

## Galatians 6 The Law of Christ

Jeremiah 31: 31-35  
1 Corinthians 9:19-27

So here we are, the last Chapter of the book of Galatians. Paul has ran the gambit throughout this letter from sharing his personal testimony, rebuking false teachers, warning brethren against being deceived by false teachers and to stand fast in their Faith.

Paul used some harsh words at times rebuking the false teachers because as far as Paul was concerned these men were not a part of God's true church but rather they were wolves in sheep's clothing who had come to cause dissension, confusion, and division among the brotherhood. He spent a large part of this letter explaining from scripture who really are the people of God. He argued who the true Israel was, and who was the true offspring of Abraham, and it wasn't the physical offspring of Abraham, it wasn't these Jews who were trying to convert the Christians into following Jewish Law and Tradition.

Paul argues that the Law leads to death. It is slavery and all who follow it are bound by it, slaves to it, and in the end die by it. He asks, why would you want to go to something that only can provide punishment and death? Since Paul argued so strongly against the law it may leave one to wonder then how to live out your Christian life and that is what we looked at last week.

Paul said that those of faith, who have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are not bound by any law. Rather, they are free from the law, its requirements and punishments. Christ came, fulfilled the law becoming a curse for God's children, He took the punishment upon himself and died in the place of God's children paying the ransom cost for our souls that we may become adopted children of God.

He said that those who are Christs, will walk in the spirit bearing fruit of the spirit and he listed those in the end of Chapter 5 that we read this morning. This was his answer to the question of how we live our lives without a list of rules and regulations. He said that those walking in the Spirit will have the spirit working in them and will act as God's children without needing a list of laws and regulations. He says that the entire law is fulfilled in one word, which is Love.

Last week we looked into how indeed love covers the law requirements. This love that we have for one another, and for those around us which is not really of ourselves but rather is the out flowing of the Holy Spirit working in us. Our lives should be defined by this love, we should be known as people who have the traits of those who live in the Spirit that Paul listed in Chapter 5.

Years ago there was the popular mantra of "What would Jesus do." I know, I almost cringe when I think of it because of what it became. It lost it's meaning in the marketing, it made lots of money in the selling of bracelets and bookmarks and the message really was lost. The idea was suppose to help you live a better Christian life. When a decision, or problem, would come into your life before you act, you

were supposed to ask yourself What would Jesus do. The big problem with this, besides the obvious commercialization of it, was the focus.

The problem with this phrase is that we really don't want to do what Jesus would do. What did Jesus do? He died, he laid down his life for people who hate him, and despise him, he died for his enemies. As Paul says in Romans, scarcely will someone die for another, yet Christ died while we were enemies. This is what Jesus would do, it is the working of his Love toward his people. And that is the standard that is set before us, we are to love as Christ loved us. I don't think very many people wearing the bracelets thought about putting their life aside for another, or even dying for another person but that is what we are called to do.

That is the concept that Paul is talking about when he says that we should set aside our liberty's for another. If Christ loved his enemies so much that he would die for them so that they may become brethren, and children of God we should at least be able to love enough to put others before ourselves. Not everyone is called to die for God, but we are all called to love our neighbors as ourselves.

This is of course impossible, and we fail constantly. We can not even love as we ought. Our pride, our selfishness, and our sin gets in the way. Those who still look to the law as a guide for their christian life call us lawless. But I would argue we are called to a higher calling then just living out a moral, righteous looking life. We are called to love our neighbors as yourself...and quite honestly that is much harder then not lying, murdering, stealing, or observing certain days differently then others. When our standard becomes Christ, we realize how pitiful we really are.

If we seek to measure ourselves to the law, we can convince ourselves that we are doing pretty good. But if we measure ourselves to Christ's love, and his sacrifice for us, it really puts us in our place. That is how it can be said that Love fulfills the law. It is a higher standard, it is much more. But even in this one thing we fail, so even in this we can not justify ourselves. We need Christ, and the Holy Spirit working out Christ's love through us. Even the love that we show does not make us righteous, but rather it is just the natural out flow of a changed heart.

if we are Christ's we are in the spirit and love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control will flow out of us, it is not ours, it is God's working through us. So what does it mean to walk in the spirit, or live in the spirit. Paul says in Chapter 6:1 that if a man is overtaken in sin, those of us who are spiritual need to restore that person in a spirit of gentleness.

