

20. Galatians 5:1-6 Liberty versus Circumcision

October 26, 2008

This morning we will be beginning chapter 5 of the book of Galatians. Back in April when I was only beginning our third lesson in Galatians, I mentioned that John MacArthur, NavPress, and Warren Wiersbe all used the same basic outline of the book of Galatians. I told you that they saw chapters 1 and 2 as being Personal; chapters 3 and 4 as being Doctrinal; and Chapters 5 and 6 as being Practical. Warren Wiersbe further elaborated that Chapters 1 and 2 deal with Grace & the Gospel. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with the Grace and Law and Chapters 5 and 6 deal with Grace and the Christian Life. So this morning in our twentieth lesson we are venturing into the third and final section of Galatians which deals with the Practical teaching of Grace and the Christian life. And one thing I am convinced of is that more than once this morning we will be challenged to have a thorough understanding of God's Word because failure to do so is the easiest path to falling into error.

I would like to begin our text this morning with the last verse of chapter 4 and continue through to verse 6 of chapter 5.

Galatians 4:31-5:6 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. 5:1 ¶ Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. 5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

This morning's text is obviously directed toward Gentiles as the discussion involves becoming circumcised, which the Jews would have already undergone. But in addition to the concept of circumcision, which we will look at more in a few moments, these verses also teach us about freedom and liberty. In fact chapter 5 begins with a command from Paul that the Galatian believers stand fast in liberty. According to Martin Luther this plea to "stand fast" is equivalent to Peter's exhortation in 1 Peter 5 to "Be sober, and watch." John Brown equates this phrase with the personal responsibility of maintaining their liberty. John MacArthur in order to explain what standing fast means, goes with a more literal translation of the Greek and says "For freedom Christ has set us free." So in other words, be what you were meant to be.

But what is liberty? With regard to liberty, Warren Wiersbe states that "Legalists in our churches today warn that we dare not teach people about the liberty we have in Christ lest it result in religious anarchy." But while we will see more about what liberty is throughout chapter 5, I would first share with you the definition I was taught when I was younger. True liberty is the ability to live as we should and not as we please. Warren Wiersbe on Christian liberty says it is not a license to sin, but an opportunity to serve. In fact, Wiersbe further fleshes out the definition of liberty by saying "The Christian who lives by faith is not going to become a rebel. Quite the contrary, he is going to experience the inner discipline of God that is far better than the outer discipline of man-made rules. No man could become a rebel who depends on God's grace, yields to God's Spirit, lives for others, and seeks to glorify God. The legalist is the one who eventually rebels because he is living in bondage, depending on the flesh, living for self, and seeking the praise of men and not the glory of God."

Martin Luther says that this liberty is defined as the conscience being “free and quiet, not fearing the wrath of God to come...For who is able to express what a thing it is, when a man is assured in his heart that God neither is, nor will be angry with him, but will be forever a merciful and loving Father unto him for Christ’s sake?”

This is Christian liberty.

But the alternative to standing fast in the liberty of Christ Jesus is made clear in this first verse as well. The alternative is living under the yoke of bondage or yoke of slavery.

And the New Testament bears this alternative out also in Romans 6:14

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

One other passage of scripture that tells us more about this yoke of bondage is

Lamentations 1:14. *Lamentations 1: 14 The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up.*

The law reveals sin and as we saw in Romans 6:14, that sinfulness has dominion over us if we are not under grace. So this is the third picture of the law Paul has given in Galatians. He has called it a schoolmaster or custodian, a bondwoman, and now a yoke.

But Paul is not the only one to refer to the law as a yoke. In fact we saw it several weeks ago in Acts 15:10, when Peter says: *10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?*

But again this yoke of bondage does not have to be our eternal destiny. Our text says “and be not entangled”, which implies that they are not powerless in the matter, but rather that they have chosen to be found in bondage. But as new creatures, we can stand fast in Jesus instead of being bound. And in fact our Lord and Savior in Matthew 11:28-30 declares this truth Himself: *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* So the message is that those under the yoke of bondage should come unto Jesus. This is why I asked for **Hymn #389 – I am Resolved** to be sung. The first 2 verse alone demonstrate this truth.

*I am resolved no longer to linger,
Charmed by the world’s delight,
Things that are higher, things that are nobler,
These have allured my sight.*

*I am resolved to go to the Savior,
Leaving my sin and strife;
He is the true One, He is the just One,
He hath the words of life.*

Refrain

*I will hasten to Him, hasten so glad and free;
Jesus, greatest, highest, I will come to Thee.*

Now before I move past the first verse, I must share with you what John Brown says about this first verse. John Brown summarizes it well:

“What an admirable system is pure Christianity! How grateful should we be for clear and full statements of it we have in the New Testament Scripture! How deeply should we study it! How jealous should we guard it against corruption! How anxiously should we seek to experience more and more of its generous and holy influences – its efficacy to purify and to bless! How grateful especially should all be who have reason to hope that they are in possession of this liberty! He whom the Son makes free is free indeed. Every man is naturally a slave; and he only is truly free whom grace has made a freeman.”

Next we come to verse two where we find another bold plea from Paul to get the Galatians to listen. “Behold, I Paul say.” This statement provides another opportunity for the Galatians to accept Paul’s apostolic authority by listening to him. But under his apostolic authority, what does he want them to know? He wants them to understand what circumcision does and what circumcision does not do. Verses 2, 3 and 6 speak clearly about circumcision. So let’s look at the tradition of circumcision.

Turn to Genesis 17, where the practice of circumcision began.

Genesis 17:10-14 ¶ 10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. 11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. 12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. 13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

And circumcision is more than just a custom of the Jews. It is a part of the Mosaic Law. *Leviticus 12:2-3 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. 3 And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.*

John MacArthur, in his Galatians commentary discusses circumcision and he says “Rather than looking on circumcision as God had given it – as a symbol of His covenant promise – most Jews looked on it as having spiritual value in itself. To them it was not a reminder of God’s gracious and sovereign blessing but a means of humanly guaranteeing His favor.” This was what the legalists or Judaizers were trying to convince the Galatians about. They wanted them to believe that you must secure God’s favor by human means. MacArthur says further “Paul’s objection here is not to circumcision in itself....Paul’s warning about circumcision pertained only to the false idea that in itself it carried spiritual benefit or merit. The Judaizers were saying, in effect, that faith in Jesus Christ, although important, was not sufficient for complete salvation. They taught that what Moses began in the Old Covenant and Christ added to in the New Covenant had to be finished and perfected by one’s own efforts – the centerpiece which was circumcision.”

