

LSB Galatians 5:7-15

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you do not do the things that you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. 19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become those with vain glory, challenging one another, envying one another.

I'll begin our thoughts this morning by reading the words of a new hymn written by Skye Peterson and Kristyn Getty called ***I am not my own***

Skye Peterson - Kristyn Getty I am not my own

The one who made the heavens made my heart and soul
Before I drew a breath, I was loved and known
I am His creation, the Maker's masterpiece
And all that He designs will be done in me

My body is a temple of the living God
I'll worship in this house that His blood has bought
As I bear His image, O may I not profane
The holiness I hold in this earthly frame

And if he has redeemed me, I am not my own

The measure of my worth is His love alone
He declares my standing, and He declares my state
So I will know myself by the name He gave

I belong to the Lord
O, I am not my own
I belong to the Lord
I am not my own
I will honor Him, for this I know:
I belong to the Lord
I am not my own

This idea of ownership is something we christians give lip service to. Jesus addresses the reality of Kurios, Lordship, and doulos, slave, head on when He says;

46 “Now why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? 47 Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep, and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the river burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 But the one who heard and did not do accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the river burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.” Luke 6:46 - 49

We laid the foundations last week of the dual nature of our new life with the Spirit. We are quickened from the dead, as spiritual beings who have a new life, a new intimate fellowship, with our Creator and God.

We are made alive together with Christ. We enter into Him, and He enters into us in a union because we have been adopted as sons and daughters of God. The Holy Spirit lives in us. That is the definition of true christians.

And obedience becomes our hallmark. In our passage this morning we can

clearly see two categories of evidence that we can draw conclusions from. One distinct group exhibits a preponderance of godly behaviors. The overall pattern is godliness. The other group exhibits ungodly behaviors as a pattern.

We aren't talking about either perfection or literal complete total depravity in either group. But are talking about distinctives. Life style distinctives.

The apostle John addresses this idea in his epistles. It is a theme that runs throughout his letters to the church; People who make the claim but their lives don't support their claim.

1 Jn. 1:5 And this is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not do the truth;

James, the Lord's half brother, the leader of the Jerusalem church after Jesus ascension into heaven says this;

James 1:19 Know this, my beloved brothers. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore, laying aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in gentleness receive the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But become doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

We live in a town where at least half of the people who live here, if confronted, would tell you they are christians. Believers. They make the claim, but where is the evidence.

James says those claimers are living under a delusion. False pretense. John the apostle says they are liars. A little harsh perhaps, but necessary for their welfare if they would listen to Jesus. Jesus says a flash flood is coming that's going to knock their fake house into toothpicks and sweep it away in

ruins.

Those are harsh realities. Real warnings. Over and over and over again. Jesus says; Matt. 7:

*17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but the 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 So then, you will know them by their fruits. 21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, in Your name did we not prophesy, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name do many miracles?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who **practice** lawlessness.’*

I would draw your attention to a single word in that warning from Jesus as we approach Paul's lists of evidence that demands a verdict; Practice. Practice.

We aren't talking about sinless perfection, but we are talking about the long term practices of your life. Practice. Life style over the long haul. Continual life patterns of sin without repentance. Or continual submission to Jesus with the occasional fall back into sinful flesh. Over arching pattern of life.

I've been a christian now for 53 years. Almost to a person, the kids I started with are gone. Most of the people I fellowshiped with 50 years ago have vanished. The vibrant charismatic neighbors across the street when I was a teenager; gone. Family members, there are many who make the claim but they don't stand with me.

Storms have come and gone over the 50+ years and I'm still standing. I'm looking out to sea and watching a tsunami heading towards the ground I'm standing on, and I'm praying that my foundation is secure enough that I'll

still be standing after it hits. My foundation is Jesus, the rock.

The difference is the Solid Rock foundation. Waves can pass over us moving everything else around us, but for those who are secure in Jesus, the Solid Rock, we will be immovable, even in the coming storms.

It's our connection. Our oneness. His Spirit living in me. My spirit clinging to Him. Unbreakable.

