

***“Paul’s Letter to the Colossians, Introduction —
The Seven Dimensions of the Mystery, Part 5, Section 4”***

Review::

- ***All Legal Principles are Summited in the Pinnacle of Love***
- ***The Dynamic of the Christian Life, Under Grace Given for Our Understanding — According to Galatians***

- ***All Legal Principles are Summited in the Pinnacle of Love***

Gal. 5:1-6

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by [the] law; ye are fallen from grace.

5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

- ***Here we have a two verse summary of the teaching on the dynamic of living under grace. What he writes here should be so clear:***

LAW MAKES UNLIMITED DEMANDS THAT CANNOT BE KEPT WHILE GRACE FREELY PROVIDES UNLIMITED BLESSINGS THROUGH FAITH. THE ONE CAN ONLY CONDEMN WHILE THE OTHER CAN ONLY BLESS AND ENCOURAGE. My, what a difference. Do we understand this? If not, we need to wait on the Lord for understanding.

The result of God’s working is FULLY sufficient to please Almighty God, in fact it exalts him and glorifies the finished work of his son Jesus Christ. And that is because it is his plan under grace to do just that, to remove all human bases for righteousness so that the righteous act of his beloved is held as high as possible. Amen.

So, “we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith”. These are wonderful words brings much joy to those who will hear.

May we indeed “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

- ***But so many today are claiming that such radical grace necessarily leads license and then immorality. But it is not so as Paul writes in verses 13-14. Now the focus therefore shifts to LOVE!***

Gal. 5:13-14

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 For all [the] law is fulfilled [*filled to overflowing*] in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

- ***Paul writes here a summary statement in just a few words showing just how high above the works of the law grace is, in fact, he writes this seemingly astounding declaration here for all law-keepers to take full note of: “all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”***

Paul’s teaching, therefore, is that the principle of love is foundational to the Christian life of a believer. It overwhelms legal requirements of living and renders them weak and counter-productive, for they incite the flesh and grieve the spirit therefore. The principle of love fulfills every legal requirement, at least in spirit if not in letter. In fact, as he writes in 2 Cor. 3:12-18, the letter of the law “kills”. Romans 7 gives us teaching on this that we will examine later today.

- ***The Dynamic of the Christian Life, Under Grace Given for Our Understanding – According to Galatians.***
 - ***We ended here last time and will begin again here today.***

Our Outline Today:

- ***The Dynamic of the Christian Life, Under Grace Given for Our Understanding – According to Galatians, Final***
 - ***The Dynamic of the Christian Life, Under Grace Given for Our Understanding – According to Romans***
 - ***The Key to Christian Living Under Grace Is As Simple as Reckoning***
- I. The Dynamic of the Christian Life, Under Grace Given for Our Understanding – According to Galatians, Final:**

- *Galatians chapter 5, and especially verses 16 through 25, contain the most detailed teaching in Paul's letters on how the Lord God works in a believer. Let's read it again.*

[READ] Gal. 5:16-25

16 *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

17 *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. [the spiritual life]*

18 *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*

19 *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are **these**; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,*

20 *Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,*

21 *Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told **you** in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

23 *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

24 *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

25 *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

- *The life of the maturing believer is so much more than law keeping as the apostle writes here. It is the difference between the “fruit of the spirit” and the “works of the flesh” as Paul outlined here in a few words. The one therefore is all about fruit, the other is all about the works. The contrast is very great.*
 - *The summary statement of Paul's Positive teaching is stated here in verses 16-18 where we see the two different living dynamics in operation, the one, of the spirit (or spiritual) and the other of the flesh (or carnal) — spiritual on the one hand, carnal on the other.*
 - *This is all at the 50000 foot level, of course. Then he lists the works of the flesh in verses 19-21. These, whether “Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, or Idolatry and witchcraft” and the rest, clearly describing the lives of unbelievers for whom there is no inheritance in the Kingdom of God. But, sadly, we believers also have a sin nature*

dwelling within and if we are not walking in the spirit as he has written here, we will also be demonstrating carnality in our lives.

