

Read: Galatians 5:1-6

Stand Firm in the Freedom Jesus Gives

Galatians 5:1,6

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery...The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Every November our country celebrates Veteran's Day. On this day, we honor the brave men and women of America's armed forces who have fought to preserve our nation's freedom. But what do we mean when we say that America is a free country? When we are free, we are not trapped or controlled by anyone else. We can worship, speak, and act the way we think is best. We thank God for the brave people who fought for this freedom!

In God's Word for today, Paul reminds us that we need a different kind of freedom, too. We are all trapped in sin. We all do things that are wrong. Maybe you can think of some mistakes you've made already today. Maybe you got impatient with your brother or sister as your family rushed out the door this morning. Maybe you had a hard time sharing or you argued with a classmate. No matter how hard we try to be perfect, we all make mistakes that disappoint God every day. These sins tie us up, like we are trapped in chains. We are all tangled up in our mistakes, and we could never break free on our own. God knew that we could not save ourselves, so in love he sent Jesus into the world to rescue us. When Jesus died on the cross, he took away all of our sin and took the punishment we deserved. Our chains are gone! The guilt of sin is gone! Jesus has set us free!

Free from our sin, what should we do? We are so happy and thankful that we want to serve God with our lives. We praise God! We worship God! We love others! We can't wait to show God how much we love him by living the way he wants us to live and by making choices that bring him glory. We don't have to feel trapped by our mistakes or guilt anymore. We have peace. We don't have to try to earn God's love or fix our sin on our own. We have grace.

We enjoy many wonderful freedoms in our country, and many brave people have fought for us. But only Jesus could set us free from the biggest problem of our sin. Whenever we start to feel trapped by our sins, we turn to God's Word and remember that Christ has set us free! We stand firm in the freedom Christ won for us on the cross, and we live joyful lives of love and thankfulness to God.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- What is sin? What are some ways that you sin?
- Why did Jesus die on the cross?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why can't we solve the problem of our sin without Jesus?
- What are some things we can do to thank God for saving us?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Agree or disagree: Christian freedom means that I can do whatever I want, whenever I want.
- What might you say to encourage a friend who is afraid they've sinned so big that they can't be forgiven?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross set us free from our sin. Through your Word, remind us that we have your full and free forgiveness. Fill our hearts with joy as we live lives of love and thankfulness to you. Amen.

Hymn: CW 390:1,5 – Salvation Unto Us Has Come

Salvation unto us has come By God's free grace and favor.
Good works cannot avert our doom; They help and save us never.
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone, Who did for all the world atone;
He is the one Redeemer.

Since Christ has full atonement made And brought to us salvation,
Each Christian therefore may be glad And build on this foundation.
Your grace alone, dear Lord, I plead; Your death is now my life indeed,
For you have paid my ransom.