But these arguments of the Judaizers is easily debunked by closer examining what else the Old Testament has to say about circumcision. Here is my first example of our need for a stronger dedication to studying and obtaining a deeper understanding of the Scriptures. Turn first to Deuteronomy 10.

Deuteronomy 10:12-16 ¶ And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, 13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? 14 Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. 15 Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. 16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked. So in this passage Moses instructs the children of Israel what God requires. And part of what God wants for His people is that they circumcise the foreskin of their hearts. But how serious is this desire of God?

Well we only need to look to the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel for that answer.

Jeremiah 4:4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

And stronger yet is what Ezekiel says.

Ezekiel 44:9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.

So brothers and sisters, Paul in Galatians 5 was not denying the need for circumcision of the heart, but he was denouncing the false teaching that circumcision of the flesh was a necessity for salvation.

So if we can agree that we must be circumcised in the heart and not in the flesh, how do we accomplish this? Here again the Old Testament is not silent.

Deuteronomy 30:1-6 ¶ And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, 2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; 3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. 4 If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: 5 And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. 6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

The circumcision of the heart that we all need, is a work of God, not a work of men. Truly as Jonah declared, "Salvation is of the Lord." Oh, that God would do such a work of circumcising the hearts of men this morning. So fleshly circumcision profits nothing spiritually and to mistakenly believe that it does results in making the person a debtor to do the whole law according to Galatians 5:3, Galatians 3:10 (that we previously looked at) and James 2:10 that we are all familiar with.

Paul well summarizes this whole matter in Philipians 3:3 when he writes "*For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*"

And so I would you give you the tenth way to finish Wiersbe's statement as **If I want to be a really good Christian I must be circumcised in the heart not in the flesh.**

Now I want to quickly look closer at verse 4 as I must admit it is a verse to struggle with (and as an aside I want to thank Brother Bruce for making available John Piper's sermon, "Why God inspired Hard Texts" because it was a blessing to me this week even as I struggled with this very text.). I doubt that I need to point it out, but this verse is easily mishandled and has led many to denounce the doctrine of eternal security. This was evident to me as I was searching online for various sermons and opinions on this verse. The second site in my Yahoo searchlist was www.truthablaze.com and that site, says the following about Galatians 5:4 " The above verse should be enough to motivate us all unto abiding in Christ and maintaining a living faith in Him. Because of all the controversy surrounding the unconditional eternal security doctrine, it is important that we rightly divide the word of truth and bring to light such biblical concepts. From scripture, we can clearly see that the possibility exists of falling from grace. This is a frightening concept, but we have a responsibility, not only to teach what we consider to be "uplifting" truths from the bible, but also those things that are sobering and cause us to remain fresh in our relationship with the Lord."

But is that what Paul is saying? Absolutely not. Again I would commend we all be better students of the Bible by pointing out that specific words matter. I believe we need to be students of the Word by being students of the words in the Word.

First, we must be sure about the Galatians. Were they Christians or not? We have discussed this before but repeatedly in this book Paul calls them brethren and in chapter 4 Paul said they were not just sons, but also heirs. Woefully, failure to understand this has been a part of both sides of the argument. Those that believe in perseverance of the saints have erred in saying that in verse 4 Paul is talking to unbelievers who have heard the gospel but just missed the boat and not believed. Also incorrect on the other side is the failure to recognize that Paul continually calls both Jews and Gentiles in this church brethren both before and after this text. So they would have to see a nonsensical fluctuation in the status of the Galatians' spiritual condition from chapter to chapter during the very process of Paul writing the book of Galatians. Wiersbe points this out in his commentary when he writes "'fallen from grace' is not suggesting that the Galatians had lost their salvation, because throughout this book he deals with them as brethren and he also uses the pronoun we."

But I believe the key in understanding this verse is in the phrase "whosoever of you are justified by the law". We have seen previously in our study of Galatians that this is in fact an impossibility. No flesh is justified by the law. That is shown in Acts 13:39, Romans 3:20, Romans 3:28, Galatians 2:16, Galatians 3:11. So in verse 4, what Paul is showing is again the impossibility of justification by the law. It cannot be done because it has nothing to do with grace. The law will never be a means of justification no matter what you think or do. As I struggled with this I came across a passage that I saw as a parallel that helped me understand it.

Romans 9:30-33 ¶ What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Like oil and water, justification by grace and justification by the law cannot mix. Justification always has and always will be by grace alone, apart from the works of the law. Martin Luther on this verse says "Either thou must forego Christ, or the righteousness of the law." Again, you cannot have it both ways. You either believe the Bible that justification is by faith through grace or you believe sinful men and hold that justification is by works. John MacArthur says "Paul is not dealing with the security of the believer but with the contrasting ways of grace and law, works and faith, as means of salvation. He is not teaching that a person who has once been justified can lose his righteous standing before God and become lost again by being circumcised or otherwise legalistic. The Bible knows nothing of becoming unjustified."

Contrasting to verse 4, Galatians 5:5 provides us with the status of Paul, the Galatians, and all Christians through ages. Verse 5 says "*5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*"

About this verse, Martin Luther wrote "There is nothing more precious in all the world to the true children of God than this doctrine."

MacArthur sees this verse as displaying the 3 characteristics of a godly life: living through the Spirit, living by faith, and waiting for hope of righteousness. The righteousness of Jesus Christ is something certainly worth waiting and hoping for. And as a matter of practical teaching, let me read to something else Martin Luther wrote on this verse.

"Let us learn, therefore, in great terrors when our conscience feeleth nothing but sin, and judgeth that God is angry with us, and that Christ hath turned His face from us, not to follow the sense and feeling of our own heart, but to stick to the Word of God, which saith that God is not angry, but looketh to the afflicted, and such as are troubled in spirit, and tremble at His word (Isa 66:2), and that Christ turneth not Himself away from such as labour and are heavy laden, but refresheth and comforteth them (Mat 11:28)."

This brings me to an eleventh way to finish Wiersbe's statement: **If I want to be a really good Christian I must through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.**

I will conclude this morning's lesson by reading verse 6, which is a summary of what we have looked at this morning. But before I do, I would also tell you that verse 6 is the only verse in Galatians that Spurgeon preached on four times. So perhaps we should give it our full attention.

6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

No matter what men may teach, you cannot add imperfect or worthless works to the complete, perfect and priceless work of Jesus Christ. May the Lord grant us lives of dependency on His grace and not any work of the flesh.

