

#15 Galatians chap 5

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Verse 21: Last time we ended with Paul beginning to tell us about the works of the flesh: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies... now he adds: 'envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Notice that, right along with obvious sins like fornication, sorcery, murder... he also says some of the things that aren't so obvious but are just as destructive to our souls... envy... jealousy... selfish ambition... but isn't that just, like, part of being human ... of course I get mad once in a while... who doesn't!! (Actually, you should have seen me yesterday with the dishwasher!) But I'm not as bad as the guy who murdered his girlfriend; I'm not as bad as witches with their sorcery; I've done some good things that surely should balance out my score-card with God... if He's fair... doncha think? Oh sure, I've been envious and jealous, but who isn't... some people never should have been so promoted... it's not fair... that's just who I am... I like to party as much as the next guy... it sure wouldn't be right for Him to send me to hell for that kind of piddly stuff now would it! I put a quarter into that little red kettle last week... twice! Sometimes I think God just isn't paying attention all the time... He really is pretty lucky to have me, after all... I hope He appreciates me...

I tell you beforehand, (before you stand before Him in Judgment) just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. So these are all serious with God.

Those who **practice** such things... The KJV says, 'they which do these things. A number of other translations agree with the NKJV, 'who practice such things.' Obviously KJV doesn't adequately cover the Greek word because if God meant, those who have done these things or those who might do them but are quick to confess their sin to God... then it would include everyone for we've all done some of them at one time or another... haven't we? Well haven't we??? I have... a little bit, anyway...

Paul is speaking of a lifestyle of sin, practicing sin. This isn't the born again believer who falls into sin, like we will see in verse 6:1. For true believers, born again children of God, we know that Jesus Christ's sacrifice was all inclusive for every one whom God had chosen before the foundation of the World.

Again, it's like what John said, 'Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. 1 John 2:18

Verse 21b: 'that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God'

The ones who '*practice such things*' are not born again children of God. Practice means to do it over and over without second thought. The child of God may fall into sin but he is not happy with it or with himself and his desire will be to walk in freedom and liberty, not in the bondage of sin.

Verse 22: 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.'

'We **love** Him because He first loved us.' 1 Jn 4:19 therefore, we can love other believers: 'Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And **walk in love**, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.' Eph 5:1

These things I have spoken to you, that my **joy** may be in you, and that your **joy** may be full.' Jn 15:11

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Rom 5:1

'My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces **patience**.' James 1:2

"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, **kindness**, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, **forgiving each other**; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." Col 3:12

'But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith **virtue (goodness)**, to goodness knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge **self-control**, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness **love**.' 1 Peter 1:5

'His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and **faithful** servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' Matt 25:21

'...walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and **gentleness**, with patience, **bearing with one another in love**' Eph 4:1

The **fruit** of the Spirit: they all, together, are called the fruit of the Spirit... not the fruits of the Spirit... one fruit, all of them together are what God, through His Holy Spirit, works in us, to produce from the moment of our salvation until its culmination at the Rapture.

'He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.' Phpp 1:6

Also... notice that the goal of all the fruit of the Spirit is one thing... **love**... love toward God and love toward each other in the Body of Christ... **love for all other believers**: 'But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith **virtue (goodness)**, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge **self-control**, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.' 1Pet.1:5 All of it moves in the direction of love. Love is the culmination of all God's work in us... not teaching, preaching, evangelizing, feeding the poor, loving the city etc. Love is the goal of God in our lives... nothing else... everything else is a tool of God to move us to love and then, out of love, all other good works can flourish but the goal of God in our lives is always, first, love toward Him and then toward all other believers and finally, out to the World. If we don't love God, we certainly can't love other believers and if we don't love other believers, then our supposed love for the World, or the City or whatever, is not genuine.

Verse 23b: 'Against such there is no law.'

God's goal in our lives is that we become, more and more, day by day formed into the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ. **God is love**: 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, **we also ought to love one another**.' 1 John 4:7

God is love and His ultimate goal in our lives is that we, too, are love, that love characterizes every facet of our lives. Since Jesus fulfilled all the Law, there is no Law against Him nor has there ever been. As we love, there is also no law against us. Remember: 'Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is *the* first and great commandment. ³⁹ And *the* second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ **On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.**" Matt 22:37 When we love God and love others, especially other believers, we, too, are fulfilling all the Law, even though we never could, completely but, thankfully, Jesus Christ did that for us.

Verse 24: 'And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.'

