

McCoy Memorial Baptist Church

Date: **December 14, 2022**

Fall Study: GALATIANS: "Letter of Liberation"

**PRACTICAL: A Defense of Christian Liberty** (Chapters 5:1-6:10)

This section of Paul's Epistle is concerned with the relationship between liberty/freedom, license, law, & love. Having defended both his authority as an apostle (chs. 1, 2) and the doctrine of justification by faith (chs. 3, 4), Paul turned to defend the life of Christian freedom. Would the apostle's teaching lead the Galatians into lawlessness or into godliness? *The Christian life is described as a life apart from* the Law (5:1-12), a life apart from license (5:13-15), a life according to the Spirit (5:16-26), and a life of service (6:1-10).

1. A Life apart from the \_\_\_\_\_ (5:1-12)

Paul begins by explaining "our calling". We are called to liberty/freedom. With this truth, we are prone to go to extremes. On believer interprets liberty as license and things he can do whatever he wants to do. Another believer, seeing this error, goes to an opposite extreme and imposes Law on everybody. Somewhere between license on the one hand and legalism on the other hand is true Christian liberty.

2. A Life apart from \_\_\_\_\_ (5:13-15)

Having explained *our calling*, Paul issues *a caution*. Don't allow your *liberty* to degenerate into *license*!

A. Christian freedom is not freedom to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 13).

B. Christian freedom is not freedom to \_\_\_\_\_ my \_\_\_\_\_ (vss. 13b, 15).

C. Christian freedom is not freedom to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 14).

3. A Life according to the \_\_\_\_\_ (5:16-26)

A. The \_\_\_\_\_ of victory over "the flesh" (5:16-18)

1) The answer to the abuses described in the previous verse (ver. 15) is to "live by the Spirit." The verb (**περιπατέω** *peripatéō*) is a present imperative; the lit. translation = "keep on walking". But the Spirit does not operate automatically in a believer's heart. He waits to be depended on.

2) The apostle next explained the need for a life controlled and energized by the Spirit (vs. 17). Each Christian has two natures, a **sinful nature** and a **new nature**. They are in active conflict with one another. They are pulling in opposite directions. The result of this conflict is: "you do not do what you want". There is a parallel between this little phrase and the second part of Romans 7.

3) Paul stressed that a godly life is not lived "under the law" but is a life "led by the Spirit." This does not mean that a Christian is totally passive in either case (salvation or sanctification), for the response of faith is necessary—faith in Christ to save & in the Holy Spirit to sanctify (cp. 3:3).

B. The \_\_\_\_\_ of victory over "the flesh" (5:19-21)

Since a Christian has the same sinful nature he possessed before salvation, he may fall prey to the sins that nature produces if he does not live by means of the Spirit. *The Galatians are a case in point* (v. 15).

*The listed sins are commonly seen to fall into four categories:*

Three sexual sins are mentioned; two religious sins; eight societal sins; and two sins associated with alcohol fall into a fourth category of evils. Finally, this list was representative, not exhaustive. Paul adds the words "and the like".

C. The \_\_\_\_\_ for victory over "the flesh" (5:22-23)

As vs. 16 indicated, there's no need for a believer to display the works of the flesh. Rather, by the Spirit's power he can manifest the nine graces that are now listed. Some things to note:

1) "The fruit" here is not produced by a believer, but by the Holy Spirit working thru a Christian who is in vital union with Christ (cp. John 15:1-8).

- 2) The word “fruit” is \_\_\_\_\_, indicating that these qualities constitute a \_\_\_\_\_, all of which should be found in a believer who lives under the control of the Spirit. In an ultimate sense this “fruit” is simply the life of Christ lived out in a Christian.
- 3) Here we have a cluster of nine Christian graces, and all of these are “the fruit of the Spirit”, the natural produce that appears in the lives of Spirit-led Christians. We might say that . . .
  - A. The primary direction of “love, joy, and peace” is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - B. The primary direction of “patience, kindness, goodness” is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - C. The direction of “faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) No wonder Paul adds again (see vs. 18): “against such things there is no law. The function of law is to curb, to restrain, to deter, and no deterrent is needed here. Obviously, no one would make laws against people who practice such things.

