

“The Normal Christian Life – HOW Then Should We Live, Part 2?”

Review: “The Normal Christian Life – HOW Then Should We Live?”

- ***The Normal Christian Life According to Paul’s Letter to the Romans***
- ***The Normal Christian Life According to Paul’s Letter to the Galatians***

We begin a review in Romans since that is such an excellent introduction to the teachings set before us today in chapter 5 of Galatians. Romans prepares us well for the teachings in Galatians. In the Romans we have the teaching concerning the NCL well stated. What we see in given in Galatians is even more about our enemies and then the dynamic of the NCL in some depth.

- ***The Normal Christian Life According to Paul’s Letter to the Romans***

- In the earlier chapter of Romans, 1 - 3 and most of 4, Paul reveals how God worked to communicate his standard of righteousness down through the ages. Finally, Abraham is set forth as an example for all in that God’s own standard for righteousness is revealed to him, and he by faith alone receives it. Paul, at the end of chapter 4, applies the same principle to us today, full beneficiaries of Christ’s redemptive work:

- Chapters 4-5:

Romans 4:23-25 [*How is this righteousness attained? THROUGH FAITH ALONE AND BY IMPUTATION!!*]

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him [*Abraham*];

24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

- SO THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN POSITIONAL TRUTH AND CONDITIONAL TRUTH IS ESTABLISHED!

Romans 5:1-5

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

- This is all about our living out the blessings secured to us through Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. We are on a path of “grace, hope, and glory”, as it were, with trials that only increase our hope. Our faith makes the difference. The love of God is what it is all about! For the Lord sees us as “with him”. Amen.

Romans 5:18-21 [*There is so much in chapter 5, culminating with verses 18-21.*]

18 Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment* came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift* came upon all men unto justification of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

○ Chapter 6:

Romans 6:1-4 [*This is now the realm of our living under grace. What he could have written but did not — and what rather he did write here is so important*]

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

- Notice here that the focus is not on our works at all but on his work in making us his vessels to be used as he will.

But now he provides in only 6 verses an outline of the entire dynamic of our abundant and glorious living, under grace:

Romans 6:8-13 [*Know->Reckon->Yield (Present) is an outline of the dynamic of our lives under grace.*]

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: [*not only a future promise but a promise for now, in this life!!*]

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

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.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

- In a “nutshell,” here the outline of victorious living under grace is revealed in three words: Know, Reckon, and Yield (or Present). The intent here is not to focus on our works but instead yielding to the power of sin dwelling within, we should present ourselves and our members for the Lord’s use. Then the result will be fruit unto him and his glory. Otherwise, however, bondage to the flesh, etc., will rule in one’s life. Amen.

○ Chapter 7:

Romans 7:18-25 [*But the enemy is near, even dwelling within — take him seriously.*]

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

- Chapter 8:

Romans 8:8-14 [*But be encouraged, for we are on the path of glory with the Spirit and the Son always present to help.*]

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

- This is such a fitting introduction to the letter to the Galatians with its focus on our new and abundant living. But it begins with stern warnings due to the circumstances under which Paul was writing.

Our Outline Today: “Hope Through the Indwelling Spirit Abides In Christ Jesus”

- ***We Have Liberty through Christ’s Gracious Free Gift***
- ***But Bondage Continues Even for Believers Today***
- ***What Are the Impediments to This New Life?***
- ***Paul Defines the Way For Our Walking with Him***

I. We Have Liberty through Christ’s Gracious Free Gift:

[READ] Galatians 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.

- So we have liberty as a gift of grace, if we will “keep” it! But the enemy remains, is powerful, and is always ready to attack.
- Compare with Romans 5, where the same subject is addressed, but without addressing the challenges brought to the assembly by false teachers promoting the works of the Law:

Romans 5:1-5

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

- Verse 5 says that true and authentic hope will not let us down. We shall not be disappointed in God’s working in and through us, as the fruit of the Spirit is manifested in us (love, ...).
- But back now to Galatians, in this similar passage introducing the chapter. The teaching regarding the living out of our lives under grace is as simple as it is taught here in the first six verses. The rest of the chapter will give important details.

Still, it is a teaching for believers who have already believed the gospel of grace and were established in gracious living, but who have now turned aside to the carnal works of law, and for some, to the denial of the true gospel of the grace of God.

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

- We have liberty now; we should stand fast in it, resting here in this liberty due to the unfailing promises of God, and never give in to the bondage of the flesh. Our hope should carry us through to the destination, as both the Romans passage and this passage here in Galatians state with such power. This liberty is to be lived out gloriously, and those who are justified by grace have at last a foundation of grace to stand upon, if we will.

But the enemies of our walk are many. The law with its required

works will surely always interfere with the working of Almighty God under grace, as the next verses show so well:

Galatians 5:2-4

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.

- Paul states this fundamental truth here so directly, doesn't he? Legalism of any kind always cancels, short-circuits, grace, and its workings. Why? Because it encourages the indwelling flesh with its power, and we are then even more easily brought back into slavery to it.

The works of the flesh are the inevitable outcome. The Romans passage indicates the same with these proclamations:

Romans 7:7-8

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.