21. Galatians 5:7-12 Leaven

November 2, 2008

As we began Galatians chapter 5 last week, we looked at physical and spiritual circumcision and in the end, verse 6 said it the best:

6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

This morning we are going to go through 6 more verses of chapter 5 and as we do we will see not only some more about circumcision but also we will look at another idea that has its root firmly in Jewish tradition.

Paul will once again show not only his zeal for the best Christian walk for the Galatians but also his contempt for the Judaizers.

Galatians 5:7-12 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? 8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. 9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. 10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. 11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. 12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

As I looked at this passage a few weeks ago in my own study, I really felt led to momentarily slow down and spend some time on primarily one verse – verse 9. But before we look at that one rather short verse, I want to quickly look at the other 5 verses of our text together. In this section of Galatians, Paul throws his hardest punch at the Judaizers, but in so doing he never loses sight of his most important target: restoring the Galatians. In verse 7, Paul uses the language of a race – imagery that he appeals to elsewhere in his epistles. He says about the Galatians – You ran well in the past, but there's a problem in your running now.

Even in this verse I believe we find evidence of the fact that the Galatians were Christian believers. Every time Paul uses the imagery of the race (i.e. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Philippians 2:16, Philippians 3:13-14, 2 Timothy 2:5, 2 Timothy 4:7, and even Galatians 2:2) believers are pictured as the runner and according to Wiersbe other commentators, this is meant to parallel the Greek Olympic Games, which during the first several centuries were only open to freeborn citizens of Greece. Only Christians can run and complete this race. But as Paul points out, there were some hindrances or obstacles on the race track for the Galatians that was distracting them – that was taking their eyes off the prize that Jesus Christ is. And as Paul says in verse 8, this isn't from God, which by contrast means they are from Satan. And in verse 10 Paul makes it clear that those that are causing all of this commotion will be judged by God. In verse 11 we catch a glimpse of another accusation being made against Paul – it is believed that some of Judaizers even said Paul believed circumcision was required. Some conjecture they pointed to Timothy as a proof of that belief. But Paul makes it clear that if that is the case than the cross isn't offensive but is instead unnecessary. And before Paul can let the Galatians think for a moment that this might be true, Paul makes one of the boldest statements in all of his epistles. In verse 12, he wishes that they were not just circumcised but emasculated. Some hold that his wish is actually for the Judaizers to be cut off from the land of the living. But I personally think what Paul is asking for is the inability for them to propagate their falsehoods even further. I believe Paul wanted them to never reproduce their lies again. He wants the world purged from these false teachings. And this is consistent with Wiersbe who says Paul didn't want them to produce any more "children of slavery".

With that said, I want to refocus the rest of this morning onto verse 9. While this verse seems to say so little, in fact in my opinion it says enough to fill the rest of this morning's lesson with plenty left over (in fact my notes usually average 5 or 6 pages per lesson but when I really began preparing this morning's lesson I had 15 pages of notes). So let's look at *9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*. I want to try to explain some of the Jewish ideas associated with this verse as well as to share with you some of the spiritual implications intended in this verse.

You should know that I could not possibly speak about this verse without my mind being flooded with thoughts of the Jewish Passover. To see why I say this, turn to Exodus 12:15, 18-20. *15 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven <07603> out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread <02557> from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.*

18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. 19 Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. 20 Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

We won't take the time, but a parallel passage to consider on the subject is Deuteronomy 16:1-4. Both passages make it extremely clear that a Jew could neither eat nor possess leaven at the risk of being cut off or excommunicated from the congregation of Israel. But why the prohibition of leaven? Why is the Lord so adamant about the absence of leaven?

Let's begin trying to answer that question by looking at the word leaven. The word leaven comes from the latin word *levemen* which means that which raises. If you looked up the word leaven in the dictionary, beyond the first definition dealing with that which causes fermentation by a fermenting agent such as yeast, you might find 2 other definitions that I believe will help shed some light on our subject matter this morning. The 2nd definition is anything that by touching or tinging causes a modification. The 3rd definition is perhaps the most overlooked. Leaven is any influence which works silently but strongly that causes change. And this is evident in the Bible as in almost every use of the word leaven, it represents sin. Leaven, just as sin, is a small thing in its original size but it spreads secretly and quietly until it becomes puffed up and powerful. It works silently but causes a significant change in all men.

In Hebrew there are actually two words for leaven, both of which are used in Exodus 12:15 and 19 [שֹׂאֵר (07603 *seh-ore*) - leaven 5; חֵמֵץ (02557 *khaw-mates*) 1] the thing leavened, leaven]. Chametz is the more commonly used of the two words, but chametz is really a technical term used to describe any one of five basic types of good grain that when mixed with water and allowed to remain will ferment. These five food grains are wheat, rye, spelt (a European wheat), barley, and oats. While these grains are not inherently considered leaven, when they are mixed with water they become a problem. To be specific according to the rabbis, if any of these grains come in contact with water, for more than 18 minutes they will become leavened unless they are prepared and baked (In fact in Israel some fields of grain are guarded to ensure that from the time of harvesting they don't come into contact with water, or if it does, it is baked within 18 minutes). In addition to forbidding these 5 types of grain when mixed with water for more than 18 minutes, the rabbis also prohibit Jews from having any food that contains baking powder, baking soda or vinegar as these three substances can all lead to food appearing to rise during food preparation. This should remind us of 1 Thessalonians 5:22 which says "*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*"

But let me get back to the word chametz. It is actually derived from another Hebrew word chamates which means to be sour, embittered or grieved, or to be cruel, oppressive and ruthless.

This is why removing chametz or leaven from the Jewish home is considered the most important action of preparation for celebrating the Passover. And I would dare say that from Galatians 5:9, Paul would see removing leaven from local churches as the most important defensive action we can take. In the Jewish home, this process requires absolute diligence and precision and is a task that must not be underestimated.

There are a few Jewish traditions involving the removal of leaven but the most important one involves removal of every trace of leaven from within their home. Beyond the commands of Exodus 12 to remove all leaven, this form of preparation also finds its roots within another less obvious passage of Scripture. Turn to Zephaniah 1.

Zephaniah 1:12 And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil.

This verse which describes God searching with a candle reminds us that God sees what others do not - God searches the heart. He searches and finds the sin which is within us. And as this verse reminds us, he punishes those settled on their lees, or in more modern English those who are sitting content and relaxed in their sins.