In our passage this morning, Paul talks about evidence that is only true of actual quickened from the dead possessors of the Holy Spirit. Fruit. Fruit.

I've called it evidence a couple of times, the Bible likes to use the metaphor of fruit. Listen to Jesus on the eve of His own death, giving the final preparation teaching to His disciples who will be bereft of Him before 24 hours are over;

John 15:1 - 5 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine-grower. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit from itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Did you hear the exclusivity of what He just said. Spiritual fruit is the exclusive domain of those who belong to Jesus and who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the helper. The connection is imperative. If you are a branch on that vine, fruit will happen. If you aren't connected, fruit is impossible. Period.

Let's look again at Galatians chapter 5.

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the

flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you do not do the things that you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

For those of you who may be visiting, we spent most of last week studying vss 16 and 17 in depth. So we actually begin with vs. 18 this morning. *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.* Led by the Spirit. Not under the law.

Recall for the moment the context of this letter. Judaizers had come. False teachers had come and told these gullible baby christians that Paul hadn't gotten the full memo. His gospel, though perhaps well meaning, was incomplete. In fact, Paul's gospel was easy believism.

To be acceptable to Christ, you need to embrace judaism fully. You need to be modeled after the Pharisees. You need to embrace all of the Mosaic laws, customs, civil laws, ceremonial laws, washings, circumcision, Sabbath law, all of it, and then Jesus will receive you.

And they had bought it. Oh foolish galatians. Paul's words, not mine. So they have busied themselves with superficial hypocritical outward law keeping. So many laws. So little time.

And Paul has dismissed and dismantled that false teaching in different ways in different chapters of this polemic argument of his against the false teaching of a works based righteousness.

But ultimately, the straw that breaks that camels back is in verse 18. *18 But **if** you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.*

Judaism is this massive mechanism to produce godly behaviors by diligent obedience to all of the law of God. It's a massive machine to subdue the flesh, by the flesh.

And it's better than nothing. People who have no knowledge of God, but who observe the moral restraints within the law of God *will* in fact thrive. Have you driven through Utah lately?

The BLM puts up those little fenced off acres in the middle of different districts. Have you seen those. Exclusions. The BLM can look at the grass and foliage inside the fence that has no pressure from animals and compare inside the exclusion to outside the exclusion and make conclusions about land use.

Utah is like one of those fenced off exclusions. Because of Mormonism, the morality of God in the ten commandments was the over arching rule. And those folks don't have a clue as regarding actually knowing God relationally, but the place was like a beehive of activity. Massive thriving came as a result of minimal morality.

God built that into the universe. Observe God's moral laws and thriving comes. Great benefit comes from honoring and observing God's laws. But Paul tells the Galatians; . . . *if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.*

What the law produced by forced mechanical observance apart from knowing God, the Spirit produces as fruit in the lives of real christians, automatically. I don't stand around telling myself Do not lie. Do not steal. Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not covet. All of the negatives are superceded by the single positive. The leading of the Holy Spirit in my heart.

Romans 13:8 *Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does not work evil against a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the Law.*

Gal. 5:18 . . . *if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.*

What does it mean to be led by the Spirit. That single life reality seems to cancel out everything else. What is it to be led by the Spirit?

It's a choice, really. It's a choice to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and to choose obedient godliness, in His likeness, over the sin my flesh would produce. A choice for godliness and the power to actually do it. The Spirit supplies power for victory over sin. A choice to submit to Jesus as Lord of your life instead of you.

We are no longer slaves to our fallen flesh. If we walk in the Spirit, we enjoy His power to overcome sin.

Paul gets very visual. He doesn't leave the idea as something nebulous, something elusive. Not Paul. Paul's going to paint two distinctive pictures. This is what the flesh looks like. This is what the flesh does. This is the fruit of ordinary fallen sinful people who do not possess the Spirit of God.

And then likewise, in contrast, this is what the fruit of the indwelling Holy Spirit controlled life looks like. Without the Spirit; this. With the Spirit; this. Let's look at the first list of fruits.

