

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.

This morning we again come to Galatians chapter 5 and our finishing look at the visible evidences of the presence of the Spirit of God in the lives of actual regenerated born again christians.

This is also the first time we've had a part 5 in a running series and discussion, so that's a new one on me. There's such a wealth of precious gold to mine right here, we needed to camp here until we looked at each gem, each nugget. We have two left and then some interesting ideas that finish the paragraph.

We noted before that the deeds of the flesh are separate. Independent areas of sin. Most people aren't burdened with all of them. Whereas the fruit of the Spirit are like a package deal. It's like the Holy Spirit moved in and brought all of these attributes with Him.

These attributes describe God's personality, and God set up house inside of you, and so His personality traits are exhibited in you. Or not. We can walk with the Spirit or we can choose our flesh and grieve and or quench the Spirit.

That's why Paul's command to be being kept filled up with the Holy Spirit is an ongoing continuous thing. Walking with God is a little bit like a marriage. Sometimes you fight and go to different rooms. Sometimes it's blissful companionship. We say "sorry" a LOT.

When we are walking together, these fruits are present. When we're out of fellowship, some of the the deeds of the flesh are present.

Let's look at the final two in Paul's list. *22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 **gentleness, self-control.***

Gentleness. Also translated meekness. Unpopular today to be considered as meek. We equate that with weakness. But this isn't meekness according to our world's definition. Christians aren't wimpy. This is quiet strength.

For the world the opposite of weakness is showy strength. Macho man. Bulging muscles with your sleeveless wifebeater shirt and lots of tats. A beer in hand with your 12 pack on the table in view. Loud shows of strength. In a way it's boastful pride on permanent display. We see it daily in Tonopah. Biker cool. Cowboy cool. Whatever. You get the picture.

For christians, the boastful displays are neutered. Nutralized. I love the definition; power under control. Power under control. Strength that doesn't need a prideful exhibition.

Jesus is the most perfect example of power under control the world has ever seen. Two examples for us on the night of His arrest. Massive power held in check with Biblical meekness.

In John 18 the soldiers come to the garden to arrest Jesus, but just an inkling of the restrained power is visible;

3 Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" 5 They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "I am He." And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. 6 So when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground. Jn 18:3 - 6

Jesus speaks God's name. I AM. The tetragrammaton. YHVH or the anglicised YahWeh is the answer He speaks when they tell Him they seek Jesus. And the power of His spoken answer literally knocks down the soldiers and temple guards like dominoes. That's meekness, Jesus style. Restrained power.

In Matthew 26 there is a story that illustrates this word for us;

50 And Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him. 51 And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew out his sword and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. 52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. 53 Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? 54 Therefore, how will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?"

We learn in John's gospel that the guy who pulled the sword out is Peter. Power out of control. Later, Peter with the help of the Spirit reigned in this power. But not yet. Peter is the perfect example for us of power not in control.

Jesus had at His immediate disposal 72000 angels and in the old testament

one angel killed 185,000 men. Jesus doesn't need Peter's impetuous out of control strength.

In fact Jesus tells Peter that God's plan is in perfect synchronization with prophecy and Peter's purpose would have worked against the plan of God to obtain a different end. Peter was actually fighting against God's purpose by drawing his sword and cutting off Malchus' ear.

Peter never forgot this lesson, and it shows up in his first sermon, a little over a month later. Acts 2. 22 *“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God did through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— 23 this Man, **delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God**, you nailed to a cross by the hands of lawless men and put Him to death.*

Wait a minute. What was that Peter? **delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God**,

Peter's force was working against an immovable force. God. Jesus arrest, and death, was according to **the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God**, Peter got it.

God gives us power to accomplish His will. But God's power in us is always under control. Christians are quiet. In a very real sense quiet strength removes all of the glory from us and places all of the glory onto God.