- The admonition here in verses 2 through 4 is so strong, isn't it? It is so clearly and powerfully written. And yet the legalism among believers is evident nearly everywhere. Could it be because the churches are not Pauline in their orientation and teaching?
- And so we reach verses 5 & 6. There we see a simple and yet powerful summary of the entire walk of faith in one verse!

Galatians 5:5-6

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.

- These two verses are transitional. They are a summary of what has just been written in the previous verses and a launchpad to what is yet to come in the chapter.

We really must begin to grasp the teaching in verse 5 and its follow-up in verse 6 before beginning to dwell in the next section.

- Verse 5 states affirmatively the essence of our intended walk by faith with the relationship to the Spirit in central focus. The hope of righteousness is intended to guide us each step of the way, always, for that is our promised destination. Our justification demands that glorious result, and all are on that path of glory.
- But our adversaries seek to take us off the high ground, as it were, and to embroil us in worldly and carnal affairs that can never provide any true blessing. God's desire for us is not works of the flesh but rather the fruit of the Spirit. Our new life in Christ Jesus is always present and available to be manifested. But legalism is the enemy of the Spirit's work, and his fruit can never be borne when we lose the focus intended with the hope of righteousness guiding and directing us. Amen.

II. But Bondage Continues Even for Believers Today:

- Paul now continues with his strong admonitions with language chosen by the Spirit of God intended to address the dangers believers in Galatia now faced due to the evil ministry of the Judaizers:

[READ] Galatians 5:7-11

7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

8 This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you.

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

- Paul has selected circumcision in his teaching regarding the works of the Law. For the false teachers had so corrupted the minds of some believers in Galatia that the gospel of grace itself was at risk. He wrote of that at the beginning of the letter:

Galatians 1:6-9

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

- Those false teachers were also teaching a way of living based on works of law rather than on grace and faith alone: They are therefore to be condemned with their evil teachings. For even the truth of the gospel itself was at risk, as well as the teaching of the principles of gracious living. For the two are connected in essential ways as our apostle states clearly here.

Galatians 3:3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

- Paul repeats his precious admonition in even stronger words of personal testimony when he was with the Galatians.
- How then should the Law be properly seen? The answer is in the next part of the chapter.]

Galatians 3:19-25 [*The Law was only given to Israel temporarily...*]

19 Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20 Now a mediator is not a *mediator* of one, but God is one.

21 *Is* the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

- In chapters 3 & 4, Paul teaches that the law has been set aside now that Christ has accomplished his work and gives reasons for that here, just as he also had done in Romans, chapter 4.
- Verse 11 demands our special focus here as well: “And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.”
 - What is “the offense of the cross”? Consider what is written in chapter 12 of the Hebrews:

Hebrews 12:1-3

1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

- It seems the false teachers, the Judaizers, at least some of them, had also been teaching that their apostle was himself preaching circumcision, so that their focus on the works of the law was proper. That Paul circumcised Timothy might have led to that idea (see Acts 16:3). But, as he writes here, the “offence of the cross” was intimately related to the ceremonial rite of circumcision as well as to the Law’s demands.

The offense of the cross seems to be that the Law was not enough, and a righteous and holy God required far more of sinners than some, greater or lesser interest in living a moral and ethical life, even if it were religious or apparently Christian.

- And so Paul writes here that the ceremonial rite of circumcision, so fundamentally important to Judaism, could no longer stand once the cross of Christ had become a historical fact and the full blessings of that death and resurrection were proclaimed to all, even Gentiles.

And if not circumcision, then also all law. Romans chapter 7 shows that even the Ten Commandments is included. This does not mean that one should dwell in sin, of course, but simply that liberty from the power of the flesh demands that we are not motivated by legal rules or commandments but by grace itself, so much has been included in Christ’s resurrection blessings for us. Praise God. Know->Reckon->Yield (or Present). Never forget it.

III. What Are the Impediments to This New Life?

- There are many impediments to this new life. All should agree. That would include the world, the flesh, and the devil. In this letter, it is the flesh, the nature of sin, that is highlighted as our great enemy:

[READ] Galatians 5:12-15

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

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 in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

- **The flesh** is identified as an enemy in many places in Paul's letters:

Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but [how] to perform that which is good I find not.

Romans 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Romans 8:8-9

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Ephesians 2:1-10

1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

- **The spirit:** 2 Cor. 7 — the spirit can move in many directions

2 Corinthians 7:1-16

1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

3 I speak not *this* to condemn *you*: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with *you*.

4 Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.

6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season.

9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourselves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

14 For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth.

15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all *things*.

- Satan and his servants:

2 Corinthians 10:1-5

1 Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you:

2 But I beseech *you*, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Ephesians 6:10-17

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

- So we see and have known that many enemies are waiting and ready for attack — if we allow it. But the flesh leads the pack, generally speaking. And the law, really, any law, is its friend indeed and accomplice in its crimes against the workings of the grace of God.
- The next verses contain Paul's most detailed explanation of the inner workings of God's grace in the believer as we walk (and that is the key word here) according to the workings of God the Holy Spirit in each believer. The teachings there are beyond price and so essential for our understanding. The revelations here supplement what was written in Romans 6-8 adding important details as to how the walk of the believer, under grace, is designed to work as God does what only he is able to do. In harmony with that, we co-operate with him by faith. Praise God.

Conclusions & Exhortation: