

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

One of the traditions that we have in our house is that we put up our Christmas decorations every year around Thanksgiving.

I usually take care of the outside of the house and Bridget and the girls take care of the inside of the house.

One of the things that we have started doing – is allowing the girls to decorate our Christmas tree on their own.

We have had the same fake Christmas tree for 13 years – and every year we remove it out of the garage – we remove it out of the plastic container – assemble it – unfold the braches – and then the girls proceed to decorate it with different lights and ornaments.

For about 30 days, this lifeless tree sits there in front of our living room window pretending to be something it is not.

Beneath the light and ornaments – this tree is dead.

Unfortunately, there are Christians whose walk in Christ resembled that tree.

They are fruitless -

They may put a few strings of lights or add ornaments here and there to present themselves as being a fruitful tree – but in reality they are a dead tree.

And Jesus gave us a strict warning regarding this –

Turn with me to Matthew 7

[Mat 7:15-23 NKJV] 15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor [can] a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them. 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

There will be some who on that day will say – Lord, Lord don't You see my ornaments, don't you see the strings of bright lights around me –

But He will see our true nature -

And He will say – But where is the fruit???

The legalist will be the one pointing out there ornaments and lights because they lack fruit since they have not walked in the Spirit.

This morning, as we continue our study through the book of Galatians, Paul will continue to exhort us to walk in the Spirit.

And he will even give us a few examples on how to walk in the Spirit.

Let's pray...

[Gal 5:24-26 NKJV] 24 And those [who are] Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

[Gal 6:1-5 NKJV] 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. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load.

Once again, Paul is writing this letter to a group of churches in the Galatia region that had been infiltrated by these legalists that were adding works to what Jesus Christ had already accomplished on the cross.

They were making the claims that salvation and spiritual maturity only came through the adherence of the law.

One of the arguments that they were making was that the gospel of grace gave the believer a license to sin.

If you do not follow a list of do's and don'ts – you will do whatever you want. You will have no boundaries.

But, for the past two weeks, we have seen Paul counter that argument by making the claim that gospel of grace doesn't give us a license to sin but it actually gives us liberty from sin.

That as long as we walk in the Spirit – God, will empower us to counter our fleshly desires.

We will no longer be feeding the flesh and producing some of the attributes of the works of the flesh that Paul mentioned last week in verses 19-21.

Instead, fruit will be produced.

[Gal 5:24 NKJV] 24 And those [who are] Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Turn back a few pages to Galatians 2 –

Before we look at what Paul is trying to tell us here in verse 24 – I want to make a quick distinction.

Because in chapter two, Paul tells the church in Galatia the following...

[Gal 2:20 NKJV] 20 "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.

What Paul is referring to in 2:20 is not the same thing that he is talking about here in verse 24,

In 2:20, when Paul speaks about being crucified with Christ - it was referring to the decisive act of God in us, through our union with Christ.

This is something that God has done in us, to us, through us.

This speaks about regeneration – it speaks about spiritual rebirth.

To be born again or "regenerated" is to start a new spiritual life, one that is from God rather than from a human parent.

However, here in verse 24, Paul is referring to something that we do in our rejecting of sin.

And what Paul is saying here in verse 24 is that it is up to the believer to nail or crucify the desires and passions of our flesh to the cross so that it may be under control and under the sentence of death.

Crucified is an important word. Paul could have simply chosen the word “killed,” but he used the word crucified because it speaks of many things:

- It reminds us of what Jesus did for us on the cross.
- It reminds us that we are called to take up our cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24).
- It reminds us that the death of the flesh is often painful. This is one of the reasons that people choose to not have a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ because they don't want to part with the sin in their life.
- It reminds us that our flesh must be dealt with decisively. Paul didn't tell the churches in Galatia and us to simply push the flesh to the side. He said, take care of it. Nail it to the cross because unless we nail it to the cross, it is going to eventually get a hold of us.

