



## The light yoke

Galatians 5:1-12

Friday, July 17th, 2020

In Galatians 5 Paul gives us a wonderful view of freedom in Christ, which differs from the bondage of the law like day and night. In a few sentences, the apostle illuminates numerous central aspects of the faith and following Jesus. To name a few:

- Real faith is shown in love (Gal 5: 6, see also Jac 2: 17)
- Free and righteousness before God arises from a belief in spirit and we cannot do anything by following the laws. Rather, we are warned by a return to the lawfulness to reject God's grace (Gal 5: 4-5). But as Paul struggles for the congregation in Galatia, it becomes clear that it is not too late for them to turn back and leave the false teachings behind (Gal 6:16).
- Paul has to endure regret because he preaches Christ's message in an unadulterated manner (Gal. 5:11). This is reminiscent of Isaiah's prophecy that Christ's message will be a stumbling block (Is 28:16 and Rom 9: 32-33) and we will experience resistance in preaching the gospel.

However, what appealed to me most in this section is the description of the yoke (Gal 5.1). An ancient word with which we can hardly start today. It is all the more worth taking a closer look at. A yoke is a very simple way of describing the load that is placed on an animal at work, for example in agricultural work to pull a plow hole and cultivate a field. In this passage, the yoke is depicted as something negative, as a yoke of bondage that contradicts freedom. Here I thought about the association of being a slave to sin (Romans 6:17). In contrast to this is the yoke that Jesus imposes on us. This is gentle. (Mat 11.29-30). Jesus directly asks us to come to him when we are arduous and burdened, because His reign is meek and his burden light. But even in the Old Testament, for example at Hosea (11.3-4), we find the image of the yoke.

*"It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them."*

But people still lived under the law at that time. However, if a life under God's law is shaped by God's love and meekness and yet leads to damnation, since we cannot persist through our actions – how much more is there a blessing on the yoke of freedom that Christ brings? Let us encourage each other to use this freedom and to encourage us to do good works. Let us take Paul's warning seriously and not mistake us, but hold on to the grace of God that faith gives us. Let us get to know God's yoke every day, because he helps us to carry our burden and with him our soul finds peace.

**Prayer:** *Lord, I thank you that your yoke is light and that you invite the laborious and laden to you. Thank you that we are not able to add anything to the grace you give us. It disarms us that you can do everything for our salvation and that we are powerless. Help us to rest more and more in the certainty that we can only receive and let us be steadfast in your promises. Amen.*

**-Solveig Küspert-**

