

“The Normal Christian Life – HOW Then Should We Live, Part 4?”

Review: “The Walk of the Believer Under Grace Is A High Road Indeed”

- ***Our Gracious Walk Is Far Above Anything the Law Could Ever Offer***
- ***The Full Dynamic of the Normal Christian Life Has Now Been Revealed***

- ***Our Gracious Walk Is Far Above Anything the Law Could Ever Offer***
 - Our apostle explains in some detail the essence of the abundant life of the believer in Romans 6-8. I hope we have here in this study come to grasp that message well. But a quick review will be beneficial. We read this in Romans chapter 6, verse 8 and following:

Romans 6:8-10

8 Now if [since] we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

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.

- First the promise: that since we died with Christ, we shall also live with him. This is such an excellent promise indeed.

- Then the explanation: “Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.”: So Christ’s perspective now is entirely in reference to life. If this were our mindset what a difference it would make. It is exactly like the difference between looking backward at all of our “dirty laundry”, as it were, and forward to all that Christ is making us to be, even transforming us into his very image, from death to life. That is the path we are on as we now, through the Spirit, may indeed co-operate with Christ in our abundant living.

- So verses 9 and 10 express so well the foundational truth behind verses 11 through 14. We must think as our risen Christ does. Amen.
“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.”

Romans 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- “Likewise ...”: Lit. “In this way” or “in reference to” what was just written in verses 6 -10. What was that? It was all about what we must know before we can go on to his next exhortations. And that was all about how God sees us as “in Christ Jesus”, where the connection to Adam’s sin has been broken completely, and now we have only a real and living connection to our Lord himself and his perfect righteousness in its place!
- How is Christ thinking, operating, now that our sin debt has been paid? That is what we must reckon upon, and that brings true liberty from all of our enemies, beginning with the most intimate and personal of all, the indwelling sin nature.
- This is all about Christ himself. But the point of Paul’s teaching here is that we are “in Christ” and therefore what is true now of Christ regarding sin is also true of us. But will we receive that truth? Our sinful nature resists that teaching, and satan’s lies easily deceive us as well. Legalistic, carnal religion is the consequence. See Hebrews 9:8-10.

The point of this is that our resurrected and ascended Christ now lives above and beyond the issue of our sin and our sins!

But he is risen, praise God almighty, and is seated in the heavenlies gloriously at God the Father’s right hand. He is risen. And consequently, his righteousness has become ours. And so the Lord God sees us as “in Him”. But how do we see ourselves? That is the question Paul is now addressing here in the Romans.

So our response is intended to be like his, to live unto God and not as a slave to sin. It is that simple. These truths written so simply and so boldly here should indeed lift all believers into the heavenlies.

And so he follows with these words:

“Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves ...” This was hinted at earlier in verse 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.”

- “... to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”: It is as simple (but profound) as to be translated from one realm of living where death and its shadows are enslaving us over to another realm of living where death has no relevance at all except the glory that shall then come to us. Indeed, that other side has to do with

being alive unto God through Jesus Christ. That relationship is for us to be just as vivid and compelling and undeniable as the former was, or, as Paul testified, even more so!

And all of this teaching is so very unique and therefore powerful that we may want to stay here some time meditating upon it. Amen. But we must go on to the next, equally compelling, verses:

Romans 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

- Here, the verb “to reign” is a present active imperative with a negative particle, so the meaning is “stop sin’s reigning or ruling in your mortal bodies (which are liable to die)”.

The stain of sin is still upon us as he writes here, in our mortal bodies, so damaged from how God originally created them. But we now dwell in liberty, he writes. And as such, we are called to stop allowing sin to dominate us as it always did when we knew not the Lord and were in bondage to trespasses and sins:

- “... that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof”: He adds the consequence of not taking verse 11’s truth to heart by faith, by describing the normal functioning of the mortal body with its inward strong desires [the sin nature] to bring forth evil and sinfulness.

So the teaching is simple and clear, and therefore so powerful. We have been translated out of the realm of sin and death and into another place altogether, a spiritual reality created just for us, a realm of life and peace in Christ Jesus. And that means we have already been granted the power to live above and beyond the passions of our flesh.

The liberty God has entrusted us with is a privilege indeed. For the possession of the freedom to refuse the lusts of the flesh, of which we all are so prone, is marvelous and far beyond our limited ability to comprehend. The opportunity is ours. But will we avail ourselves of it?

- The apostle is nearly finished but must go on to repeat his teaching in the next two verses with additional details, and thereby continuing his gracious exhortation:

Romans 6:13 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.