There is a sense in which this is sort of the great equalizer in God's armies. Some men are just naturally forceful. Powerful. And others are less so. In our natural frames. Some are strong, some are weak. Some are mighty, some are painfully ordinary.

God doesn't need any of it to accomplish His goals. In fact the default is; *26 For consider your calling, brothers, that there were not many wise*

according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may abolish the things that are, 29 so that no flesh may boast before God.

God doesn't need your power or your might, or your fabulous intelligence or my personal favorite, He really really doesn't need your cleverness. God is looking for a few meek men who can clearly open and teach His words with gentleness.

The power is restrained as far as what little might I might even possess. God doesn't need it. The power to pierce between soul and spirit is in these words we're pondering here this morning.

Men with natural power and might and abilities according to this world's definition are actually at a hinderance. There's more for God to get under control. It's actually a dis-advantage. Paul will allude to this idea in the next couple of verses.

Gentleness is power perfectly restrained for God's use in God's way for God's glory. Think about the visual symbols of two religions. The symbol of swords on black flags with Arabic letters brings fear of unrestrained fleshly powers. The symbol of the cross alleviates those fears. God's people are gentle. In this age of grace. But that cross will conquer this world, without man's pride and power.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.

Self control. (eng-krat'-i-ah) Self mastery that doesn't come from your own flesh. The flesh has no power to master the flesh. That would be like asking the fox to guard the hens.

This self mastery is the result of the power of the Holy Spirit empowering us to master ourselves. It goes hand in hand with the previous one. Both have the idea of restraint. Different shades of the same color.

The first word, gentleness is what it looks like, and the second word, self control through a power outside yourself, is how it happens.

All of those deeds of the flesh listed before the fruits of the Spirit, all of those need to be subdued. Throttled. Restricted.

Remember that there is a war going on. Inside me, there's a war. The Holy Spirit is in a war with my fallen flesh that I still very much have.

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.

Self control is the mastery of restraining what the flesh wants with what the Spirit wants. It's an ongoing war. Self control is the Spirit giving you power to win against what your flesh desires.

Christian deconstructionism, exvangelicalism, is the capitulation in this war. Tired of the war. Goodbye Holy Spirit, I'm going to quit and just let my flesh have it's way with me.

Unfortunately, real regenerated born again christians do not have the option to wave the white flag and just let the flesh reign. People who walk away permanently and live indulgent lives and abandon Christ, were never regenerated in the first place. Pretenders who gave up the pretense.

Peter says;

20 For if they are overcome, having both escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and having

again been entangled in them, then the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. 22 The message of the true proverb has happened to them, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire." 2 Pet 2:20 - 22

Self control is the Spiritual fruit of mastery in this life long war with the flesh. Real born again christians never capitulate. We stumble, often. We sin, but we always pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and get back into the battle.

Why do you think we long so to see His face?! Because that war will be ended in a moment. IN the twinkling of an eye. As the song writer put it;

This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise, to seize the everlasting prize. I'll shout while passing through the air; "Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer"

We DO long for that day, but while we're here, we must be being kept filled with the Holy Spirit so that we have the power on tap for victory over what our fallen flesh desires. Self control.

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.

Against such things there is no law.

These galatian christians were all hung up about the law of Moses. Trying to attain salvation by keeping God's moral and civil and ceremonial laws. In their flesh. That's a recipe for false religion. A recipe for hell. Achieving salvation through a works self righteousness and sacramental hoops you jump through is a recipe for hell.

So Paul argues, instead of trying to accomplish spiritual realities in the

power of the flesh, conquer the flesh, by the Spirit. Spirit filled people have no need to worry about Moses laws because the Holy Spirit becomes God's law living itself out in you. *Against such things there is no law.*

Recall that just a few verses ago Paul argues this in vs. 18; *18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law*

. . . Against such things there is no law.

