

Introduction:

As we approach July 4th, there is a lot of attention given to the idea of liberty and freedom. A document we don't hear talked about much is the "Magna Carta" written and signed in England in 1215. It was between King John and the land barons who wanted some basic rights such as: protection of religion, stopping of illegal imprisonment, limitation of taxes. It was not kept but it served as the frame work of our Constitution. Our text has been called "The Magna Carta of Christian Liberty".

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

I) Background

A) The whole letter is a warning about going back into bondage.

1. Paul speaks on his meeting in Jerusalem.
2. He is instructed by revelation to go to Jerusalem.
3. Some wanted to have Timothy circumcised and Paul would not consent.

Galatians 2:4 And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), 5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

B) Paul's point is we are justified by faith not by works of the law.

Galatians 4:3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Galatians 4:9 But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?

Galatians 4:24 *For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar-- 25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—*

II) The Liberty we have in Christ

A) Freedom from the law of Moses

1. This was Paul's primary message in Galatians.

Galatians 2:16 *"knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.*

2. The first four chapters of Galatians is making this point.
3. He also stressed this to the Romans.

Romans 7:4 *Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another--to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. 6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*

4. They were now wedded to Christ, they had obeyed the Gospel of Christ, because the Law of Moses was no more.

B) Freedom from the bondage of sin

1. In Paul's writings this use of "justified" refers to being "not guilty" of sin.

Galatians 2:16-*"knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. 17 "But if, while we seek to be justified by*

Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!

2. Being in sin condemns us being in Christ justifies us.
3. Jesus spoke of setting us free from the bondage of sin.

John 8:31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. **32** "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." **33** They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free'?" **34** Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

4. Christ delivers man from the power and guilt of sin.

C) Freedom from the traditions of men

Galatians 4:9 But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? **10** You observe days and months and seasons and years. **11** I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

1. Religious traditions can be very powerful, make us feel safe and as if everything is normal. Try breaking a non-religious tradition and see what reaction you get.

Colossians 2:20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations-- **21** "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," **22** which all concern things which perish with the using--according to the commandments and doctrines of men? **23** These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

2. We have to distinguish between traditions based on God's word, human traditions which cancels out God's word, and traditions which are neutral to God's word.

3. Jesus warns us of the dangers of seemingly harmless traditions.

Matthew 15:3 He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? **4** "For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' **5** "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God" -- **6** 'then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. **7** "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: **8** 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. **9** And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'"

D) Freedom from works of the flesh

1. Sins which entice the flesh, gratify the flesh, and appeals to the carnal nature of man.
2. Paul simply called the deeds of the flesh.

Galatians 5:13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, **20** idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, **21** envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

3. Christ came to set us free from the deeds of the flesh.

III) Standing Fast in Our Liberty

A) Handle the law properly

1. The law is good if one uses it properly.

1 Timothy 1:8 *But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully,*

2 Timothy 2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

2. When used properly the law gives us safety, properly identifies sin and righteousness.
3. It is written for our learning. The law of Moses brings us to the Law of Christ.

Romans 15:4 *For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

B) Apply our blessings in Christ liberally

1. The blood of Christ frees us from the guilt of sin.

Ephesians 1:4 *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

2. Remission of sins is promised to those who repent and are baptized. **Acts 2.38**
3. The blood of Christ applies to Christians who sin against God.

1 John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

4. When in sin; turn to Christ. The alien sinner comes to Christ, the Christian in sin comes back to Christ.

C) Deal with traditions (of men) cautiously

1. Traditions may have a place on an individual level.
 - a. When not taught as the doctrine of Christ.
 - b. When taking the place or supplanting the commandment of God.

Mark 7:7 *And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'* **8** *"For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men--the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."* **9** *He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition."*

2. We must be careful to not allow human traditions destroy our liberty in Christ.

D) Follow the Spirit diligently

1. Do not use your liberty as an opportunity to fulfill the lust of the flesh.
2. Those who are led by the Spirit will produce the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

Conclusion:

The liberty we enjoy in our nation came at a price. It should be treasured, never taken for granted, and lived. Our liberty in Christ came as the price of His blood. The liberty we enjoy in Christ is great...

- Freedom from the law of Moses
- From the bondage of sin
- From the traditions of men
- From the works of the flesh

It is not a license to do whatever we want; we must

- Handle the law properly
- Apply our blessings in Christ liberally
- Deal with the traditions of men cautiously
- Follow the Spirit diligently