



StPAUL'S
SALISBURY

Session One: Born Free – An Introduction



Key Passage: Galatians 5:1

Introduction: This term's teaching programme is based on material from "Freedom in Christ," a dynamic course which is based upon the writings of Neil T Anderson (see www.ficm.org.uk for more details). The thrust of Freedom in Christ Ministries is "to see churches make disciples not just converts" based on a conviction that many Christians fail to experience the true freedom that Jesus brings. Our morning sermons, and these notes, will seek to explore this theme, with an expectation that the Lord will meet with us, and change us as a result.

This introductory session purposely sets the ground for the coming weeks' material, and encourages group members to explore some of the issues associated with freedom which will arise.



Read Galatians 5:1a

Consider: Begin by asking people what this simple (half) verse means to them personally. Can anyone back up their comments with examples? Struggles? Delights?

Exercise: In pairs, or small groups, ask members to define "freedom" 1) as society sees it, 2) as Paul would have meant it here, and 3) how they see it. *A reminder of the images used in the sermon for this session are printed below, should you wish to use a visual prompt.* Ask people to feedback their definitions, and allow the group to shape them appropriately.

Pause: What have you learnt about "freedom" so far?

For many, whilst Christ may "set us free," it is the issue of then living in this "freedom" that remains a constant challenge. Few of us come "baggage free" to discipleship, and life seldom gives us an easy ride. Hence, we follow Christ having accumulated "stuff" along the way – "stuff" which ultimately holds us back from living free. This is something we will explore over the coming weeks.

And actually, the place of freedom is not necessarily a comfortable one. We so easily look back to our old way of life, or allow other things to crowd in, making excuses along the way. And this is true not only for us...



Read Exodus 14:5-14

Discuss: Take a moment to remind each other of the dire circumstances the Israelites had come from (see Exodus 5:6-9), and the incredible moves of God which they had witnessed (chapters 7-13). Yet here, at the first sign of trouble, they look back on where they had come from – and suggest that they would prefer it! Whilst this is, by all accounts, ridiculous, how easily do we find ourselves in the same circumstances? Why?

Ask: What can we do to support each other, and reassure each other, when the “old life” appeals?
Why is it that this happens? Can people identify a particular pattern to this in their own lives?
What advice would you give people when facing these challenges?
Do you act upon such advice yourself? *Honestly?*

Read again verse 13, keep a finger in it, and then turn back to **Galatians 5:1b**. Notice the call in both verses to “stand firm.” What does this mean in both circumstances? What would this mean in our circumstances today? Ask, therefore, how much do we have to take action, and how much do we have to rely on God?

Pause to pray: Based on your discussions so far, take space to pray for one another at this point. Ask people to be honest and open, and bring these needs and concerns before the Lord.



Finally, read James 4:7

Consider: Much of the Freedom in Christ material is based upon the profound promises of God in scripture, and encourages people to say these, prayerfully, over themselves. This verse from James sets us a target as we go forward into this term. The challenge is to submit our ALL to God – the rooms we don’t like him to enter as well as those we do – and to resist the Devil. There is a great promise here: resist, and Satan will flee!

In a time of **quiet, prayerful reflection**, encourage group members to meditate on this verse, allowing the Holy Spirit to bring to mind situations and circumstances. Don’t rush this, but allow plenty of time for God to speak, as well as them to call out to Him.

Encourage members to take this verse with them into the week ahead, to pray it and live it out.

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Images from the original sermon appear below...