I like the wisdom of Luther – who wrote,

The problem of our flesh will not be finally dealt with until we are resurrected. Until then, we are to constantly “nail it to the cross,” so that it hangs there, alive yet powerless over us. “To resist the flesh... is to nail it to the Cross. Although the flesh is

still alive it cannot very well act upon its desires because it is bound and nailed to the Cross.”

Even though we still face temptation day after day, it is comforting to know that sin no longer has to reign in our lives.

The good news is that because we belong to Jesus, we do not have to be dominated by the flesh.

He has given us victory and it is only a matter of time before we are given glorified bodies where we will no longer have to deal with the flesh.

Until then we crucify the flesh even if it is painful.

[Gal 5:25 NKJV] 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

The word that is used here for walk – is a military term. It means to walk in formation – to be in line with – to keep in step with the Spirit.

That is what Paul is telling us – He (Spirit) leads – we simply follow closely.

We must remember that we derive our life from Him.

It is His life (not the Law) who transforms the way we live, and as we yield our will to the desire of the Spirit, Christ’s life is manifest in and through us as the fruit of the Spirit.

The Spirit is the source of life, of guidance, and of all superiority to the works of the flesh.

Since it is true that the Spirit has given us life, it follows that He should also control our lives.

[Gal 5:26 NKJV] 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Back in verse 15 of chapter 5, Paul had alluded that there was dissension within those in the churches in Galatia – that they were biting and devouring one another instead of loving each other.

Instead of ministering to each other and building each other up – they were tearing each other down.

Paul revisits this here in verse 26 as he identifies three things that prevent the believer from ministering to others.

And the first one that he provides is - let us not be conceited –

Conceitedness is one of the byproducts of legalism and the flesh.

You see, when we live our lives by holding to some kind of strict set of rules and regulations, we can get kind of proud of ourselves for having accomplished the "impossible".

Church – this is exactly what the legalists were doing to the gentile Christians in Galatia.

They viewed themselves as being more spiritual because they adhered to the Law of Moses – because they were circumcised.

They looked down upon the others in the church who did not do the same.

Turn with me to the Gospel of Luke 18,

Because Jesus gives us an example of someone who behaved in the same manner in one of the parables He spoke.

It was another legalist – a Pharisee

[Luk 18:9-14 NKJV] 9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise [his] eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified [rather] than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

We must guard ourselves from becoming conceited – our flesh loves to get attention.

That is what the Pharisee was doing.

But we can't love others when we are too busy loving ourselves.

Think about this –

When we discern that other people are not growing spiritually and allow that discernment to turn to criticism, we block our fellowship with God.

God never gives us discernment so that we may criticize, but that we may intercede.

And Paul is going to show us how to intercede starting in a little bit in chapter 6.

The next one that Paul bring up is those that provoke one another –

The word for provoke means to constantly challenge someone or irritate someone for the sole purpose of getting a reaction from them.

Nobody is going to come to you for prayers or spiritual advice if you irritate them or if they know that you just want to argue all the time.

We used to have an at home bible study at our house and this couple showed up one day and the first thing that they said was – “We just want you to know that we are Old King James only”

My response was – ok, have a seat.

Was I supposed to be impressed that they were Old King James only, somehow they were more spiritual because of it or were they simply there to make an argument on to why they believed that their bible translation was better than any of the bible translations that were being used in the room???

The last one that Paul warns us against is envying one another.

We all know what envy is – wanting what the other person has.

And when we think of envy, we think of material things – I wished I had their car or their home or their well-behaved kids.

But it could also be that we begin to envy the way that people respond to another believer at church.

Why does he get all the recognition – I want to be recognized too. That is envy.

There are people in ministry that envy –

Pastors that say, “I wish I had that congregations building, I wish I had that congregation” –

But the reason that envy is so dangerous is that one of the byproducts that envy produces is discouragement.