- *On the other hand, in verses 22-23 we see such a contrast: The fruit of the spirit is positively enumerated next, with “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.” These variously describe the lives of believers, who due to the new nature dwelling within, may indeed bear fruit as described there. Paul calls that fruit the “fruit of the spirit” highlighting its source and empowerment. He then characteristically writes that “against such no law can ever condemn.” This is a precious truth.*
 - *Legalism really does cut to the root of the gospel itself as we have seen. That is its natural consequence and therefore this letter is so critical for our understanding. Indeed, the fruit of the spirit is so far above works of law that he must continue to return to this issue. Even the purity of the gospel itself is at stake.*
 - *And there is another issue too. This is a radical one indeed and a great tumbling block for all moralists, whether they may be unbelievers or believers. And it is this: The works of the flesh are all that can be produced by a “carnal” believer. The reason for that is that then the spirit will be grieving (Eph. 4:30) rather than fighting against the flesh so that the flesh and its desires dominate over the desires of the new nature. I hope we may come to understand this better in our lesson today, especially when we look into Romans 7.*
- *To summarize the teaching here in Galatians 5, verse 24, the apostle gives the reason behind this so starkly painted contrast: Our flesh has already been crucified! The apostle uses such strong and compelling language here, doesn’t he? But it should strike home in us readers.*
- *The whole teaching regarding the dynamic life of the believer under grace is stated in these three verses, verses 16-18. We need to understand them and take them to heart for they are truly spiritual fruit for a hungry heart. Let’s look at them carefully.*

Gal. 5:16-18

16 *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

17 *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

18 *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*

- *Verse 16 states a condition, in effect, that if (and when) a believer is “walking in the spirit” he is NOT able to fulfill the lusts or strong desires of the flesh. This is NOT saying what so many want it to say, that we SHOULD NOT but rather that we WILL NOT. So SHALL=WILL here according to the Greek text. And, the clear implication of this is that OTHERWISE we are able to do just that. And that is the nature of carnality, where the flesh desires evil and the believer then fulfills its evil desires. Verse 17 then explains verse 16 (that is what the “for” is there for). This is the key to our understanding what Paul is revealing here. It is critical to understand this.*
- *For verse 17 states how the spirit works WHEN the believer is “walking [in the realm of] the spirit’s desires and actions” today UNDER GRACE! Then and only then the spirit dwelling within us wages a direct warfare against the sin nature within us thereby disabling its power to influence. That is what the rest of that verse means, “so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”*

In other words, when the spirit of God is fighting the war, we are freed to bring forth the fruit of the spirit, and then and only then we “cannot do the things that we would otherwise do”, that is, the bring forth the works of the flesh.

Why? Because the power of the flesh, the old nature of sin within, has then been thwarted in its attacks by the Holy Spirit of God!

- *Verse 18 summarizes it powerfully in this way: “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” Again Paul mentions the law where you might not have expected it. That is because his focus is always on the radical difference between being under law and legal-principle versus being under grace*

and gracious-principle. The whole letter is about the false teachings of legalists so we should not be surprised when he continues that theme here.

But there is another reason why he mentions law again here and it is this: since the law excites the flesh one cannot be under law and also enjoying the liberty that is in Christ by grace. And that is because the believer living under law must be experiencing the direct warfare, the conflict between the flesh and the spirit himself. Instead of enjoying that deliverance from that conflict, he is waging that war himself against the flesh with the inevitable consequence that the works of the flesh dominate. Only while the spirit victoriously fights that battle are we therefore freed to enjoy the desires of God as prompted through the new nature.

This is such an important teaching. I remember well how these verses changed my life so many years ago. Praise God for the fruit of the spirit. The apostle goes on now to the next verses here he lists some of the works that will dominate the carnal believer's life therefore:

Gal. 5:19-21

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*;
Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

- *A quick note on the words in verse 21, “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God”: The word means to PRACTICE AS A WAY OF LIFE, as in the life of an unbeliever. Believers cannot PRACTICE this evil though they may commit such. See 1 Cor. 6:11 For a statement about that: “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” So believers may indeed be carnal but they cannot be classified as those who are not, even in regard to their evil deeds. Praise God for his abundant grace.*

- *This is the summary then of the way of life of a believer, in stark contrast to an unbeliever:*

Gal. 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

- *And again Paul references the law but in a way that should greatly encourage us. For the challenge is great and the law attracts the sin nature to assert itself. Stepping free from the law into the glorious liberty of the children of God [and therefore without the support go that law — well, at least I am not like others ...] means risking, it seems, everything.*

