

09. Freedom



‘If the Son sets us free,
we will be free indeed’(John 8:36)

33 Jesus is crucified

34 Paul's Enlightenment on the road to Damascus



‘I received the Gospel through a revelation of Jesus Christ’ (Galatians 1:12).

‘God was pleased to reveal his Son in me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles’ (Galatians 1:15-16).

‘Have I not seen the Lord’ (1 Cor 9:1).

‘Last of all, as to one untimely born, he was seen also by me’ (1 Cor 15:8).

Caravaggio



- **34AD** Paul's enlightenment at Damascus
- **37AD** short visit to Jerusalem, then home to Tarsus.
- **45AD** in community at Antioch
- **47-48AD** Journey to Southern Galatia

47-48

Missionary Journey
to Cyprus and
Southern Galatia

Acts 13:1 – 14:28
(see 2 Timothy 3:11)



48 ‘Certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved’(Acts 15:1) See Galatians 2:4

It is this same group who have been instilling fear into the Galatians.

‘It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised – only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh’(Galatians 6:12-13).

Paul writes from Antioch to the churches in Galatia

‘Paul an apostle *sent* ... by Jesus *Christ* and God the Father’(Galatians 1:1)

See Acts 13:1-4



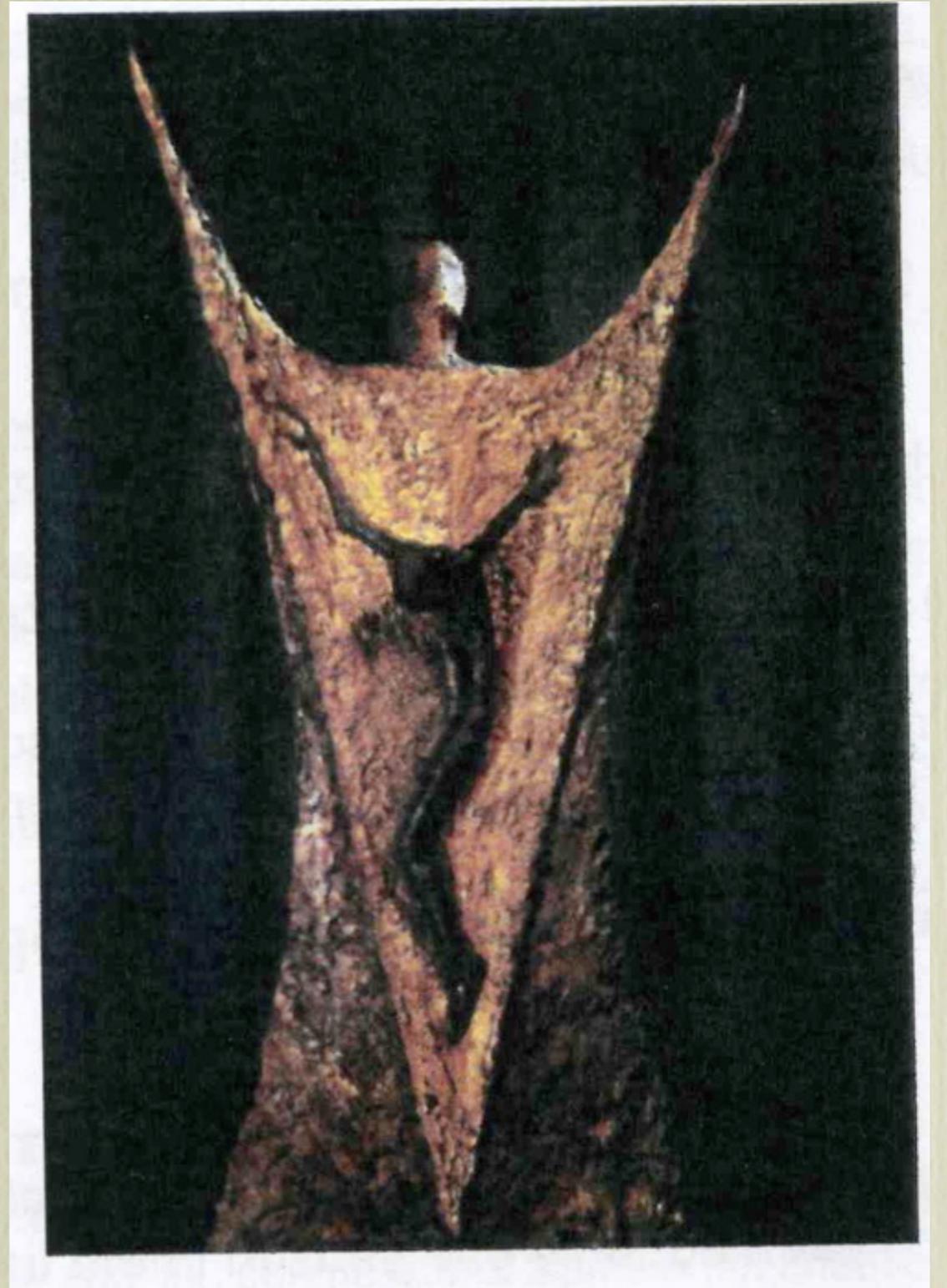
Caravaggio

Galatians 1:3-5

‘*Grace* to you and *peace* from God our Father and the *Lord* Jesus Christ,

who *gave himself* for our sins *to set us free* from the present evil age,

according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.’



