and you're not sure, just serve somebody. It doesn't matter. Just serve one of those needs that you are aware of that exists.

That's why the Lord has given us freedom. And I can tell you what this is going to look like. Here's what it's going to look like. It's going to look like, to be able to serve, you're going to have to sacrifice.

To be able to serve, you're going to have to reprioritize some things. And if we will be this love slave that the apostle Paul talks about in these verses, we'll be willing to do that.

[54 : 42] And so may God help us to do exactly that. Let's pray. Father, we thank you this morning that you've set us free not to do what we want, but to do what we ought, and that is to serve one another.

Lord, we're going to do what we want. And I pray, Lord, that you would help us to be convicted in ways where we are serving ourselves, where we are pleasing ourselves.

And Lord, turn us to brothers and sisters whom we can serve and help us to truly be loved slaves. Help us to be indebted to one another, to love.

We give you thanks this morning. In Jesus' name, amen. Let's stand together. Let's sing our closing song. Let's sing this as a prayer this morning.

Amen. Amen.