Because we will insist on trying to be in a position that we are not in and will probably never be.

And these three things contribute to divisions in the churches – because they are all from the flesh.

So, how are we supposed to act toward one another when we walk in the Spirit –

Paul gives us examples here starting in verse 1 -

[Gal 6:1 NKJV] 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.

Paul recognized that even when we walk in the Spirit – we are still going to be tempted and there will be times when we succumb to that temptation and fall.

The question becomes, “How do we, as a mature Christian, respond to that person?”

And Paul says that we are to restore that person.

The word that is used here for restore, in the Greek, is the word to mend – In the Gospel of Mark, the same word is used to describe what James and John were doing to their fishing nets when Jesus called them into the ministry – they were fixing the holes on their nets – so the fish wouldn’t swim through them. It is also a medical term to describe the setting of broken bones.

We are called to repair them.

And notice that we are to do it in gentleness.

This means that we don't do it in a prideful way.

We do not aggravate his or her grief.

We do not scold them.

We do not condemn them – we build them up.

As believers, this should be our normal response – but unfortunately, it isn't.

You see, it is much easier to respond to someone's sin with gossip or harsh judgment than it is to show them the same grace that God has shown you and me.

Now, consider how verse one would read under legalism and not grace.

This is how it would read:

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, nail him to the wall, bring him up before the court, and sentence him to severe punishment!

I like the way one of the commentators put it when he said, "Nothing reveals the wickedness of legalism better than the way the legalists treat those who have sinned."

[Gal 6:2 NKJV] 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Now, this verse speaks about seeing someone in need and doing what we can to help them--taking the burden off of their shoulders and placing it upon our own.

Doing so is an expression of love.

It may take the form of encouragement.

It may take the form of hospitality.

It may take the form of service.

It may take the form of prayer.

This is not what the legalist practices – instead of bearing the burden of others – they placed the burden among the people.

Turn with me to Matthew 24,

[Mat 23:1-4 NKJV] 1 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, [that] observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. 4 "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay [them] on men's shoulders; but they [themselves] will not move them with one of their fingers.

Paul tells us Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ,

Paul has spent the entire letter telling his readers that they are not to live "under the law", and now he turns around and tells them that there is a "law" they are to live under?

And that law is the commandment that Jesus gave His disciples and us in John 13:34

[Jhn 13:34 NKJV] 34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

Now we can kind of get a different glimpse of what it means to love each other like Jesus loves us.

One of the ways we do it is to bear one another's burdens.

And that same love is to be part of restoring each other as we stumble and fall.

[Gal 6:3-5 NKJV] 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

In verse three and four, Paul tells us to guard ourselves against pride. Because those that are prideful will tend to not want to bear the burdens of others.

And pride will also cause us to start comparing ourselves to other – either by the way of sin or by the way of burden.

So we are supposed to make sure that there is no pride when we serve one another.

5 For each one shall bear his own load.

Now, wait a minute. Paul told us in verse 2 to bear another's burden and here he says that we are responsible for own loads???

First of all, the word that is used for burden is different in verse 2 than the word for load that Paul uses in verse 5.

The word for burden in verse 2 is one used for a huge burden – one that can be hard for someone to carry on their own.

The word that is used for load in verse 5 is the word for a small burden – one that can easily be carried by one person. A backpack.

A single mom who is laid off of work and needs to feed her children and come to you asking for assistance – that is a legitimate burden. That is what is spoken of in verse 2.

We are called to share in their burden.

Another person who spends all his or her money on lottery tickets and smokes and refuses to work and they come to you and ask for assistance – that is no longer a burden but a load that they have to learn to carry by themselves.

Unfortunately, some treat everything like a load and refuse to ask for help and some will treat everything like a burden and expect everyone to solve their problems.

We are one church – one bride – we are called to exhort each other in love.

Our responsibility is to simply walk in the Spirit and allow Him to guide us through our walk and the byproduct will be fruit.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

