

The Yoke of Slavery

One of the greatest works of literature in the history of the English language is the allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Many of the themes of Galatians take great prominence in Bunyan's masterpiece. Not least of these is the comparison between works religion and salvation by grace through faith.

A great illustration of this juxtaposition takes place on one of the occasions where Christian (the main character) gets distracted from the way of salvation. He is in relationship with Christ at this point, but he has yet to find spiritual freedom from guilt. The lie that he believes is that freedom can be found in the hill of legality. Watch together an animated rendering of what happens when Christian is led away from the way of salvation toward the law.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbl7OqwibbE>

Galatians 5:1-6 gives us four more lessons about what Christ has accomplished on our behalf. Legality only stands in the way of our grasping the blessings of what Christ has done.

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

² Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. ³ I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. ⁴ You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. ⁵ For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

The four lessons from Austin's sermon concerning this passage are as follows:

- 1) The work Christ did for us gives us the freedom of living in a family relationship with God.
- 2) The work Christ did for us should cause us to never entertain any thought that a relationship with God is something earned or sustained by our efforts.
- 3) The work Christ did for us empowers us to confidently look forward to the future!
- 4) The work Christ did for us should realign our priorities.

Discussion Questions

- How is the burden of legalism like a "yoke of slavery?" (v. 1)
- Why are faith and works salvation completely unable to be mixed together? (v. 2-4)
- What does it mean to "eagerly await for the hope of righteousness?" (v. 5)
- How is "faith working through love" different from works such as circumcision? (v. 6)
- What are the biggest threats to your own freedom in Christ?

- In what ways are you tempted to return to the yoke of slavery?
- How do you identify with Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress*?
- What does it look like to run away from the bondage of legalism in real life?
- How have you experienced freedom in Christ?