D. The \_\_\_\_\_ for victory over sin (5:24-26)

- 1) The divine \_\_\_\_\_ of “the flesh” (vs. 24)  
Paul explains that the believer is identified with Christ in His death, burial & resurrection (Rom. 6). Christ not only died \_\_\_\_\_ me, but I died \_\_\_\_\_ Christ. Christ died for me to remove the \_\_\_\_\_ of my sin, but I died with Christ to \_\_\_\_\_ sin’s power. Paul has mentioned this already in Galatians (see 2:19–20), and he will mention it again (6:14). He does not tell us to crucify ourselves, because this is impossible. (Crucifixion is one death a man cannot inflict on himself.) He tells us that the flesh has already been crucified. It is our responsibility to believe this and act on it. Paul writes “count yourselves dead to sin . . . in Christ” in Rom. 6:11 (cp. Col. 3:5ff.).
- 2) The divine \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit (vss. 25, 26).  
Christ made the believer alive by regeneration (Jn. 3:5-6), so each believer is exhorted to “keep in step (or “follow” in Gal. 6:16) with the Spirit.” Step-by-step one’s Christian “walk” should conform to the Spirit’s direction & enablement. So that believers do not “become conceited, provoking and envying each other.” These latter traits would be true of walking in the flesh (5:19-21) & may point to the divisions in the Galatians churches occasioned by the Judaizing error (cf. vs. 15).
- 3) The personal \_\_\_\_\_ of the believer.  
“You and I are not debtors to the flesh, but to the Spirit (Rom. 8:12–14). We must accept what God says about the old nature and not try to make it something that it is not. We must not make “provision for the flesh” (Rom. 13:14) by feeding it the things that it enjoys. In the flesh dwells no good thing (Rom. 7:18), so we should put no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3). The flesh is not subject to God’s Law (Rom. 8:7) and it cannot please God (Rom. 8:8). Only through the Holy Spirit can we “put to death” the deeds that the flesh would do through our body (Rom. 8:13). The Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 5:25), but He is also the Spirit of death: He helps us to reckon ourselves dead to sin.” - **Warren Wiersbe**

4. A Life of \_\_\_\_\_ (5:26-6:10)

“It is difficult to find direct relevance of these ten verses to the situation at Galatia. We have what appears to be some random thoughts (bearing burdens, sharing with one’s teacher, sowing and reaping, and doing good), so random that they not only seem unrelated to one another, but also unrelated to the situation at Galatia. Is this accurate? I think not. . . . We can also safely conclude that these ‘random thoughts’ are by no means irrelevant to the Galatian churches but are intended to meet their general problems of strife and division. What we find here, then, is an interplay between two themes: personal responsibility and mutual accountability—both emerging from the context of communal strife.” - Scott McKnight, The NIV Application Commentary (Galatians).

A. \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ (5:26-6:5):

- 1) How Christians \_\_\_\_\_ treat each other (5:26)  
When we are “conceited”, we tend to do one of two things: Provoke others, and envy others.
- 2) How Christians should treat \_\_\_\_\_ (6:2-5)
  - a) The principle: Love one another (vs. 2)  
“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21).  
The “burdens” spoken of are moral burdens or weaknesses (vs. 1; Rom. 15:1-3). For “the law of Christ” see 1 Cor. 9:21 – “To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law.” See John 13:34-35.
  - b) The problem of \_\_\_\_\_ (vss. 3-5)  
The prob. that occupies Paul’s attention while addressing restoration is pride on the part of the restorer. Pride is wrong (v. 3), and each restorer should check himself or herself out (v. 4a) and not find personal status by comparison with others, esp. with sinning brothers & sisters (v. 4b). In the final analysis, each person is responsible before God for what he or she has done (v. 5).
- 3) An \_\_\_\_\_ of burden-bearing: Someone is “caught (overtaken) in a sin”.
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_ to do  
Restore = “to set him back on the right path.” The Greek for this vb. (*καταρτίζω katartizō*) is used elsewhere for setting fractured or dislocated bones, mending nets, or bringing factions together. See Mark 1:9. We’re not told here how precisely we are to restore our fallen brother, but we can learn this from the more detailed instructions of Jesus in Mt. 18:15-17. Jesus also made our goal positive and constructive.
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_ is to do it  
He is referring to ‘mature’ or ‘spiritual’ Christians, whom he is later to describe more fully in 1 Cor. 2:14–3:4, and whom he has already begun to portray in Gal. 5:16–25. All Christians are indwelt by the Spirit, but ‘spiritual’ Christians are also ‘led by the Spirit’ & ‘walk by the Spirit’, so that ‘the fruit of the Spirit’ appears in their lives. Indeed, this loving ministry of restoring an erring brother is exactly the kind of thing that we shall do when we are walking by the Spirit. It is only the ‘spiritual’ Christian who should attempt to restore him.
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_ should it be done  
“In a spirit of gentleness” - The same Greek word for ‘gentleness’ has occurred in 5:23 as part of the fruit of the Spirit. One of the reasons why only spiritual Christians should attempt the ministry of restoration is that only the spiritual are gentle.  
In a spirit of “watchfulness” - This suggests that gentleness is born of a sense of our own weakness and proneness to sin.

B. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (6:6-10)

The apostle Paul is nearing the end of his letter. His main themes have by now been expounded. All he has left are a few final admonitions. At first sight, these instructions and exhortations appear to be very loosely connected, even totally disconnected. But a closer look at them reveals the connecting link. It is the great principle of sowing and reaping (vs. 7).

- 1) Christian \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 6)  
He who’s taught the word should help to support his teacher. So, a pastor may expect to be supported by the congregation. He sows the good seed of God’s Word, and he reaps a livelihood. This biblical principle is emphasized many times (cp. Luke 10:7; 1 Cor. 9:11; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). The principle can be abused by a pastor and by a congregation.
- 2) Christian \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 8)
- 3) Christian \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ (vss. 9, 10)