From this one verse in Zephaniah, a tradition has been developed that has been carried out within Jewish homes for at least 2,000 years. For days and even weeks, all Jewish families do what could be considered the ultimate spring cleaning. Every room where it is possible for leaven to be eaten or tracked in must be searched from top to bottom and cleaned if necessary. Special attention must be given in the rooms where eating occurs, but imagine some of the other locations that must be searched, such as under all the chair and couch cushions, throughout your cars, in handbags, and even in baby strollers. Even your toothbrush must be replaced on Passover. But the rabbis warn that the focus of the removal of leaven must not be overtaken by the need for the appearance of a tidy home - so the goal is removal of leaven not necessarily organization. All pockets of all items of clothing must be emptied. Every book must be held by the spine of the cover and shaken to remove possible crumbs. Tables which can be opened to put additional leaves in must be separated and scraped for possible crumbs and then scoured with boiling water. My father use to tell of this extensive cleaning when he was growing up. Two of his tasks used to be scraping the bottoms and cracks of all the tables and beating out all of the rugs outside of the house.

In addition to general house cleaning, the area with the most need for attention is undoubtedly the kitchen. And like everything else, the rabbis have a lengthy list of rules about the kitchen. It is the obligation of all Jews to ensure that whatever cookware, utensils, or dishes are to be used during Passover free from chametz or leaven residue. For this reason some interesting practices have developed. Many Jewish women possess two sets of dishes - one set for during only Passover and the other set for the rest of the year. In extremely wealthy Jewish homes, a second kitchen is built that is only entered or used for these eight days of the year. But for most who find this action to excessive for their budget, there are ways of kashering or cleaning your one and only kitchen (a lot of it involving boiling water).

And once families have spent the necessary time cleaning out the entire house, there is one final tradition that must be observed. On the night before Passover, or about 24 hours before the Passover itself, the father of the household will take a wax taper candle, a feather or a feather brush, a spoon, and a brown paper bag to do what might be termed an ancient game of hide and seek. Earlier that morning, on the 12th, the mother of the home and the children hide 10 piles of crumbs in various parts of the house. That night, the father goes through the entire home with his candle and other instruments and searches for any leaven that might have been missed. When he finds some, he sweeps it onto the wooden spoon with the feather or feather brush and then deposits the crumbs into the bag. Of course the mother is obligated to make a careful list of all the chosen sites, in case the father cannot find one of them.

Once all ten piles have been found and collected, the father says a set of two prayers. The first prayer says "All leaven in my possession which I have not seen or removed or of which I am unaware is hereby nullified and ownerless as the dust of the earth." Then he prays "Our God and God of our ancestors, just as I have removed all chametz from my home and from my ownership, so may it be your will that I merit the removal of the evil inclinations from my heart." The next morning, the morning before Passover, all the Jewish fathers gather together, often with their children and hold a community bonfire where they dispose of the bags of crumbs, the feather, and the spoon. At the bonfire the two prayers are repeated and then the families return to their leaven free homes.

But with all of these elaborate traditions in mind, we would all do well to consider the possible leaven that needs removed from our homes and our own lives. Consider the sinful influences that have infiltrated every nook and cranny of your life and consider the difficulty of removing it. But despite the difficulty, consider also the necessity of this task and spend some time praying for the grace to discover this leaven in your life.

So why do they take this so seriously? Essentially, their problem with leaven is that it represents sin. They see leaven as a symbol for corruption, uncontrolled passions, and the evil inclinations within man. But they primarily associate leaven with the sin of pride, because pride puffs a person up. One of the earliest people to associate leaven with the sin of pride was the Greek-Jewish philosopher Philo who not only described chametz as pride, but also said that to remove chametz is the struggle to remove our sense of self-importance. But this association of leaven and sin is also consistent with the NT, where in all but a couple of cases leaven represents sin. As I look at the associations of leaven with sin in the NT, I see 6 types of leaven that I want us to now examine.

The first two descriptions of sinful leaven are both found in 1 Corinthians 5.

1 Corinthians 5:1-8 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

This passage of Scripture is clearly overflowing with references to the Passover. But the first type of leaven encountered in this passage is the **1) “old leaven”** which refers to according to multiple commentators including John Gill as the old nature or the sins of the old life.

The second description of leaven we find is found in verse 8 where it mentions the **leaven of malice and wickedness**. Since malice is not a word that we often use, another way of putting this would be the leaven of ill-will or the leaven of depravity (in fact malice implies not being ashamed to break a law). Clearly, the man of verse 1 was demonstrating such a form of contamination and as a result, Paul was warning the church of Corinth because he understood how such sin was already fermenting within their midst and spreading just as leaven spreads throughout a lump of bread.

The next three descriptions of leaven are all somewhat related to one another. They are **the leaven of the Pharisees, the leaven of Herod or of the Sadducees, and the leaven of hypocrisy**. Each of these forms of leaven are detailed within the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Turn first to Matthew 16.

Matt 16:5-12 And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. 6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. 7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. 8 Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? 9 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? 12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. <Now turn to the parallel in Mark 8>

Mark 8:14-15 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. 15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

Within both of these two accounts we find the warning against the leaven of the Pharisees; however, in Matthew we find a warning against the leaven of the Sadducees while Mark warns against the leaven of Herod. But these really the same as the Sadducees were the more political Jewish leaders and were in fact closer with Herod than the Pharisees during the time of Christ. But to better understand what these two kinds of leaven are really all about, turn to Luke 12 where we will find our Lord's comments on a similar occasion.

Luke 12:1-5 In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. 3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. 4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Clearly in Luke 12 we find that the leaven of Matt 16 and Mark 8 are synonymous with the leaven of hypocrisy.

The 6th and final description of leaven as sin is found in our text in Galatians 5. It is the leaven of false doctrine. It is the leaven of anyone who teaches contrary to the true gospel.

For a few moments, let me share with you what some of the commentators say about this type of leaven.

Starting with John Brown, he says “Had these men [the Galatians] understood the tendency of the first step, they might perhaps not have taken the second. Had they contemplated the termination of their career they might probably never have commenced it.”

John Gill’s commentary on verse 9 says “so a small error in doctrine, as it may be thought to be, increases to more ungodliness, and eats as doth a canker; and though a few hands may be first concerned in propagating it, and but few be infected with it, yet these may soon spread the contagion through the whole society: wherefore errors and false teachers should be nipped in the bud, and stopped in their beginnings, how inconsiderable soever they and their tenets may be judged to be.”