[READ] Tit. 2:11-13

**11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;
13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;**

- *Grace, not law, teaches us — without the works of the law or the threat of God's judgment on law breakers. Cast yourself onto his grace and accept the free gift. A few final comments on this teaching are needed to summarize what we have been teaching here today:*
 - *Clearly this is a central, perhaps THE central teaching of the dynamic of the Christian Life in Paul's letter, and these verses are the most important part of this letter and concerning which the other chapters were an introduction setting the background and context.*
 - *The central question here then must be: what is walking by the spirit all about and how may one do that?*
- *Now, we need to be very careful here and not go contrary to the spirit of this teaching.... Let's repeat again those words in verse 25: Those In Christ "have crucified the flesh with its lusts" Explain as the dynamic of grace living. All who are in Christ! The key to this life above the desires of the flesh is here, in reckoning upon this precious truth. But the key to this life of grace is here, when we*

reckon on having been crucified with Christ the spirit subdues the flesh allowing the fruit to be borne in us.

- ***There is such a difference between a life dominated by legal works and a life filled to overflowing with the grace of Christ who dwells within every believer. Paul has summarized it so well here, hasn't he?***

And yet most believers today have not understood this most critical concept and continue to dwell in the realm of legal obedience and therefore failure and anxiety over our acceptance before Almighty God, whom we incorrectly assume will still hold all of our sins against us some day. But, believers, isn't God's abundant grace so wonderful? Amen.

- ***They were long ago transforming for me. What about you?***

II. The Dynamic of the Christian Life, Under Grace Given for Our Understanding — According to Romans:

- ***Romans, chapter 7 is the complementary teaching to Gal. 5 and it is equally important for us to understand. There is much food for thought there.***
- ***I will not spend much time here. But this teaching in Romans 7 gives an inside look of the life of a believer who has chosen to live under a legalistic system. He writes here of a person he seems to know well — and of course that person is Paul himself!***

[READ] Rom. 7:7-13 [describing the conflicts in the life of a believer who is "carnal"]

7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

12 Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

- ***I have lived “in” this chapter for considerable time and with much anguish of spirit as the apostle himself had, so I know all about it. The teachings here have therefore transformed me, now over 50 years ago. But I have never forgotten the struggles I endured.***
- ***Paul was a believer and writes here about being a believer. But he writes of giving up the liberty that he had in Christ under the sufficiency and fullness of his grace, for the sake of a legal righteousness. The result was not what he had expected. Sin became even more sinful as it was in fact magnified under the domination of a law. These phrases make this so clear:***
 - **7 ...Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.**
 - **8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.**
 - **9 ...when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.**
 - **13 ... But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.**
- ***So it is clear. A life of carnality for a believer is overwhelming and there seem to be only two ways to go on for one in this situation. The one is to just continue in this condition hoping for the best; the other is learn the lesson Paul did, just to take God at his word and by reckoning begin again to enter into the fullness of joy the Lord has enabled:***

III. The Key to Christian Living Under Grace Is As Simple as Reckoning:

The foundational teaching of the gospel of grace itself having been laid, Paul has indeed proceeded to the practical. Yes, The Gospel of God's Grace exhorts believers to holy living, not license. And not only that, the dynamic of Christian living under grace is empowered by the spirit But not as under the Legal Dispensation or the Pentecostal, or the Millennial

Kingdom. Very differently indeed. Amen.

Just as a sinner becomes a saint, is saved, by taking God at his word as outlined in the gospel of grace, so also a person may live above the power of the flesh today simply by taking God at his word as it is written so clearly here in Paul's letters:

Gal. 5:24-25

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

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

Reckoning is taking God at his word, by faith receiving this transforming truth, counting upon it, loving it and thereby living it. If it has been declared that we have been crucified with Christ but nevertheless we live, how can we proceed without gladly receiving it? For it is then not we ourselves the live but Christ liveth in us as he writes in Gal. 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Or, as he writes in Romans chapter 6:

[READ] Rom. 6:10-12

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

We close with several more scriptures that have the power to transform our lives as believers — if only we would take God at his word receiving this truth and his abundant grace:

[READ] Gal. 2:19-21

19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

What more can be said. Who can add anything to what stands written here for all time? Enjoy the Lord all and the supreme riches of his grace! Amen.