Vs. 18 prefaces the fruit of the Spirit and vs. 23b concludes the idea. Spirit filled Christians have God's law residing in their hearts. All they have to do is choose the good thing, the self control, in the power of God's spirit to realize these fruits. Moses becomes automatic if God's Spirit is the controlling influence of your life.

I was thinking about this a week ago Friday. Al Mohler was tackling a question someone had written in about the death penalty. Someone using this statement about not under law in order to over rule the death penalty.

We're not under law, we're under grace. Therefore the death penalty is no longer binding. Over ruled by grace. Is that true? The death penalty is obsoleted by grace?

It's an interesting question. We've heard people discussing grace vss. law our whole lives. Does grace render God's law given by Moses, obsolete? Poof, the law just evaporates?

Well, not according to Jesus. He clearly says not one jot or tittle will be removed. And then He says, well let's just read it because this is important;

17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in

the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 5:17 - 19

Listen again to what Paul says to the Galatians. *18 But **if** you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law 23b. Against such things (the fruit of the Spirit) there is no law.*

That's a conditional statement folks. If - then. IF this is true, then the second part is true. People who are regenerated and indwelt by God's Holy Spirit, who are walking in obedience to Him and with Him, and who are by the filling of the Holy Spirit and the mastery of self control in the Spirit's power, exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit as their normative daily walk,

That's the condition. That's the if part. If that is true, THEN . . . *you are not under the Law*

You don't need to obsess about the law of Moses if the Holy Spirit is causing the true law of Moses, which no one could keep, to be lived out in your life because of the fruit and the power of the Spirit. Pretty simple.

For all others who have **not** the Spirit of Christ, Moses law is in full effect and will make you just as dead as ever. Grace doesn't make God's laws obsolete. But it can save you from the death you deserve. And grace can also provide the power to have victory over sin that the flesh never could do.

And anyways, the death penalty predates Moses law. It goes all the way back to Noah, after the ark landed with just 8 people and the animals, God stated the imago dei and the resulting death penalty for those who take a human life. Kill the image bearer of God and by order of God, be killed.

All of God's law is in full effect. Grace saves us from the punishment we deserve. And now Paul gets very practical. What are the mechanics of how this works Paul?

vs 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Oh! How I wish this was a one time event. And if we embrace the reality of positional truth vss practical truth, it is in fact a one time event.

I am in Christ, and IN Him I died on that cross with Him, and I arose from the dead a new person with Him and in Him. Water baptism is a pictograph of that event. Buried with Christ in baptism and risen again out of the baptismal waters a new creation. The old is dead and gone and buried. The new is risen up out of the grave.

2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life.

That's what Jesus meant when He told Nicodemus, you must be born again.

Positional truth is real. Valid. It's like something that's bought and paid for that we don't quite have in our hands yet. It's an engagement ring that signifies the later reality is rock solid, we just don't have it in our hands yet. I've got the ring. It will happen. You can take the future reality to the bank. It's paid for, it's real, it's just not completely mine. Yet.

vs 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Crucified in that statement is past tense. Already happened. In the bank. But there is a sense where the positional must be practical truth. If we are in fact real born again Spirit indwelt regenerated christians, the evidences of the positional truth must be more and more practically realized as I walk and grow in my spiritual relationship with the Saviour.

One of my worst faults is I'm probably too quick to question people's stated reality, when I see no evidence.

Half the people in Tonopah are christians . . . but they can have three beers and watch a football game instead of worshipping God on a Sunday morning? Really?

Listening to MacArthur this week and he was saying according to John 4, the woman at the well, God's purpose in all of this is to gather worshippers. Christians who aren't worshippers? I have well founded doubts.

If all the people who claimed to be christians in Tonopah were actual christians and were worshippers of God, we'd be making a deal with the town to buy that boarded up elementary school and we'd have plenty of cash to fix it up. The Mormons would be embarrassed to have us next door.

But beer and ball games are apparently what christians do on Sunday mornings. Or not.