There is a lot of talk today about being spiritual. People want to have a spiritual experience without religion. To Quote Robert Wuthnow, who is a known for his work of sociology in religion says about American Spirituality, "Growing number of Americans piece together their faith like a patchwork quilt. Spirituality has become a vastly complex quest in which each person seeks in his or her own way. "

Some people seek spirituality through solitude. They think that cutting themselves off from the world will make them more spiritual. Martin Luther Wrote " More and graver sins are committed in solitude than in the society of one's fellow men. The devil deceived Eve in paradise when she was alone. Murder, robbery, theft, fornication, and adultery are committed in solitude, for solitude provides the devil with occasion and opportunity."

Catholic Monks would go into solitary, deprive themselves of outside temptations, but Martin Luther found that sin was in him and that locking himself away did not keep sin away, but he discovered as he said in the quote, More and graver sins are committed in solitude.

The bible says the heart is exceedingly wicked, our very core is wicked and evil, We don't need outside influences... we have everything we need within ourselves to live in complete rebellion to God.

Then there are those who don't seek solitary for their spirituality but seek the church itself. They believe that the church traditions, and liturgy grows a spiritual life. Paul has just spent the last 5 chapters arguing against such traditions so its rather safe to say that this is not the way either.

And lastly, people seek a spiritual event, or experience. Seeing a sign, talking in tongues, miraculous healings, This idea largely divides the church between the haves and have nots.. the spiritual and the non spiritual those who practice such things and those who do not. The bible never makes such distinctions and without making some pretty basic hermanutical errors you will be hard pressed to find the support for many of these types of spiritual worship supported in scripture.

So what is being spiritual then? Simply, it is exactly what the Galatians experienced with Paul, and each Christian experiences personally. It is based on a personal relationship with a personal God who has spoken an eternal word. Our spirituality is not something that we create, or drum up ourselves..just like good works, or the ability to love our neighbors it comes from the Holy Spirit and flows out of us.

So spirituality is the exact opposite of what Robert Wuthnow said. The Holy Spirit does not produce spiritual fruit in us for us to nurture and keep for ourselves, it flows out to others. As Ryken said in his commentary, "It is less like a hidden fruit tree tucked away in a secret garden, and more like a one that grows in a public park." It is there for everyone to partake of, and enjoy..it is not a path of personal spiritual enlightenment.

Looking at the entire book of Galatians it can really be divided in 3 sections, and we did this a few weeks back if you remember. We divided it into Paul's Biography, theology, and ethics. We can also look at it this way. The first few chapters show us What we are not, Chapter 4 and 5 show us what we are, and chapter 6 shows us what we should be, or rather how we should be. Paul starts into some practical teaching of how to deal with things that will arise in the life of a Christian.

He says that those of us who are spiritual, if we find a brother or sister who is overtaken by sin, we should seek to restore that person. But notice he says, in a spirit of gentleness, which is one of the fruits of the spirit. We don't go in guns blazing seeking to fix this person or else. Paul is talking about those who are also of the spirit, they are fellow brothers and sisters in the family of God we should seek to restore them in love. Not because we are right and they are wrong, not because it is our job to impose some sort of law upon them, but rather if we see one that we love falling away we should in love seek to bring them back.

I think that it is important to note that the Love that Paul talks about here, and that is talked about throughout the bible is not the type of love that we see common today. The idea of loving someone today basically means that you support and agree with them completely. If you do not support, or agree with this friend or family member you are considered to not be loving. That is contradictory to what Paul is saying here. If you see your child, or family member, or dear friend about to get seriously hurt or stupid, if you love that person you won't just sit idly by because you love them so much that you fully support their desire to walk across a busy highway blindfolded. No, you would try to stop that person, reason with them, explain to them why this is a very bad idea.

This modern idea of love is completely wrong, they like to take a phrase from 1 Peter and say that love covers a multitude of evils, really meaning that if you love them you would be OK, or supportive of their evil. That idea, is well frankly quite stupid...rather since you love them you seek to restore them, protect them, or in many cases share the gospel so that they may be free from the slavery of sin.