Actually Paul is distinct in his wording. He calls what the flesh produces deeds, not fruit. And he calls what the Spirit provides for us and in us fruits. Also note, that the deeds of the flesh are independent of the other deeds. Most people don't exhibit all of the listed deeds. Satan gives us a banquet feast of sins to choose from. All of them are deadly.

But the fruits of the Spirit, unlike the deeds of the flesh, are a package deal. You don't get one or two at the exclusion of the others, the Spirit gives all of these blessings to us bundled together. We'll see that in more detail next week

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality,

impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Did you notice a word that Jesus and Paul both used that I drew attention to earlier. Practice. Practice indicates a continuing pattern. Uninterrupted life practice that continues unbroken.

Listen, doing any of these things, even the really awful ones, doesn't prove a christian isn't a christian. *We all stumble in many ways* is how James put it. Jas. 3:2 Likewise John says, 1Jn. 1:8 *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

But if one or some of these are the continuing pattern of your life, perhaps you're deluding yourself claiming to be a christian. If any of these is the ongoing continuous pattern of your life, you may find yourself standing before Jesus, saying, hey, it's me . . . and He'll say the words you absolutely don't want to hear; *I never knew you.*

Mt. 7:21 *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, in Your name did we not prophesy, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name do many miracles?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’*

Jeff Foxworthy has a lot of fun with his; *"you may be a redneck"* We need to be a lot more serious when we co-opt his idea and say, if this picture that Paul painted, looks like you . . . you may not be a christian. That's the bottom line.

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,

If the ongoing pattern of your life is any way shape or form of sexuality outside the boundaries of one man, one woman, in the bonds of real marriage, as a life commitment . . . why would I believe your claim that you're a christian?

This is such a good boundary. I was sort of the last generation that got in by the skin of their teeth. Even in my youth, this was already obsolete, except for christians.

Here's a secret. When I was young, and within the boundaries of christianity, and I had a real natural need for love and sex, that desire ultimately required me to choose a wife. I was 22 when I got married. And I stayed married.

I was a child. My wife had to put up with a lot of childishness. Still does, but that's another story. We weren't perfect, but the boundaries of obedience to Christ forced me to choose a wife and get busy being an adult.

How is it that so-called christian young men can live into their 30's with mom and dad and not become adults, not leave father and mother, and cleave to a wife, by God's design. Did those desires and needs that God built in go away?

We know how the world does it. No rules, no expectations, no nothing. But how is it possible for christians, if they actually are christians, to not obediently leave mom and dad behind and begin adulting, with a wife?

I look back now, nearly 50 years later, and what a blessing that single boundary has been. Family! Stability! The synergy of what we have together now, after a lifetime of combined work. The joy that our children and grandchildren add to our lives. All of those blessings; because of the boundary of no sex outside of marriage. God designed thriving to be the result of leaving father and mother, and cleaving to a wife.

The world says biblical morality is oppressively restraining. I look back on almost 50 years of marriage to the same lady as one of life's greatest blessings. The gift that has continued to give, right down to this day.

Let's look at a few more of these indicators of a life controlled by the flesh. I'm not going to wear you out breaking down every single descriptive word listed here. We'll cherry pick a few.

20 idolatry, sorcery, Both words have the idea of worship connected to them. Idolatry is anything that is more important to you than the Creator.

I bump up against this all the time in all of my hobbies. Most of the folks that I engage with in my different hobbies have gone way beyond the simple enjoyment of a relaxing diversion. Especially artistic people. Photographic artists are looking for that something other. It becomes like a religion. A quest for the deeper meaning of life. That's idolatry.

Sorcery is similar. Pam was visiting with a lady earlier this week who is all dialed up about new age energies. Spiritualism, devoid of God. That only leaves a single other source folks.

How many times have you talked with someone who says, Oh, I'm very spiritual. I believe in all kinds of *other*. Things that go bump in the night that we can't see. Pretty common. Any spiritualism that doesn't fit within the texts of this book, is sorcery.