And finally, Martin Luther says “In philosophy, a small fault in the beginning, is a great and foul fault in the end. So, in divinity, one little error overthroweth the whole doctrine. The doctrine is not ours, but God’s, whose ministers we are; therefore we may not change, or diminish one tittle thereof.... Paul, therefore, by this sentence warneth as well teachers as hearers to take heed that they esteem not the doctrine of faith as a light matter, wherewith to dally at pleasure.”

We would do well to recognize that doctrine matters and a neglect of doctrine will eventually destroy everything.

Paul obviously wants the churches of Galatia to be unleavened – to be committed to the true Gospel. The contrast is the living in the flesh and living a Christ-like, Spirit filled life. We will see more of this in the rest of Galatians 5 but perhaps now you can better understand why I asked for **Hymn #176 – Break Thou the Bread of Life** to be sung this morning. As the third verse of that hymn declares:

*Thou [Jesus] art the bread of life, O Lord, to me,
Thy holy Word the truth that saveth me;
Give me to eat and live with Thee above;
Teach me to love Thy truth, for Thou art love.*

This morning I have spent the bulk of our time looking at one verse and examining the 6 types of leaven outlined in the NT. To fight against these 6 types of leaven, we must seek to live a life of separation from our former ways, we must heed the sincerity of Scripture, we must desire to serve others in the body of Christ, and we must obtain a proper understanding of what Christ has done, all while walking a Spirit filled life by the grace of God. Quite a task we have before us - in fact it is a lifelong task that we must not ignore or neglect if we are to keep from being infiltrated and destroyed by the leaven of sin. May the Lord give us the grace to have our lives scoured so that more and more we can be both a new and a holy lump.

With that said, I would like to provide the twelfth way to finish Wiersbe’s statement: **If I want to be a really good Christian I must search for leaven in my life and I must strive to purge it out when I find it.**

22. Galatians 5:13-18

Fulfilling the Law

November 9, 2008

Last week we spent the majority of our time looking at Galatians 5:9, *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*. I will remind you again that this verse should renew our dedication to searching our lives for the hidden leaven of sin and that at all costs we should hold to true doctrine, knowing that even the smallest of errors can progress to utter destruction as infiltrates everything it touches. With that in mind, I would tell you again that our Heavenly Father and Paul desire the absolute best for the churches of Galatia and for us at Covenant Baptist Church. As this fifth chapter of Galatians began, Paul wants them to live in true Christian liberty. This morning we will press onward into chapter 5 and cover verses 13 through 18.

Galatians 5:13-18 ¶ 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.

In the first lesson in this series on Galatians, I told you that one description for this book is the Magna Carta of spiritual liberty. As it says in Psalm 84:11 “no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” And in verse 13 Paul once again reminds them of God’s best for His people – Christian liberty – the ability to live as we should and not as we please.

But you may recall that I mentioned a couple of weeks ago that Warren Wiersbe said “Legalists in our churches today warn that we dare not teach people about the liberty we have in Christ lest it result in religious anarchy.” And while that statement is far from being true, Paul does point out a danger involved with Christian liberty. The second section of verse 13 says “only *use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh*”.

According to John Brown, when Paul refers to “the flesh” he means the depraved inclinations which though subdued are by no means extinguished even in the regenerate. In other words, the fight against the flesh in this life is never over. As Paul says in Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. We will come back to this passage later in our lesson, but let it be realized that the flesh doesn’t need any help in making a hard situation worse. So how exactly can Christian liberty result in an occasion to the flesh or indulging the sinful nature? Woefully, on this verse Martin Luther said “the more sure we are of the freedom purchased unto us by Christ, so much the more cold and negligent we be in handling the word, in prayer, in well doing, and in suffering adversities.”

But other than neglecting Christian discipline, John Gill provides additional examples of how the flesh is indulged. John Gill wrote “When under a pretence thereof men think themselves exempt from obedience to the civil magistrate, which is using this liberty as a cloak of maliciousness; or that they are free from obedience to the law of God, as a rule of walk and conversation.” This again should provide us with evidence that Christian liberty is the ability to live as we should and not as we please.

Paul continues on in verses 13 and 14 by providing how we can avoid this wrong application of liberty. *“13c 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.”*

While love may seem like a trite answer to some, it is the only means of properly living the Christian life. As Wiersbe states in his commentary, “It is not law on the outside, but love on the inside that makes the difference.”

But should love really be considered the summation of the law?

As I was studying for this lesson, I did run across what I thought was a rather interesting excerpt from John Gill that I would like to share with you in trying to answer this question:

“six hundred and thirteen commandments they say were given to Moses—David came and reduced them to eleven, Psalm 15, Isaiah came and reduced them to six, [Isa 33:15](#) Micah came and reduced them to three, in [Mic 6:8](#) Isaiah came and reduced them to two, [Isa 56:1](#), Amos came and reduced them to one, [Am 5:4](#) but this being objected to, it is observed that Habakkuk came, “and reduced them to one,” [Hab 2:4](#) that is faith, as here the apostle reduces them to love:”

So Christian love, which is the evidence of faith is the answer.

But secondly to prove this, I would argue that Paul was not saying something new when he wrote Galatians 5:14. Our Lord and Savior also gave much instruction on how central love is and I would like to spend a few minutes reminding us all about this command (not suggestion).

Matthew 5:43-44 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

John 15:17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

And finally, look at the passage I see as the key to answering our question.

Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Two commands of love sum up all of the law and prophets. So love really is the answer. But let me ask another question – what does real love look like? I will try to answer this question by sharing with you what two theologians have said. And as I tell you their answers, just like last week when I challenged you to look for the leaven of sin in your life, this morning I want us all to inspect our own lives for the signs of love. This lesson was of course going through my mind during Wednesday night prayer meeting recently when Linden Viinalass challenged us from Revelation 2.

The first theologian I would cite is Martin Luther. In his commentary, he said that the means of demonstrating this love, is “to instruct him that goeth astray, to comfort the afflicted, to raise up the weak, to help thy neighbour, to bear his infirmities, to endure troubles, labours, ingratitude, in the Church, and in civil life to obey the magistrates, to give honor to parents, to be patient at home with a froward wife, and an unruly family.”

