

**PALOMINO VALLEY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP**

**Sunday, July 2, 2023**

**Galatians 5:13-21, and 22-26**

***The Spirit And The Flesh: The War Within Us, Part Two***

**and**

***The Fruit Of The Spirit Is---***

Order Of Service

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Comment On July 4<sup>th</sup>

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Today

On July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia and adopted the United States Declaration of Independence.

It is well known that 33 year old Thomas Jefferson was credited with writing the original draft, announcing to the world, and Great Britain in particular, that the 13 British colonies were now separated from Great Britain—free and independent from the tyranny of the king and British Parliament.

What is less well-known, is that one year earlier, when Jefferson was 32 years old, he authored another document that members of the Congress were signing; a Declaration to pick up arms against England.

As it turned out, freedom came at a high cost of life and fortunes.

Most Americans celebrate the freedom won by those brave patriots, remembering the cost and cherishing that freedom resulting from the victories of those battles against Great Britain.

Not all colonists wanted that independence, preferring, rather, to stay under the thumb and taxation of the British government and subject to the dictates of the king.

Unfortunately, we have some people of a similar mindset in America today that despise our Constitution and our freedom; wanting instead, to tear down America, and place our nation under a one-world anti-Christian, Marxist type government.

Since those days of seeking God, our nation now runs from God and we are seeing His judgment coming upon us.

Our freedoms must be continually guarded. We must guard our freedom as written in our Constitution and Bill of Rights—freedoms not given as favors from government, but freedoms given by Almighty God.

In our study of the apostle Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia, we have learned about another freedom not described in our Constitution or Bill of Rights; that certain freedom that can only be provided by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Son of God—the freedom that cost Jesus Christ His physical life on earth.

By His sacrificial death He gave His people freedom from slavery to sin.

Paul described this freedom in ***Galatians 5:1*** *It was for freedom that Christ set us free, therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*

Our text for today will be the same as last week, ***Galatians 5:13-21***, then we will examine the remaining verses of *chapter 5, verses 22-26*.

Within those verses, we will find more of Paul's "solid food" or "meat" of the word of God, as opposed to the milk of the word.

Since we looked closely at verses 13-15 last week, we will include those verses in our reading, but begin our study at verse 16.

**Vs. 13** *For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*

**Vs. 14** *For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."*

**Vs. 15** *But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.*

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

**Vs. 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 may not do the things that you please.*

**Vs. 18** *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.*

**Vs. 19** *Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,*

**Vs. 20** *idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,*

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

**Vs. 22** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

**Vs. 23** *gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

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

**Vs. 25** *If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.*

**Vs. 26** *Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.*

Last week, in verses 13-15 we learned about our call to freedom; God's will for us to love our neighbor as ourselves, which is not a suggestion, but a command.

We were also reminded about what being “born again” means, and that without being born again, without *regeneration*; a complete change of one’s soul which only God can do, no one will see or enter heaven.

Paul provides a contrast between being called to *freedom and loving our neighbor as ourselves*, and that behavior described in *verse 15* about *biting and devouring one another and being consumed by one another*.

Being born again, that is, professing a genuine faith in Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior, allows God to forgive us of our sins, save us from His wrath, and give us eternal life in His Kingdom.

However, while we still live in this body of flesh, we find it strongly contrary to our fleshly desires to obey God’s commands, because as Paul states in **Romans 7**, sin dwells in the flesh.

***Romans 7:18*** *For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.*

So the question is, “How can I love my neighbor as myself when my flesh leads me to bite and devour him?”

Now, in *verses 16-18*, Paul teaches us the solution, the remedy for submitting to the desires of the flesh—again, not a suggestion, but an imperative.

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

Being born again, you are indwelt by God’s Holy Spirit.

But, there is some thought and effort required on the part of every believer, with the foundation of thoughts and effort being heartfelt prayer and complete willingness to submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

We find it nearly impossible to obey Christ’s commands in our own power. We must be willing to be led by the Spirit’s power so that we are able to deny the desires of the flesh.

The question is, “How do I walk by the Spirit?”

You walk by the Spirit by resting with full assurance in God’s promises, without any doubt, that He will accomplish in you exactly what He said He will do.

But, if you do not read the word of God for yourself, you will not remember His promises.

Bask in the word of God. *Know* the word of God. *Know* what He has promised you.

**Vs. 17** tells us why we must be willing to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit:

*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 may not do the things that you please.*

Do you see that? Yes, the flesh has been crucified with Christ, but we still live in the flesh and it wars against the Spirit. That's why we cannot enter heaven in our flesh.

The flesh is our enemy, but God's promise is that we will be changed! In an instant, in the twinkling of the eye, at the last trumpet! (*1 Corinthians 15:52*)

The wicked desires of the flesh include the mind, the heart, the tongue; the entire body.

What that means is we must be willing to forsake our own pride, our own selfishness, and in humility, submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit who will clearly tell us what is good and what is not.

This is the war within us, and, as followers of Jesus Christ, we cannot fight this war on our own, we must allow God to be the victor.