The same goes for dogma built on superstitions outside of scripture. Visions of Mary appearing. Stigmata. Superstition. All sorcery. People who claim to be christians who believe that UFO's are something God is doing. Conspiracy theories and other spiritual nonsense. Sorcery.

enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, 21 envying,

Those are all closely related. All of them are the direct result of the

opposite of love. The flesh is full of hate. All of us are conscious of this in our flesh, daily. All I've got to do is get in my car. I can't turn left because I have to wait for 5 cars to go by. I hate those guys. The guy in front of me could have gone, but he was too timid, so now I have to wait for him too. You know what I'm talking about.

All of the words I just read are how my flesh defaults in it's interactions with other people. All of them are cancelled by the first word in the next list, the fruit of the spirit list. Love.

enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, Every one of those has a root in pride. Every one of those, in some form or another has me crushing you. Do you have any idea how important I am! You need to get out of MY way. That's my fallen sinful flesh.

My car example, people in my way that irritate me, that's like 3rd level removed. How frightening when any of these words describe interactions with our family. 2nd level people. And yet we look up and down the street and we don't want to think about what's going on behind closed doors, do we.

Our flesh is sick. The disease of sin that we inherited from Adam is deadly serious. Child abuse and spousal abuse makes my heart just ache.

*Vs. 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things **will not** inherit the kingdom of God.*

I want to single out just a couple of these deeds of the flesh. Envy. Envy. To want what someone else has. Envy is the direct breaking of the 10th commandment. You shall not covet.

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his male slave or his female slave or his ox or his

donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.” Ex.20:17

Marxism is based on the utter and total abandonment of this command of God. This is the single command that looks on the inside of a man. The rest are exterior. Lying, stealing, adultery, etc. All outside, but envying what someone else has, that's a heart thing.

I asked google what percentage of the worlds population is marxist and didn't get any workable number. Marxism takes the cancer of desiring for yourself what someone else has, and spreads it, cell to cell to cell until the whole culture is sick.

We talked about how thriving is built into the cosmos even for those who don't honor God. If they obey His moral law, thriving comes. What better proof of this concept than Marxism. Proven over and over and over again to lead to the opposite of thriving. It takes want and creates WANT on steroids.

Such a simple word, simple concept. It's a sin to envy what your neighbor has. Thank God for all that He has blessed you with, and do not envy what someone else has.

Also, in that simple commandment of coveting is the biblical basis for property ownership. Marx was consistent. He threw out God and took the natural sinfulness covetousness of fallen flesh and devised a system that has infected the whole world with the cancer of envying, which is sin.

I wish I was as pretty as you. I wish my skin was the color of yours. I wish I had the same opportunities as you have. I wish I was a man instead of a woman. Envy is a cancer we got from Adam. It brings failure and ruin.

Drunkenness and carousing. Drunkenness and carousing are often interrelated. Drunkenness breaks down the conscience and self control goes out the window. Normal boundaries are easily breached. Harm results. Ruined lives result.

"*Christians*" (in scare quotes) who have life styles that are associated with things in this list of what the fallen flesh produces, unhindered, unrepentent, need to check their spiritual pulse.

Paul says I've warned you, if that's your life pattern, you won't be inheriting the kingdom of God. And Jesus says He'll be telling you; *I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.*

To finish our study this morning, I want to circle back to where we began with Skye Peterson's hymn, ***I am not my own***. I've been thinking this week about unbelief, . . . unbelief. And the problem isn't that the evidence is unbelievable. Mountains of believable evidence. Enough for any courtroom.

The problem is that we won't believe, because believing requires a conscious submitting ourselves as slaves to a new King. King Jesus is our rightful owner and ruler. But we love our flesh. We love our sin. We love the idea that we are kings of our own lives.

Believing Jesus' claims requires, actually demands that we repent of the rebellion of usurping the thrones of our lives and humbly asking for forgiveness as we bow down to our rightful owner and King, the Lord Jesus.