Secondly, John Gill also provides such an answer in his commentary on this passage. This is what he said “as it becomes them to love one another, as the new command of Christ, their profession of religion, and their relation to each other, require, so they should show their love by their service; as by praying one with and for another, by bearing each other’s burdens, sympathizing with and communicating to each other in things temporal and spiritual; in forbearing with and forgiving one another; by admonishing each other when there is occasion for it, in a meek, tender, and brotherly way; by instructing and building up one another on their most holy faith, and by stirring up one another to all the duties of religion, private and public.”

To summarize, this text provides us with 2 equations. Liberty minus love equals license and eventually slavery to sin. But liberty plus love equals service to others and Christian fulfillment.

But before I move on, I would also point out from verse 14 that this text is proof that the law has a purpose because otherwise it would not need to be fulfilled at all. While I won’t spend time fleshing my belief out, I also believe that another purpose of the law is to help define what love is.

This morning we opened by singing Hymn #2 Love Divine and I would remind you for just a moment of the first 2 verses of this hymn:

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling;
All thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation;
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit,
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit;
Let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its Beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

The love of God through faith in Jesus Christ truly is the only way any of us can declare that our hearts have been set at liberty.

This leads me to my thirteenth way to finish Wiersbe's statement: **If I want to be a really good Christian I must fulfill the law – by loving my neighbor as myself.**

But Paul knows this is easier said than done. So in verse 15 he writes *15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*"

But what exactly does this verse mean? Paul isn't saying that he understands and it's okay if we don't love, but he is saying that we must be extremely careful when we fail to love. I think this verse is well explained by John Brown who says that by Paul's urging mutual love and then cautioning against biting and devouring, Paul was warning against an opposite extreme to the bondage of the law. That is demonstrating that their sinful problem was some sort of ostentatious and untimely display of freedom from the Mosaic law that caused the weaker brother to stumble. So be careful how you choose to live in Christian liberty. Love must be paramount in the choices we make. As Paul says in *1 Corinthians 10:23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*

With that said, let's move on now to verses 16 through 18.

In the book of Galatians there are at least 14 references to the Holy Spirit contained in 13 verses. But our text this morning presents one of the most imperative statements. Look again at verses 16-18:

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.

I want to look at this admonition of walking in the Spirit eventually, but before that I want to look closer at the struggle described in verse 17. And while I mentioned it briefly earlier this morning, this verse cannot possibly be looked at without also examining Romans 7, so please turn there again for a moment.

Romans 7:18-25 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Despite this struggle, verses 16 and 18 make it clear you can't have it both ways at any given time. You either live a spirit filled life or a life in bondage to the law – a life that is awakened to the lust of the flesh. On this struggle described in both Galatians and Romans, John MacArthur said "The unsaved man knows nothing of this battle because he does not have the Holy Spirit." Do you know anything about this struggle? If not, I plead with you to look to Jesus as your only hope of salvation.

So for the remainder of this morning, I want to look at this vital command to "Walk in the Spirit."

The first thing I would point out about this command is that it's not a one time command that you fulfill and then you move onto something else. According to Marvin Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, "walk" is metaphorical for habitual conduct. Walking implies a journey as well as a destination and we are definitely not there yet, but we are stepping closer day by day. Secondly, walking requires you go in a specific direction. You cannot walk in faith and walk in the law at the same time. This is not to say you cannot ever take a step back but this is not a swing we are on; it's a walk. Which way are you walking in your daily life?

Walking in the Spirit implies submitting to the Spirit. As John MacArthur says "What God the Father planned for you, and God the Son purchased for you on the cross, God the Spirit personalizes for you and applies to your life as you yield to Him." Similarly, Kenneth Wuest Word Studies in the Greek New Testament wrote "The Holy Spirit is not a perpetual motion machine which operates automatically in the life of the believer. He is a divine person waiting to be depended upon for His ministry, and expecting the saint to cooperate with Him in it."

As this verse declares, walking in the Spirit is not fulfilling the lust of the flesh. Walking in the Spirit means more than not indulging the flesh. It means subduing it.

2 Timothy 2:19-21 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. 20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

I believe this well defines the meaning of walking in the Spirit – purging from the leaven of sin and being used by God's preparing us to perform good works. Lord willing we will see more about walking in the Spirit next week as we delve further into this chapter and contrast the results of the flesh and the Spirit.

Much more could be said about defining what Walking in the Spirit means, but really I believe that all of the New Testament comprises the handbook about how to walk in the Spirit. Let me conclude with one more passage of Scripture. Turn to John 16.

John 16:13-14 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Are your eyes open? You can't walk in the Spirit with your eyes closed. This morning we have seen that we must live by love and not in the flesh. We must love freely to be free. And ultimately, we must keep walking in faith. We must walk in the Spirit. We must live, love, and walk in the truth of Jesus Christ and what He has done for His people.

23. Galatians 5:19-26 Working to Death or Bearing Fruit November 16, 2008

Last week we examined how walking in the spirit and loving our neighbor is the only way to living a liberated Christian life as opposed to a licentious or enslaved life. This morning I would like to finish chapter 5 but we will again see these two opposing ways of life as we examine one of the most familiar portions of the book of Galatians, Galatians 5:19-26.

Galatians 5:19-26 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. 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. 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.

Our text this morning is the contrasting of two lists of actions and behaviors. The first list is contained in verses 19 through 21 and the second list in verses 22 and 23. One list is lifeless and the second list flows from the life of Jesus Christ. One list describes the natural man and the second list that describes the regenerated man. One list finds its source in the flesh and the second list finds its source in the Holy Spirit. One list delineates the works or deeds of the flesh, or as the NIV calls it, the acts of the sinful nature, and the second list is what we all know as the fruit of the Spirit. Even though these lists are fairly easy to understand, we will look at both lists separately and we will see the stark contrasts between the lists.

The first contrast I would point out is the description of the lists. The first list is all about works and the second list is all about fruit. While the word works implies toil, effort, labor, strain, and the unending expending of energy, the word fruit implies something living and growing. These contrasts should remind us all of the contrasts in Romans 6:23. *Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Hebrews 9:14 sheds further light on these works as it refers to the efforts of men as "dead works". There is no hope of any reward, let alone any life that can come forth from any or every effort put forth by the flesh, no matter what law or extent of the law someone adheres to. The works of the flesh will suck all energy out of a person without any hope of return. The first list is a never ending action with only death as the end result. But the second list is not from our efforts. It is entirely from and by the grace of God. It is the fruit of the Spirit not the fruit of any man. It is not the result of man's labors it is the result of God's working in and through man.