And everyone who is born again can do this because God has made us new creatures in Christ—the old things have passed away. (*2 Corinthians 5:17*)

When Paul says to us, "*Walk by the Spirit*," he reflects what the apostle John wrote about Jesus' teaching in:

**John 15:4-11** *"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.*

**Vs. 5** *"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.*

**Vs. 6** *"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.*

**Vs. 7** *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

**Vs. 8** *"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.*

**Vs. 9** *"Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.*

**Vs. 10** *“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.*

**Vs. 11** *“These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.*

Here is the freedom Christ called us to. We were freed from enslavement to sin. We were freed to abide in Christ and Him in us.

We are freed to bear fruit for the Father’s Kingdom, and the Father is glorified by our fruit-bearing. Did you notice what Jesus said? By bearing fruit, we prove to be His disciples.

We are freed to obey Christ’s commandments, we are freed to abide in His love.

We are freed to submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit—freed to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Bearing fruit means all these things: Abiding in Christ, obeying Christ’s commandments, loving our Lord Jesus Christ, loving our neighbor as ourselves, and walking in the Spirit rather than in the flesh.

We are freed, then, to know Christ’s joy in us, and freed to experience the full joy of salvation in Christ.

### The Evidence Of Walking In The Flesh

**Galatians 5:19-21** Paul now describes the various behaviors resulting from submitting to the flesh and the danger of walking in the flesh as opposed to walking in the Spirit, saying, *“those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

Paul’s words in this verse should be of great concern to those who profess faith in Christ but live according to the ways of the world.

He is not saying that if you have ever been involved with any of these sins you will not go to heaven. All these sins are forgivable.

But, if you continue, without repentance, to practice these behaviors, you will never see nor enter the kingdom of God.

Jesus warned His people many times while He ministered in the world. Then, after His resurrection, He warned the churches through the apostle John’s letter, Revelation.

During last week's message, the need to be "born again" was emphasized because of the warnings in Scripture. We cannot take salvation for granted, nor can we take it lightly.

This is why Paul, as he received revelation from the risen Christ, wrote in **2 Corinthians 13:5** *Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do not not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?*

In **Philippians 2:12-13** *So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;*

**Vs. 13** *for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

Working out your salvation does not mean saving yourself.

It means obeying God's will, obeying Christ's commands, it means abandoning all those wicked behaviors Paul mentioned in our text; giving up personal pride and selfishness for the sake of humility.

In context with our text for today and last Sunday, it means loving your neighbor as yourself, which, by the way, may not always be an easy thing to do.

This is where we must answer a crucial question: Is it more important to stay offended by my neighbor, or is it more important to obey God's commands?

Which behavior proves that I am a disciple of Jesus Christ?

What Is Walking By The Spirit?

**Galatians 5:22-23** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

**Vs. 23** *gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

It is obvious that walking by the Spirit and bearing the fruit of the Spirit is directly opposite of walking by the flesh.

The old *you* lived by the desires of the flesh, and the new *you*, that new creature in which Christ lives, and lives in Christ, lives by faith; faith in Jesus Christ, faith in God's promises, faith that He is conforming you to the image of Christ, faith that the power of the Holy Spirit is available to you to overcome the flesh.

Notice back in **Galatians 2:20** *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

Paul confirms this once again in chapter **5:24** *Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

*The fruit of the Spirit is that which is produced by the born again person as they employ their spiritual gift, or gifts.*

One of the fruits of the Spirit is love. But even unsaved people demonstrate love for one another and help one another. They help in all kinds of ways; help with hunger, with finances and education. They help others in their illnesses and other problems.

What Paul is referring to here is another type of love; a love for the body of Christ—a deep concern, a compassion, a love for Christ’s church; His bride. This love is described as the communion of the saints.

It’s a love that refuses to hate another true Christian in which Christ also dwells—a love that forgives. This kind of love is not a noun; an emotion, but it is a verb. It’s how we behave toward others in the faith.

Everything else Paul mentions in these verses; joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control—these behaviors are the result of a willingness on our part to listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Joy and peace are examples of our faith in the promises of God and the work of Jesus Christ on the cross and in His resurrection.

We know we have been forgiven. We know God our Father has imputed the righteousness of Christ to us.

We know we are freed from condemnation, we know we will be changed and will live in a new, perfect spiritual body in His kingdom forever.

Following the joy and peace in Christ, the other fruits are to be our behaviors, especially toward all those in Christ.

**Vs. 25** Since we are in the Spirit through our faith in Christ—baptized and sealed by the Holy Spirit, we are then to live by the Spirit.

Jesus Christ, through the apostle Paul, is saying to us something like this: “Be separate from the world.” “Forsake the flesh!” “Abandon the flesh and live for God!”



**Vs. 26** Here it is. Humility! Love for God and His Christ, love for His church, love for your neighbor.

No boasting that someone is more mature than someone else. We are all family, with an attitude of kindness and gentleness toward one another.

Amen! Let us pray---

Worship

Benediction: ***Romans 15:5-6*** *Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!*