

**Worship Material**  
**Free to be kind**  
**Material from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Lord, you have given us the freedom  
to follow you or to turn away;  
to love or to hurt others;  
to show care or to be unkind.  
Help us to learn today  
how to make good choices  
and to love our neighbours as ourselves.

**Amen**

**Read Galatians 5:1,13-25**

**Bible notes**

Jesus has set us free so we can live lives as free people. Chapter 5:1 is a hinge verse in Paul's letter, coming at the end of the teaching that has taken up chapters 3 and 4; it is a summary of the message of those chapters, namely that our salvation depends on trusting Jesus and nothing else. Paul now spells out the implications of that.

There is something paradoxical about the freedom Christ calls us into: we are free to be slaves of one another; we are not under the yoke of the Law but we fulfil the Law through living lives marked by love of neighbour, the single commandment that the apostle suggests is a summary of the Law.

So, what is going on here? Paul is writing to communities that are tearing themselves apart over disagreements about the central teachings of the new movement – one camp arguing that we have to be subject to the Law and its works, the other asserting that we've been set free from all that. Paul says that having been freed through the faithful life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we are now to live as Jesus did in love for our neighbour – starting with our fellow believers.

Paul sets this in the context of a cosmic struggle (it really is that important!) that he spells out in verse 17, the sense of which he unpacks in the rest of the chapter. The struggle is between our sinful flesh and God's Holy Spirit and verse 17 is a statement of intent that we will side with the Spirit. The final

clause should not be understood as a cry of despair (i.e. 'we're too weak to compete'); rather, it is saying that we are not able to do certain things or live in a particular way because we are indwelt by the Spirit of God.

Paul then outlines two ways of living: the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit (vv.15-23). The climax of the section on the fruit of the Spirit is 'there's no law against such things' (v.23). The Law teaches these things but cannot bring them about – only the Holy Spirit living within us can do that. In conclusion, as we belong to Christ and our old nature has died with him, we should keep in step with the Spirit and live as Jesus did, in love for our neighbours.

### Prayer

We live in your Spirit to worship you.

The fruit of the Spirit is love. **Thank you for love, Lord.**

The fruit of the Spirit is joy. **Thank you for joy, Lord.**

*Repeat this pattern for all the fruit of the Spirit:*

*peace, patience, kindness, generosity,  
faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

We live in your Spirit to worship you.

**Amen.**

### A prayer to conclude

As we leave this place,

help us to be beacons of kindness.

Make us servant-hearted

and help us to love our neighbours as ourselves,

even when it's hard.

**Amen.**