

~ FULFILL THE LUST OF THE FLESH....

GALATIANS 5:16 – 21

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~ Many people erroneously believe that by trusting Christ, and having their sins forgiven, they somehow shed their old nature. Now, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; and old things are passed away, and all things have become new; but Paul, who wrote those words in second Corinthians chapter three, also said, “... *the flesh wars against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye may not do the things that ye wish.*” So, we can know there is a balance to be learned in this doctrine. There is a battle that continues in the life of every believer between the old nature and new nature; as long as we reside in this flesh. And, of course, the new nature can be victorious – but only *IF* we are empowered by the Spirit of God to recognize truth from Holy Writ — and *IF* we hold the sound doctrine of the apostles. That, by de facto, necessitates Bible study.

Our last several reports in Galatians brought us out of the doctrinal section of “*justification by faith,*” and we are now in a practical section of “*sanctification by the Holy Spirit.*” In our last report, Paul told us to stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and to not be again entangled in the yoke of bondage. Christ has set us free. He has delivered us from this present evil world according to His will; not according to law. You and I do not have to serve this world any longer, friends. That should be a great comfort to everyone reading this report. It is to me.

Paul says, “... *I live, yet not I.*” You and I cannot live a so-called Christian life – whatever that may or may not be. Only Christ living through us is any kind of life at all. That’s where our liberty is wrought from. If you are attempting to live a Christian life, then you are heading for Christian Tragedy. Christ was made a curse for us, and it is He Who delivers us from the curse of the law. Therefore, we have been delivered from judgment; and, you will remember, the condemnation for breaking any of the law was death – horrible death by stoning.

Israel had the Mosaic System of Levitical Law for around fifteen hundred years; of which Peter said, “... *that neither the fathers nor we are able to keep.*” Christ’s death delivered us from our offenses, and we have been raised in Him for our justification; by which justification God might show forth the exceeding riches of His grace and kindness toward us in the ages to come. Throughout eternity, you and I will be a demonstration of the grace of God to His created universe; and God will have done it *ALL*, my friends. Nothing you or I will ever do will enter into the equation of God’s grace.

That, my friends, is the offense of the cross. The offense of the cross will cease for us someday. Today, the cross offends every facet of existence that man prides himself in. The cross is profoundly offensive to man’s philosophies; because the cross reveals our works cannot justify us to a holy God. It is an offense because the appeal of the cross is to *faith* — not reason. The cross is an offense to culture because the truths of the cross are revealed of babes. The cross is an offense to man’s sense of caste because God chooses — and only uses — the poor and humble. The cross is an offense to man’s will because the cross calls for an unconditional surrender to authority. The cross is an offense to man’s pride because the cross reveals the exceeding sinfulness of the human heart and mind; and the cross is an offense to *ME* because the cross says, “*you must be born again.*” When Jesus said that to old man Nicodemus, Pharisaical Nikki was deeply insulted. Nikki was religious to his toenails.

This is why a proper, correct and complete teaching and preaching of the Word of God will get you in a whole lot of trouble in your church today. The modern church is so far away from truth that they don’t even know what truth is. The congregants don’t want to be born again; they think they are good enough just like they are. Teach what I am teaching in my safari reports in your Sunday school class, and they won’t ask you to teach very much — I can promise you that. Make no mistake about it: the cross is an offense; although I don’t think we should magnify that offense any more than we have to, as long as we don’t compromise the Gospel message by displaying temperance.

Anyways, it is grace – not law – that frees us from what is wrong, and allows us to do what is right. Grace does not set us free to sin – it sets us free *FROM* sin! Any genuine believer today will have a desire to please a righteous God. It isn't an obligation – we desire to please God because we are his children. If we have been truly converted, then we will do the will of God — because He is our Father. The life of Christ is in us; and that's why we love Him. Jesus said, *"if you love Me keep My commands."* If one of the apostles had said, *".... we don't love You,"* then my estimation is that Jesus would have replied, *"then don't bother."* The whole basis of salvation is a love relationship with Christ. The law could never bring us to that place; because that would be impossible.

The law was given in the negative, *"....thou shalt NOT...."* – it is a negative goodness. I wish the self-professing believer could process these truths; because their negative goodness is a legalized religion that will ultimately fail them and leave them shipwrecked in the faith. They say, *".... I don't do this, and I don't do that"* — but they can't mention anything that they *DO*. They sure don't support the Lord's work. Many saints jump up and say, *".... I don't go to the movies, and I don't smoke, and I don't associate with certain people."* The problem is, most of them don't get up and go to Bible study to learn His Word, either; I just happen to know what I am talking about – because they aren't here. Legalizers never rise to the place where they do things simply to please God, or as a result of their love for Him. Well, God wants us to serve Him on *THAT* basis – and none other....