- First the negative, stop, and then the positive, in both cases, he writes, our living under grace is all about “yielding” or “presenting” [better translation perhaps] our members (a generic and all inclusive term here), NOT as instruments of unrighteousness and sin, but rather “as those that are alive from the dead, and [our] members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”
- We have the liberty for this way of living, he writes, for the truth is clear and our reckoning has liberated us to be living in this way. And this all is graciously granted to us based on our reckoning!!! To reflect back to our Lord what he had accomplished on our behalf in this way should now be our highest honor. For that is glorifying to him and his work

And follow those wonderful and encouraging words expressing that truth so well taught here in these Pauline letters. For what is it that has freed us from the bondage of Adam’s sin, but his abundant grace?

- The reckoning that counts, living as alive from the dead, is our privilege. So the bar has now been raised above all the Law could offer, far above, as verse 14 signifies:

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

- So we live with a new empowering, a new dynamic. Otherwise, there would be no possibility of living on this higher plane. But with it, we have been set free to enjoy the Lord of glory into whose resurrection and heavenly glory we have been translated.

The full dynamic of the normal Christian life has now been revealed!

Today’s Outline:

- ***What Have We Learned About True Liberty Under Grace?***
- ***What Do the Works of the Flesh Reveal About Our Walk?***
- ***What Does the Fruit of the Spirit Reveal About Our Walk?***
- ***What Have We Learned About Living Under Grace?***

I. What Have We Learned About True Liberty Under Grace?

- We focused last time on Paul’s essential teaching on the dynamic of living the Normal Christian Life in Galatians, chapter 5:

[READ] Galatians 5:13-18

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.

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.

- Let's review what our apostle describes as the inner workings of the Spirit of God that empower the living out of the Normal Christian Life:
 - Verses 13-15 describe how the liberty from the power of the indwelling nature of sin may so easily be perverted. The evils which the flesh desires then, may dominate our living as he mentions here by describing believers living together not in harmony but in conflict.
 - Verse 16 is a strong imperative with an attached promise: Walk in the Spirit, and the otherwise inescapable, and carnal way of living, will no longer even be available as an option!
 - Verse 17 explains why that is true, as stated in the previous verse: it is because of the battle the Holy Spirit will be carrying out inside us. It is the battle between our flesh and the Holy Spirit, with the Holy Spirit the victor, leaving the desires of our new nature to bring forth the fruit it was designed to bear. As long as that battle is continuing, we are not able to bring forth the works of the flesh that the indwelling flesh so desires.

But this is only while we are walking by the Spirit, according to verse 16, if we understand it correctly. Otherwise, the flesh will dominate, and we will be living in effect as if we were unsaved. Then, in our carnal and fleshly state, the Holy Spirit of God will be convicting us of sin instead of waging a victorious war against the strong desires of the flesh. See Eph. 4:29-32 , 1 Thess. 5:19, and elsewhere, for that:

Ephesians 4:29-32

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

- This is a weighty subject indeed, and our apostle intends it to be. The Galatian believers were accepting the teachings of the false teachers who were promoting legalisms of one kind or another. But that always short-circuits the working of God in us, resulting in carnality. Thus, he adds these words, back in Galatians 5: "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

This means simply that since we are all as believers led of the Spirit, we cannot be "under the law", since the two are not compatible. Amen.

- Paul is repetitive regarding this because it is just that important. Amen. We are not under law but under grace. That is the dispensational framework under which we are living, praise God.

The teaching here is not contrary but supplementary to the Romans teaching where as we have learned, if we Know -> Reckon -> and Yield (or Present) we will be living in harmony with what God is doing in and through us today. And all that is based on what has already been accomplished through our glorious redemption in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit can only exalt Christ, and here that means his completed work regarding sin and sins. So that is his great work, his astounding work really, to defeat even the power of the sin that dwells within, but only when we are walking harmoniously with the Spirit in his God-given ministry in us.

When we by faith receive that teaching, we are liberated to live above and beyond the powers of the sin that dwells within, resulting in our members now being instruments of righteousness rather than sin, which they would otherwise be:

Romans 6:11-14

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.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

- We now continue with Paul's essential teaching here in the chapter of the Galatians.

II. What Do the Works of the Flesh Reveal About Our Walk?

[READ] Galatians 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.

- This is a list indeed! He writes that they are “manifest” or openly revealed. Who can deny them, for all know them intimately, or at least of them. His point is that they are always “lurking” and ready to come forth. Every believer is acquainted with some and easily given over to some:

Hebrews 12:1-2

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.

- His point is that if we are aware of the threat we shall surely be overcome. One needs to prepare for this race or we shall be disgraced surely.
- Verse 13 determines the context here: “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” So we have two kinds of “opportunities” or to use the KJV word here, “occasions”. And they are so different. One comes from the new nature and the other from the old nature or flesh.

The flesh is considered first since the dynamic of walking by the Spirit can never produce such works as these. Their presence is a sure indicator, therefore, of failure to live out the normal Christian life as we should.