The second contrast I want to discuss is pointed out by many commentators. It is that the word "works" is plural, while the word "fruit" is singular. Various explanations of this difference exist but let me share some of them with you now. One explanation is that the works of the flesh are individual and varied works and they are not necessarily related to one another but the fruit of the Spirit is one combining of all nine characteristics. Secondly, if you commit one of these works of the flesh and thereby transgress God's law you are guilty of all of them, but when you are restored through Christ, the all nine characteristics are brought to pass by the Spirit as one encompassing fruit. All of the fruit of the Spirit are to be found in each believer because there is a harmony between them.

Regarding the singularity of the fruit of the Spirit, I liked what Baker's Evangelical Dictionary said. "Some have suggested that the singular stresses the truth that the fruit is one cluster with many individual parts, as one diamond has many facets. Others have suggested that the singular refers to one harvest and the unity of the characteristics that the Spirit produces within the individual. Another possibility is that the fruit of the Spirit is actually one, love, with the other virtues being different manifestations of love in operation."

With these contrasts in mind, let's begin by looking at the first list, the works of the flesh. This list describes the state of all men apart from Christ, and it describes our existence before regeneration. This is all that fallen man's life will ever result in prior to death. And this list represents the habitual way of life and not the one time occurrence of the flesh. The unregenerate are continuously dominated by these works.

But the list of Galatians 5:19-21 is not the end all be all list of what the corrupt flesh can bring about – in fact Paul says at the end of the list in Galatians "and such like" meaning there are more dead works that he does not mention. But there are other similar as well as different lists found in the New Testament and if you want to examine them I would send you to Romans 1:26-32, Ephesians 5:1-5, and 2 Timothy 3:1-5. But this morning, let it suffice for us to look at one other list before we move further. Turn to Mark 7. From all of these passages I mentioned you could compile quite a list of sinful actions that were prevalent in the days of Paul and still remain prevalent in our very day, but the uniqueness of the list in Mark is that it comes directly from the lips of our Lord and so that is why I want us to look at it briefly.

Mark 7:20-23 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

What the Lord said about this list is true of Paul's list in Galatians 5. These dead works come from within. They come from the dead heart in unregenerate men. And these works completely defile. The far-reaching impact of this defilement is clear from what Paul says at the end of verse 21: "*they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*". With that said, let's begin looking at the works of the flesh.

Depending upon which version you are reading, you will find between 15 and 17 works of the flesh. And as we look at this list of the works of the flesh, I would point out that Warren Wiersbe breaks them down into 3 categories (although he does not take them all in the same order they appear in our text). The three categories are the sensual sins, the superstitious sins, and the social sins.

The sensual sins do vary slightly between versions as some versions combine the first two works into one. The KJV first lists adultery and fornication, which involve sexual sin between married and unmarried men and women, but the NIV, ESV, and NAS all combine these two into one either immorality or sexual immorality. The next two sensual sins are uncleanness and lasciviousness or impurity and debauchery. Uncleanness is filthiness of the heart and mind. Lasciviousness or debauchery according to Kenneth Wuest is lawless insolence; it is contempt for public opinion; it is shameless living that outrages against public decency. These sensual works of the flesh are certainly prevalent in our society today. Wiersbe lists two other sensual sins: drunkenness and revellings or orgies and I do not think either of these needs any further explanation.

The second category from Wiersbe are the superstitious sins and there are two of them: idolatry and witchcraft or sorcery. And I can't possibly go past witchcraft without pointing out that the Greek word is pharmakeia from which we get the word pharmacy. So does this mean that three members of this local body need to find a new profession? No, the origin of this word is that magicians, witches, and sorcerers used to give people drugs to bring about their evil effects – they intentionally poisoned or drugged others to get them to do what they wanted.

The third and final category Wiersbe describes are the social sins and it is the longest list with a lot of similar terms. Included in this list are hatred, variance, strife, and wrath, each representing different degrees of anger. The KJV also includes murders within this list (it is only one Greek letter different from the word for envyings).

Also in the social sins are emulations which are jealous rivalries, envyings which the Greek carries the idea of carrying grudges in addition to wanting what another person has, seditions or divisions, and heresies (dissensions due to differing opinions).

These are the unprofitable works of the flesh and the summation of this list in my opinion is well described with another passage that Paul wrote: Romans 8:7-8 *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.* Whatever is not subject to the law of God, so what ever fails to love thy neighbor as thyself, whatever fails to please God falls into this list of the works of the flesh.

This is why even this chapter, ends in verse 26 by saying *“Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.”* Even as believers the struggle with the works of the flesh continues.

So how do we battle or overcome these works of the flesh. The most straightforward answer is to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit. And we will look at that list in a few moments, but verse 24 tells us another defense. It says 24 *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

On this verse Charles Spurgeon preached a sermon entitled “A Vindication of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith” and in that sermon he provides several ways that a man can crucify the flesh. In that sermon, Spurgeon prescribes four antidotes which include, seeing the evil of sin (it is what caused Jesus to die), seeing the death of Christ (the most amazing instance of the great grace of God), seeing the justice of God (in other words seeing that God hates sin intensely), and seeing the amazing love of Jesus (a pure, perfect, intent on an errand of love). And one of the statements that struck me the most was when Spurgeon said “Now, when a man is made to see that sin in its essence is the murderer of Emmanuel, God with us, his heart being renewed, he hates sin from that very moment. “No,” he says, “I cannot continue in such evil. If that be the true meaning of every offense against the law of God — that it would put God himself out of his own world if it could — I cannot bear it.” Do you look at your sins like this? We would do well if we did. I have said it before in our study of Galatians, but our pet sins are no different than daggers or perhaps better stated no different than the nails that slay Jesus Christ.

The solutions put forth by Spurgeon as well as the contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit is well illustrated in the first verse of our hymn this morning. **Hymn #493 – Since the Savior Found Me**

Since the Savior found me, pardoned all my sin, I have had the joy and living hope within; Gone is all the shame and sorrow of the past – They're underneath the precious blood of Christ at last.

Saved, saved, saved – I'm happy on the way. Saved, saved, saved – I love Him more each day; Saved, saved, saved – I know He's mine each hour; He saves and keeps and sanctifies me by His pow'r.

With that in mind, let's move onto the second list: the fruit of the Spirit.