Paul's core experience was of being loved by Christ

(**'he gave himself'** 1:4),

Only God's love, the love of Christ poured into our hearts by his Spirit, has the power to transform the world.

‘There are some who are frightening you
and who want to pervert the gospel of Christ’(Galatians 1:7).

‘God was pleased to reveal his Son in me, so that I might
proclaim him among the Gentiles’(Galatians 1:16).

‘A person is justified not by the works of the law but through the faith of Jesus Christ’(Galatians 2:16).

This is Paul’s earliest statement of what he calls

‘the gospel we proclaimed to you’(1:8),

‘the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles’(2:2),

‘the truth of the gospel’(2:5,14),

the essence of what he

‘received through a revelation of Jesus Christ’(1:12),

the central insight that God gave to Paul when

‘he was pleased to reveal his Son in me’(1:16).

We are free to accept or reject God's gift
(**'the faith of Jesus Christ'**, 2:16).

We accept in by "believing in" (directing our faith towards) Jesus'.



Galatians 2:19-20

‘I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, loving me and giving himself for me.’

‘I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death.’

(Philippians 3:10).

To the presbyters at Miletus he says:

‘I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God’s grace’ (Acts 20:24).

‘Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying ‘Abba! Father!’(Galatians 4:6).

‘For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery’(Galatians 5:1).

‘In Christ Jesus ... the only thing that counts is faith working through love’(Galatians 5:6).

‘You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’(Galatians 5:13-14).

‘The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control’(Galatians 5:22).

To ‘**belong to Christ**’(3:29) we must die with him on the cross,
die to our selfishness (‘ego’) (5:24)
nurture our true selves
and give ourselves in love for others.

It is to live ‘**in Christ**’(2:16-17; 3:26-28; 5:6).

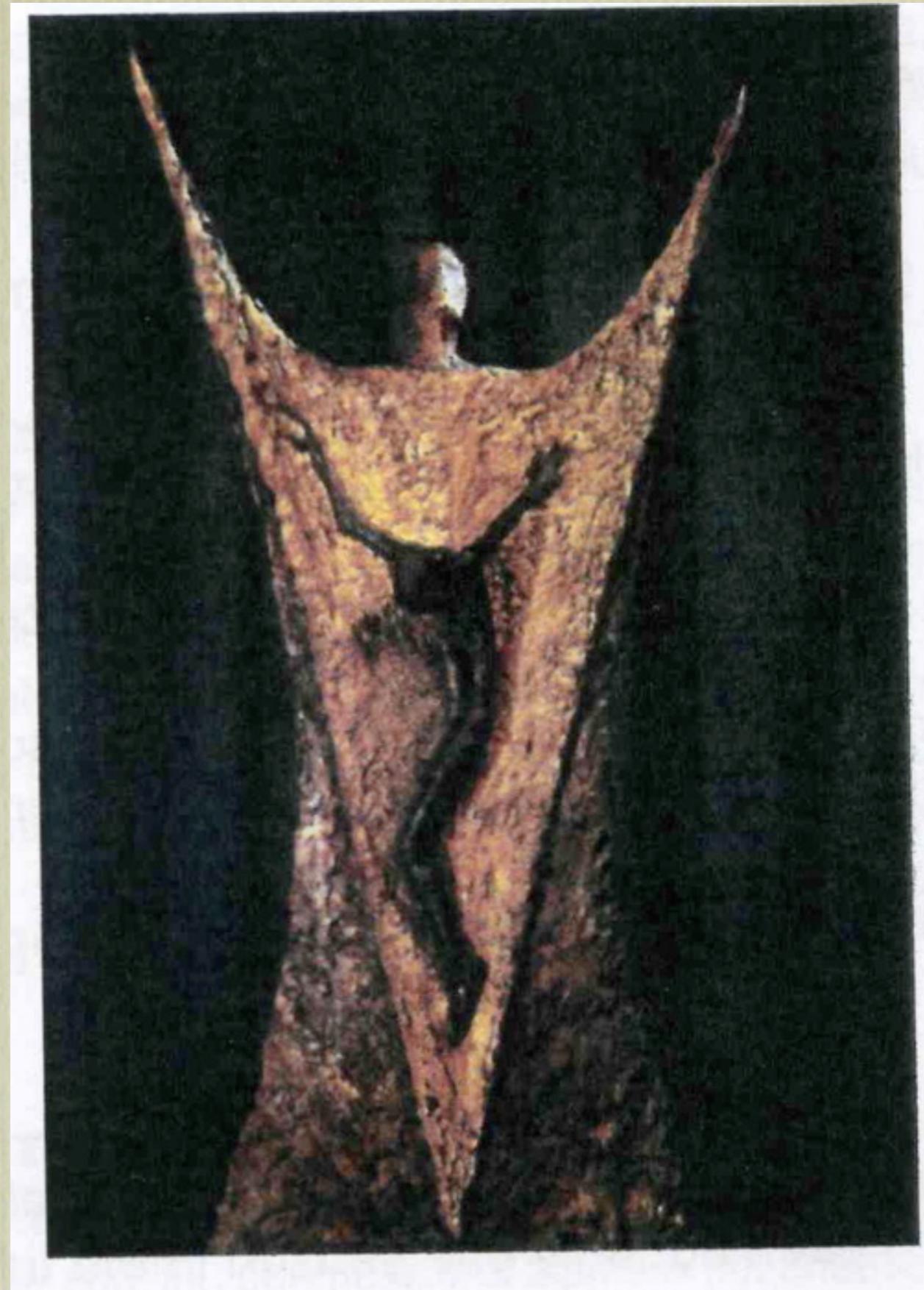
It is to be ‘**clothed with Christ**’(3:27).