Those who belong to Christ, have crucified their own flesh. We were crucified with Christ, we were buried with Him and we were raised up together with Him.

'But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.' Eph 2:4

'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.' Gal 2:20

'Then He said to *them* all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.' Luke 9:23

'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.*' Rom 12:1

This says that we **have crucified** our flesh, an action completed in the past, but we are also called to present our bodies as a living sacrifice and to **take up our own cross daily**... they are continuous action... to be doing it every day and every hour and every minute.

All of God's Word flows together in just one stream... pulling us out of the World and into the flow of walking with Him daily, looking for His soon coming for us; that is the child of God who is pleasing to his Father: the one who seeks to walk and talk with God all day, every day.

'Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. ²² After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years, and had sons and daughters. ²³ So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he *was* not, for God took him.' Gen 5:21 Enoch was Raptured up into Heaven.

'By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. ⁶ But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.' Heb 11:5

Look at that! In order to please God, we must believe that He exists... that seems pretty obvious... but look! The second thing we must do to be pleasing to God is... what?... lead a big church? have a great healing ministry? raise the dead? none of that... to please God... we must believe that He rewards those who seek Him. I've often spoken of the Eternal Rewards that God will give us for our faithful service. If you don't believe in that, you cannot be pleasing to God. But, you say, isn't that rather mercenary? Isn't that greedy? It's what God has said. He says, '**To please Me, you must seek me and expect Me to reward you for seeking Me.**' 'Oh, I don't seek God's rewards... I just love Him and want to someday be with Him...' Then you cannot be pleasing to God. He commands us to diligently seek Him and to expect His Eternal Rewards for doing so.

'For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord. Jer 29:11

Enoch sought God and walked with Him daily and God took him; His desire for us is that we would also seek to walk with Him daily until He comes to take us home in the Rapture: "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know." Jn 14:1

We are pleasing to God because He sees us in the Righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ: 'For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.' 2 Cor 5:21

Verse 25: 'If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.'

'For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.' Col 1:9

We have been given the freedom and liberty to walk in the Spirit, in close fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been given the freedom and liberty to not walk in the flesh but we, our souls are the ones

who must choose daily how we will walk. Remember, our spirits, with our new nature, pull us to walk in the Spirit; our flesh, with its old, sinful nature, pulls us to walk in the flesh and our souls must constantly choose. We do 'live' in the Spirit... that we can't help but do; we are in Christ and in the Holy Spirit which will never change but how we walk, how we live and move is the choice we must constantly make.

'...for in Him we live and move and have our being,' Acts 17:28

Verse 26: ' Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.'

In 'Church,' among other believers, the more closely we live with one another, the more difficult it is to love one another. Someone said, '*familiarity breeds contempt.*' As we've been given spiritual gifts by God, His plan has been that we exercise those gifts for the betterment, the growth and maturity of all the believers around us of whom, we are one; we are one with each other as we are one with God.

'And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ' 1 Pet 4:8

'There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*: 1Cor 12:4

'And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,' Eph 4:11

It's so easy to think highly of ourselves while thinking lowly of each other.

'For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ⁴For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.' Rom 12:3

Chap 6:1 'Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.'

Remember when Paul said, above, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Those who practice such things eventually become very good at it; that's what happens when you practice. They become so good at it that they can successfully hide it when they come to Church or otherwise interact with Christians. However, real believers, those who don't practice their sin, never become really good at it so when they do it, it soon becomes obvious to other Christians or at least to one other Christian. When that happens, we must not, first, become conceited, thinking that we are such better Christians than they, and secondly, we are commanded to use that gentleness we have, from the Holy Spirit, to first, go to them privately and gently confront them with their sin. As we do, we must use all of our powers of gentleness in the effort to not push them away but to relate to them in the same way we would want other believers to come to us, if we were the one caught in sin.

If we allow ourselves conceited pride, then we are opening ourselves up to succumbing to whatever our favorite, hidden sin might be... and nobody really wants that. Sinning and having it known are the worst! Actually, sinning and successfully hiding it is really the worst; then there is no one to call you back into fellowship with the Spirit. The longer it goes on, the harder and more seared become the heart and conscience. Then, all that is left is the danger of God ending your life, now, so that you don't bring even more disrepute to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember in 1 Cor 5: the Christian committing adultery with his step-mother. Paul says, 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.' 1 Cor 5:4 That guy is saved, but he will suffer the loss of many Eternal Rewards. None of us want to be like Him; rather, we all want to be like Enoch: pleasing and walking with God till He takes us home.