- Verse 19: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest ...” This means they are so easily seen (and, as well, his implication is that they are so

common in all of us sinners, though we are saved by grace eternally). So they are visible to all and not hidden, though the sinner might think that they are or hope that they are.

- There are four groupings of works here, and if we find any of them in ourselves, we know we are not walking in the spirit. For they are the red flag of sin announcing itself with great arrogance and power:

Sexual sin: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness

Religious Error: Idolatry (which may masquerade as covetousness), witchcraft (religious, superstitious awe is included here)

Relationships: Hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders

Substance abuse: Drunkenness, revellings

- So it is really he writes just that simple. If we are living in the realm of the Spirit's working, we shall not find these works being produced in and through us.
- But we do need to dwell on the list to recognize our condition properly, and that is why our apostle is so direct and concrete and inclusive here in his wording. And even at that, his list is not complete, nor can it be. For we may have thought we were spiritual when in fact we were, and perhaps even now, are carnal.
- Now, after listing these evil works, he adds these words: "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Several things stand out here:
 - The tense of the word translated "do". The meaning of this is "to practice habitually."
 - The other is the statement given so authoritatively that those so living "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Paul writes of this elsewhere, in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, in Ephesians 5:5-6, and in Colossians 3:6, so it is a common theme. For us, "grace believers" it seems to be a difficult warning. But it should not be. The 1 Corinthians chapter 6 passage is revealing of Paul's full intent in using this language, for he explains himself so well there:

[READ] 1 Corinthians 6:9-12

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 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.

12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

- So his meaning is this: The statement in verses 9 and 10 is that those listed shall never inherit the kingdom of God. But verse 11 says quite affirmatively that some of the Corinthian believers could in some way be identified with one or more of the previous carnal manifestations.

So the teaching is that one could have been a covetous sort of person, but now is no longer classified as such, since salvation has cancelled that identification permanently. So these believers are justified or righteous in the sight of God, while those who shall never inherit the kingdom of God, as verses 9 and 10 indicate, are, as it says, unrighteous AND unsaved.

So, when in our verse in Galatians 5 idolatry is referenced, and then it says that those who “practice” such will never inherit the kingdom of God, it is drawing comparison with the unsaved.

The Colossians 3 passage makes that comparison directly and clearly:

[READ] Colossians 3:1-7

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

- So we must draw this conclusion: The unsaved “live” their entire lives in the realm of these evil works. They may often appear good, religiously or ethically, but they are nevertheless bound to the realm of the flesh since they have no new nature, no indwelling Spirit, or the living Lord Jesus.

But believers, who were once unrighteous and lost, are now justified, declared righteous, praise God. And though we may and do manifest such works of the flesh as listed here, we have deliverance, both from the eternal curse of that sin and also from its power over us in this life, as our apostle is teaching us so carefully here in Galatians. It is our privilege, therefore the walk in or by the Spirit so that the passions or strong desires of the flesh are defeated by the Holy Spirit of God dwelling within us, and we are freed, therefore, to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. Amen.

- This is not the same teaching we find in chapter 15 of the same letter, but it does teach us when our inheritance will be perfected or completed, for that will be at the rapture:

1 Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

- For those of other dispensations, it will be quite different. For example, compare these scriptures:

Mark 10:17

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

Matthew 25:31-46

31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

- There are also different conditions for inheritance corresponding to the different dispensational frameworks. We will leave this for another time, perhaps. Let's now though look further in our chapter here for the teaching on the fruit of the Spirit.

III. What Does the Fruit of the Spirit Reveal About Our Walk?

[READ] Galatians 5:22-24

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.

- Note that these are not works! They normally lead to works, but in themselves they are not works. And they are not “manifest” either, for they are internal and unseen. The wording is subtly different and still important to take note of.
- Also, isn't it interesting that Paul is compelled to add these words in verse 23: “against such there is no law.” Why, we perhaps should ask? Because legalism is a critical source most often for our carnality.

IV. What Have We Learned About Living Under Grace?

[READ] Galatians 5:25-26

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

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

...

Galatians 6:9-18

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

- There is very much here that needs to be said. So we will start here next time, Lord willing. Praise God for our liberty in Christ Jesus.

Conclusions and Application:

- In conclusion, it will be enough I trust to simply read a few verses that I would hope would be written on our hearts by now. First in the Colossians letter, and then in the Romans:

Colossians 3:1-7

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Romans 6:3-4

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.

- Praise God for his infinite grace through our wonderful, risen savior. He is risen indeed, and has broken the bonds of sin and death, and delivered us into a liberty of such power to lift us moment by moment out of this world and into the

heavenlies in Christ Jesus. That is how our Lord God sees us, and that is how we must see ourselves as well, if we are to enjoy to the fullest the unsearchable riches of his grace. Amen and amen.