***16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the desires of the flesh.***

~ There are many desires of the flesh that are not evil in and of themselves; but they can occupy the place of that which is spiritual. Many Christians get wrapped up in a hobby that ultimately draws them away from the Word of God. Many of these people spend a whole bunch of time and money on that hobby; but they give *nothing* to the work of the Lord; and even less to a sincere, educated, proper, correct and complete Bible study. There's nothing wrong with a hobby, or television, or any of that – don't get me wrong; but – you must understand those are all desires of the

flesh. Anything that takes you away from or prevents you from equal time for spiritual things, then it is wrong — period....

***17 For the flesh is at war against the Spirit, and the Spirit is at war against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye may not do the things that ye wish.***

***18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.***

~ The greatest deception of those who think they have rid themselves of their old nature is that they haven't rid themselves of the old nature. That's a very bad state of mind, my friends. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us — that's present tense — and self-deception in this connection is the most spiritually deadly doctrine there is. If the truth isn't in us, then we're liars — period. That places a perfect individual in a precarious situation. The Word of God says you are a liar. Don't blame me — blame your self — or God — or whatever.

Paul knew what he was talking about when he said these things; and I suspect anyone reading this report knows all about the spirit warring against the flesh. The super-duper sinless perfection saint stopped reading this report a *LONG* time ago. Our new nature rebels against the old nature at every turn in our lives! There is a song that goes like this:

*Come thou fount of every blessing ~  
~ Tune my heart to sing Thy grace  
Streams of mercy never ceasing  
~ Calls for songs of loudest praise  
Prone to wander, Lord I feel it ~  
~ Prone to leave the God I love*

Well, that's a wonderful hymn; but someone came along at some point and didn't care for it; so, they revised it, because they didn't believe it correctly described their condition — so, they changed it to say:

*Come thou fount of every blessing ~  
~ Tune my heart to sing Thy grace*

*Streams of mercy never ceasing  
~ Calls for songs of loudest praise  
Prone to worship, Lord I feel it  
~ Prone to love the God I serve*

Well, friends, which is true of you? Are you prone to wander or prone to worship? Are you prone leave God or are you prone to love God? Actually, both are true, but the old nature wants to wander away very badly. Just give the old nature half a chance, and it will outweigh the new nature in a heartbeat. The point is: the old nature and the new nature are at war – and they always will be at war down here. My old nature never gets around to worshipping God, that's for sure. Let's be honest, it's much easier to get very far from God than it is to get closer to Him. Okay, maybe not you – but I certainly find that to be true in my own life. I also find that's the condition of other believers I know; and most of them are very dear saints. We all know if we are walking in the Spirit of God or not, too, friends; let's not kid ourselves about these things....

***19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, prostitution, sexual uncleanness, pornography, brutal and sadistic sexual lasciviousness,***

***20 Idolatry, witchcraft, pharmaceutical drugs, hatred, variance, emulations, rivalries, jealousy, wrath, bad tempers, strife, factions, cliques, divisions, seditions, heresies, insurrection,***

***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.***

~ So, Our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition with a very bad list of very bad things. I changed some of the words on this list, and added others to expound on them and translate closer to the original Greek. Some of these are sensual sins that the flesh commits, and some are religiously spiritual sins. The flesh can be extremely religious, friends. Idols can be everything from modern day gadgets, to covetousness, to money, to children, to family. Carnal Christianity has overrun our modern churches.

Drugs have been used in heathen religions since day one. Many are doing it right now. We also have social sins; and cliques and divisions in the church that hurt others as much as gossip does – and gossip can kill. Probably most people don't commit murder; except as the Lord Jesus said, *“if you are angry at your brother without a cause you are guilty of murder!”* By that standard, I am a psycho-killer! How many people have you murdered this week? There are also personal sins like drunkenness and revellings – code words for *P-R-I-D-E*. These are the things the flesh does automatically; we call it *“... doing what comes naturally.”* *“Such like”* means there is a whole lot more to this list, too. If these things are practiced in your life, and you live in these sins, then you're not saved; it simply cannot be otherwise. Unbelief towards these things result in hell ~

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