This really is what Paul is talking about here in the first part of Chapter 6 He says that we are to bear one another's burdens. We are the family of God and we should act like it. Paul says if we do this, we fulfill the Law of Christ. The phrase the Law of Christ only appears in 2 locations throughout all of scripture and both times by the Apostle Paul. It is also mentioned in 1 Corinthians where Paul talks of being without law, but not without law toward God but under law toward Christ. There has been much debate as to what Paul means by the Law of Christ, and many believe that it is the sermon on the mount, where Christ tells them the law says do not murder, but I say anyone who is angry with their brother without a cause is in danger of the judgment. I don't think that is what Paul means by the Law of Christ, for in reality if that was the case we would be just trading one set of laws, for another set of laws.

Paul says that all of the law is fulfilled in this.. Love your neighbor as yourself, and that I believe is the law of Christ. It is the law of Love, of true, Christ like, sacrificial, cruciform love. In the context of Paul's teaching here in Galatians it fits perfectly. And how do we do that? Just as Paul says here...seek to restore each other, and bear one another's burdens.

After Paul tells us to to work toward restoration of a brother or sister in sin, and tells us that we should bear each others burdens for that is what a family who has the mind and love of Christ should do, he warns us in verse 3. he says, For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

Really this is the opposite of what Paul has been telling us so far. He tells us to restore the brother or sister in a spirit of gentleness, and here he says to be careful that we do not esteem or judge ourselves to be better than that person. We see this all the time, as mentioned a few weeks ago we as humans like to judge ourselves to others, then we use that to justify ourselves and say well we aren't as bad as that person.

fallen into that sin, or we have never acted in such a way. This is our pride, and we need to remember that while the specifics may not be the same we are all nothing of ourselves before God. It is only Christ in us and his work and his righteousness in us that counts, for all our own works are as filthy rags. We need to remember that Christ saved us, wretched sinners also and that we are no better than the next person. As soon as we start thinking we are something, we are deceiving our selves and our focus is not on Christ, but on our selves.

So we need to be examining ourselves as Paul tells us in verse 4. Instead of judging ourselves to others, we need to be judging ourselves to God's standards. If we compare ourselves to others often times we may either become discouraged because someone appears to be more spiritual than us, or we may become prideful because we believe ourselves to be more spiritual than others. That is why Paul says to examine your own works, and rejoice in them. The works flow outward from God in you are worth rejoicing over. Have we not all had the experience when you help someone in need and you get a good feeling about it within yourself? I think that is what he is talking about here, don't look for the praise and glory of another...don't bear another's burdens to get appreciation, or reward from that person. You do it because you love your father, and rejoice in that Love and his love flowing from you.

Continuing in verse 5 Paul says for each one shall bear his own load. Now this seems to be contradictory to what he just said 2 verses ago. If we are responsible to bear our own load, why must we help another bear his for is he not responsible for his own load? Well there really is not a contradiction here, but rather some of the meaning is lost in the translation. Paul uses two different Greek words here that is translated in English to load. The word load in verse 2 is the Greek word Baros which refers to a heavy load like that of cargo being loaded on a freighter. It is a load that is so heavy that one person can no bear it themselves. The other word used in verse 5 is Phortion, it is more like a backpack. Something that you can carry for yourself.

We have all been given a burden, or a load that we must carry. We all have our own personal responsibility toward God, we all have our own set of gifts that God has given us and we will have to answer to God for how we use those gifts. They are ours, they are our own load to carry. We are to do our own work that God has given us, and we are to do it without comparing ourselves to another. Do not be envious of another's gifts, or do not esteem what God has given you to be better. They are what God has given each of us to do, and to work out and bear the load of ourselves.

Paul then finishes up this line of thought in verse 6. He says Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. This really is just a further expression of what he already said about bearing one another's burdens. Teaching, and preparation to teach takes a lot of time and is a heavy responsibility. Paul is saying here that those who are taught should share what they have with those who teach. It is a bearing one another's burdens, both parties are receiving something needed from each other. One teaches the word, the other helps to supply what the teacher needs to do so and in that way they fulfill what Paul says about bearing one another's burdens, and loving each other for both are supplying for the needs of the other, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.