It is to have Christ as our **Lord** (1:3,10)

our **Redeemer** (1:4; 2:20; 3:13; 4:4-5; 5:1).

It is to **live by his Spirit** (4:6).

‘I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world ... a new creation is **everything!**’ (Galatians 6:14-15).



Liberation from

- ‘the futile way of life inherited from the past’(1Peter 1:18).
- being ‘blind’ – unable to see God’s loving presence
- being ‘deaf’ – unable to hear God’s inspiration
- being ‘paralysed’ – unable to move
- being ‘without hands’ – unable to act
- being ‘dumb’ – unable to speak

JPII Redemptor Hominis

Pope John-Paul II refers to the Declaration on Religious Freedom, and goes on to write: 'Jesus Christ meets the man of every age, including our own, with the same words: "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free (John 8:32)." These words contain both a fundamental requirement and a warning: the requirement of an honest relationship with regard to truth as a condition for authentic freedom, and the warning to avoid every kind of illusory freedom, every superficial unilateral freedom, every freedom that fails to enter into the whole truth about human beings and the world.'(n.12)

JPII Redemptor Hominis

‘Nowadays it is sometimes held, though wrongly, that freedom is an end in itself, that human beings are free when they make use of freedom as they wish, and that this must be our aim in the lives of individuals and societies. In reality, freedom is a great gift only when we know how to use it consciously for everything that is our true good. Christ teaches us that that the best use of freedom is charity, which takes concrete form in self-giving and in service.’(n.21)

Liberation to let Christ live in us

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

‘Love is patient (never stops caring);
love is kind (acts always in a kind way).

Love does not act out of jealousy or envy;
love does not boast; or behave arrogantly;
love does not behave indecently or insist on its own way.
Love does not give way to irritation; or brood over wrongs;
love takes no pleasure in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

Love has space enough to hold and to bear everything and everyone.
Love believes all things, hopes all things, and endures whatever comes.

Love does not come to an end.’

Augustine, Tract on John 18.10.1

‘Return to the heart! Why are you running away from yourself? Why are you getting lost, outside yourself, entering on deserted ways? You are wandering aimlessly. Come back! To where? To the Lord! It can be done quickly! Return immediately to your heart!

Exiled from your own self you wander outside. You fail to know yourself, you who want to know the source of your existence. Come back! Return to the heart ... See there what you can learn about God, for the image of God is there. In your heart dwells Christ. In your heart you are being renewed after God’s image.’

Kahlil Gibran The Prophet 'Marriage'

You were born together, and together you shall be for evermore.
You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.
Yes, you shall be together in the silent memory of God.
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
and let the winds of the heavens dance between you.
Love one another, but make not a bond of love:
let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.
Fill each other's cup, but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.
Sing and dance together and be joyous,
but let each one of you be alone,
even as the strings of a lute are alone
though they quiver with the same music.

Kahlil Gibran The Prophet 'Marriage'

Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping,
for only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.
And stand together yet not too near together:
for the pillars of the temple stand apart,
and the oak tree and the cypress
grow not in each other's shadow.

Unity not Uniformity

Communion not Conformity