And this list is so simple that I can tell you firsthand that even a two year old can be begin to understand. <When we learned a scripture song from this passage Ellie at age 3 and later when Joseph was 2, both learned to sing the fruit of the Spirit. So if you can't list all 9 fruit of the Spirit I tell you not to be daunted because even a 2 year old can list them with a little bit of practice.>

Again, these nine characteristics make up one fruit and are the result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. The Spirit enables us to fulfill the law of God. The Spirit enables us to overcome the flesh. And now we find that the Spirit enables the believer to produce fruit. But Warren Wiersbe says something rather profound that I have found true in my past history as a Christian, and perhaps you have experienced the same. He says "It is unfortunate that an overemphasis on gifts has led some Christians to neglect the graces of the Spirit. Building Christian character must take precedence over displaying special abilities." Shamefully in my own experience, many Christians have gone to an extreme with spiritual gifts and because of this, other Christians including myself have sinfully neglected and even avoided exploring and cultivating the fruit of the Spirit. This is a leaven that we must purge ourselves from if we are to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

So again the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. When Wiersbe talks about the fruit of the Spirit he reminds us that the old nature can counterfeit some of the fruit but it can never produce real fruit. And he also says "Just as fruit cannot grow in every climate, so the fruit of the Spirit cannot grow in every individual's life or in every church." We must make sure that we avoid any hinderances to the bearing of the fruit of the Spirit. Just as a garden must be weeded, so too must our lives. Wiersbe also points out that we do not produce this fruit for our own consumption, but rather this fruit of the Spirit is brought forth that others might be fed and helped. If it was for ourselves, we would just be guilty of the jealous rivalries, envyings, and heresies that typify the works of the flesh.

And we should be emboldened and encouraged this morning by what it says immediately after this divine list in verse 23: "against such there is no law." We are free to bear this fruit as it will never result in sin if it is really what we are doing. So if you want to endeavor to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit, one suggestion I would give is to do a word study on these nine characteristics as each of them is rich and none of them are isolated to only this text, although some are more spoken about in the Bible than others.

My second piece of advice to those here this morning that want to endeavor to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit, actually comes from an article by AW Pink entitled "The Spirit Fructifying". There he wrote "There are three leading passages in the New Testament on this subject. John 15 names the conditions of fruitfulness: union with Christ, purging by the Father, abiding in Christ, and Christ and His Word abiding in us. Galatians 5 furnishes a description of the fruit itself. 2 Peter 1:5-8 states the order of fruit or the process of its cultivation." So in addition to doing a word study, we would all do well to study John 15, 2 Peter 1:5-8 and our text in Galatians 5 intensely.

Now let's look quickly at this second and most important list. When I was a teenager I was taught that the fruit of the Spirit could be broken down into 3 categories the upward, the outward, and the inward. Others have described them as the Godward, the manward, and the selfward.

The upward or Godward are love, joy and peace. The outward or manward are longsuffering, gentleness and goodness. And the inward or selfward are faith, meekness and temperance.

While we could probably spend weeks on the fruit of the Spirit, I will discuss only one this morning – the first on the list: love. The very first thing listed amongst the fruit of the Spirit is love and as I mentioned before, many commentators on this point state that all of the other fruit of the spirit are outgrowths of love. In fact, Spurgeon preached a sermon entitled "The First Fruit of the Spirit" in which he also put forth the view that love encompasses the other eight. But we will look at that more in a few moments.

According to AW Pink, "Galatians 5:22, 23 enumerates nine of the graces communicated by the Spirit. Some have suggested that the last eight are but varied expressions of the first." He then proceeds to quote A.T. Pierson who sums up this list so well. A.T. Pierson said "Joy is love exulting, Peace is love in repose, Longsuffering is love on trial, Gentleness is love in society, Goodness is love in action, Faith is love in endurance, Meekness is love at school, and Temperance is love in discipline"

Oh that we would show more and more of these manifestations of love. And as we saw in verse 14, love is the fulfillment of the law. According to Vincent's Word Study, agape love is a love toward persons like a person's love toward their parents, their spouse, their children, their king, and their country. It is a love that involves the intelligent estimate of what that person is really worth.

With that said, to finish out my time this morning, let me share with you some of what Spurgeon said on the subject of the fruit of the Spirit.

"It is matchless love which has caused the Holy Spirit to bear with our ill manners, and bear our vexatious behavior. He stays though sin intrudes into his temple! He makes his royal abode where evil assails his palace! Alas, that a heart where the Spirit deigns to dwell should ever be made a thoroughfare for selfish or unbelieving traffic! God help us to adore the Holy Ghost at the commencement of our discourse, and to do so even more reverently at its close!

The Holy Ghost when he comes into us is the author of all our desires after true holiness. He strives in us against the flesh. That holy conflict which we wage against our corruption cometh entirely of him. We should sit down in willing bondage to the flesh, if he did not bid us strike for liberty. The good Spirit also leads us in the way of life.

If we be led of the Spirit, says the apostle, we are not under the law. He leadeth us by gentle means, drawing us with cords of love, and bands of a man. "He leadeth me." If I overtake a single step in the right road, it is because he leadeth us, and if we have persevered these many years in the way of peace, it is all due to his guidance, even to him who will surely bring us in and make us to enjoy the promised rest."

If we appreciated these truths that Spurgeon preached, perhaps our lives would more reflect the fruit of the Spirit.

Later in this same sermon Spurgeon says

"The fruit of the Spirit is love." It is first because in some respects it is best. First, because it leads the way. First, because it becomes the motive principle and stimulant of every other grace and virtue. You cannot conceive of anything more forceful and more beneficial, and therefore it is the first....I have seen a work for the Lord prospering splendidly, like a fruitful vine, when suddenly there has come a frosty night and fond hopes have been nipped: or else new notions, and wild ideas have descended like insect blights and the fruit has been spoiled; or if the work has escaped these causes of damage, some immorality in a leading member, or a quarrelsome spirit, has appeared unawares like a worm in the center of the apple, and down it has fallen never to flourish again. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." You must take care of your fruit if you wish to have any laid up in store at the end of the year; and so must every Christian be very watchful over the fruit of the Spirit, lest in any way it should be destroyed by the enemy."

May the Lord help protect us from such blights.

To conclude this morning, I want to give you the fourteenth way that I would finish Wiersbe's statement is: **If I want to be a really good Christian I must have a life that yields the fruit of the Spirit by yielding to the Spirit.**

I will be out of town next week on a business trip, but Lord willing after Thanksgiving, we will venture into the sixth and final chapter of Galatians. But this morning, my prayer is that the Lord grant us a bountiful harvest of the Fruit of the Spirit in our day.