Positional truth is rock solid, locked down in place, an inheritance waiting for me and held secure in heaven, but evidence is not an unjustified expectation. *vs 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

Paul says; *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.* Rom. 12:1

The trouble with living sacrifices is keeping them on the altar. We keep jumping off.

The reason Paul had more fruit than perhaps any other christian before or since is because this verse was a reality to him. Practical truth. I've made

lots of poor choices in my life. I'm not very ascetic. We've just bought a newer truck that's going to massage our bums while we drive down the road. What would Paul say?

Well, you can look at his fruit and my fruit for the glory of Jesus and have your answer. In heaven we'll all have our wood, hay, and stubble burnt up. My fire will be pretty huge. Not proud of that. But it's getting pretty late for me to change it much now.

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

Paul has said this over and over in this letter. Gal. 3:2 *I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? After starting in the Spirit, are you now finishing in the flesh?*

The judaizers had come telling them; Moses. Embrace Moses. Become jews. Follow Moses, that's how you "walk" as christians. Keep Moses law. That's the walk that God wants from you.

Keep the ceremonies of Israel. Get circumcised. Obey the sabbath laws. Worship according to Moses prescriptions to the jews. You have to walk as jews in order to please God.

We have these folks today. Seventh Day Adventisits. Keep Moses laws. Observe the sabbath. Become jewish proselytes in order to be pleasing to God.

Here's Paul's answer; 2 *I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? After starting in the Spirit, are you now finishing in the flesh?* Gal. 3:1,2 25 *If we **live** by the Spirit, let us **also walk** in step with the Spirit.* Gal. 5:25

It was the Holy Spirit of Jesus who quickened you from the dead and gave

you the faith to believe that caused you to become a new creature. Forgiven. Adopted into God's family.

The way to walk as a christian is by following the same Holy Spirit who quickened you to life in the first place. Not Moses. Not cranking out God's law in your flesh. The christian walk is a Spirit walk.

Do you recall your babies, how they loved to stand on top of your big feet as you held their little arms and took steps with them. Baby steps. Their little feet on top of my big feet. Step, step, step. How they giggled with glee.

That's what we do with God's Spirit helping us walk, with Him. *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've got one thing going for me, preaching to 12 people in Tonopah, Nevada. I don't have to worry about anyone envying me. Although, if they knew how good you dear ones treat me they might in fact envy me a little.

Man made religion. False religion always ends up with a hierarchical ladder to someone who is at the pinnacle top of the pyramid. If you're an altar boy you want to be the priest. If you're the priest you want to be the bishop. If you're the bishop you want to be the archbishop. If you're the archbishop you want to be the cardinal. If you're the cardinal you want to be the pope.

We can't help ourselves. In our fallen flesh this is the default. Back in vss 20 and 21; *enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, 21 envying,*

These things are the default of fallenness. The fact that Paul has to remind them that these defaults of fallen flesh have crept back in, after they

abandoned the Spirit and embraced man made religion with rules and laws and days and seasons is damning evidence.

26b *envying one another*

Discontent is the driver in every war, every murder, every social construct like socialism and communism. Life isn't fair. He's got more than I do. I want what he has. It's the 10th commandment. You shall not covet.

The fact that this is where Paul has to go, immediately and in contrast to the clear teaching of spiritual fruit, is an indicator of where these folks have already fallen to.

False religion 101 26 *Let us not become those with vain glory, challenging one another, envying one another.*

Without the Holy Spirit, religion looks no different than a mob family, or a neighborhood gang. Puffed up dogs clawing their way to be the dog on top. That's our default we inherited from Adam. If that's happening in the church, you're operating by the flesh.

The fact that the internet is full of the chaos of so called christians fighting with each other over race and privilege and ethnic bias and wokeness and social justice issues is proof according to this letter from Paul, that the so-called church left the real church a long time ago.

Chapter 6 deals with how to restore those who bought the lie and have descended into this and other sins of the flesh.