

The Fruit of the Spirit
Galatians 5:22-26
October 3, 2012

The book of Galatians is Paul's letter to the Galatians in which he tries to convince them not to put themselves under the requirements of the Mosaic Law. Just like the book of Hebrews, Galatians teaches us that the administration of Christ is better than the administration of Moses. And it is better because it saves.

The Law of Moses did not save anyone. Because of the fallen nature of man, the Law of Moses served as a curse. Since man could not do the Law, he was cursed by the Law.

So Christ came along and replaced this Old Covenant with a New Covenant. Christ came along with a new way of doing things. Just as when we elect a new president there is a new administration, so when Christ came he set up a new administration of things. And the old administration was kicked out of office.

Paul says about the Mosaic Law that it was "done away." (II Corinthians 3:11) And he says it was "abolished." (Ephesians 2:15) And he argues that the very fact that there is a new covenant, makes the first one old and it "is ready to vanish away." (Hebrews 8:13)

Now there was a way of doing things under that Old Covenant and there is a way of doing things under the New Covenant. One is called the Law of Moses and the other is called the "law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)

Let me just point out a few of the differences between the two administrations. Moses imposed a severe law upon the people. And they were required to do it or die. And so you can see that it was a "works" kind of system. A man had to work. And he had to work perfectly or he would be executed in the end. Furthermore, Moses did not give the people any special ability to do the work. They were left to their own ability. And so, under the administration of Moses, the power source was the flesh. They were left to their own sinful natures. And of course the works of

the flesh are “adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. (Galatians 5:19-21) Now that was the administration of Moses.

But then Christ came and set up a new administration of things. And Christ’s administration was not a law way of doing things. In fact, Christ set up a completely different way of treating his elect. And it was a “grace” kind of way. Christ chose to freely forgive His people rather than condemn them. Moses cursed his people with the Law. But Christ pours grace on his people. And in so doing, he took them out from under that old cursing system.

When Christ came and offered himself on the cross for his people, he broke down that middle wall of partition, that is, he broke down the law.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances.

Ephesians 2:14, 15

You see, Christ fulfilled the requirements of law. And, He suffered the Law’s penalty. And thus, the Law has no more to say to Him. There is nothing more that the Law can do to Him. The law sentenced Christ to death, not for his own sins but for ours, and he died. And when he died, the Law was done away. That is, it had no more effect upon Christ. What else could the Law do to Christ? It already carried out the full penalty on Him. And because we were in Him, it has no more effect upon us.

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ.

Galatians 2:19, 20

So, Paul says, “When Christ was crucified, I was crucified.” And every believer can say with Paul, “I am dead to the Law. What does the Law have to say to me? It has exhausted its great fury on my Savior. It has poured out its wrath on Him. And the penalty of the Law has been exhausted. My God placed me in Christ by election before the foundation of the

world. (Ephesians 1:4) And by the sovereign choice of God I was in Christ when Christ died. The Law punished Christ on my behalf because I was in Christ. And now, the Law has nothing to say to me any longer.

In effect, the Law has no more power to hurt me.

Example: Let's say that the penalty of the Law is represented by this water in a glass. And when Christ died, the penalty was poured on Christ. And now, the law comes to you and wants to pour the penalty on you. But there is no more water in the glass. It has been poured out on Christ.

You see, Christ's administration is an administration of grace. And one of the greatest gifts that he gave us was freedom from the Law. He abolished it. He redeemed us out from under it. And now we stand in His grace forevermore.

Christ's administration is characterized by grace not law. It is now well established that man cannot be saved by the law. But Christ will now show that man can be saved by grace and only by grace.

God saves only by grace. If a man thinks himself to be saved by anything other than sheer grace, I suspect he is deceiving himself. The very purpose of salvation is to demonstrate the wondrous grace of God.

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his grace. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Ephesians 1:6

So we are considering the great contrast between the administration of Moses and the administration of Christ. And we have seen that under Moses it was law, but under Christ it is grace.

But there is another great difference between the administrations. Remember that under Moses, the people were left to the power of their own flesh. God wrote the Law on stone

tablets, but the hearts of the people were unchanged. But in Christ's administration, his people are given a very special gift. They are given the gift of the Holy Spirit. And this is the dynamic that was never experienced by the people of Israel. They were under a different system. Their system operated by works and it was powered by the flesh. But Christ's system is operated by faith and it is powered by the Spirit.

Example: Trying to obey the law is like riding a bicycle. All the power comes from you. You pedal as hard as you can, you go as fast as you can and you go as far as you can under your own power. And when you look up you discover that you have actually lost ground. And you find that it is impossible to climb the mountain of the Law by your own power.

Example: But living under grace in Christ's administration is like riding a motorcycle. You hop on the motorcycle and He supplies the power. He gives you His Holy Spirit and the Spirit takes you where Christ wants you to go.

Now that is a simplistic example and I'm sure it doesn't answer all of your questions. But the idea is that in Christ's administration, He actually empowers us for service to Him. He takes us down a road of sanctification. But he takes us by His power. And it seems to me that He takes us on a different journey. Moses would have us climb that hard mountain called the Law. And Paul called that a yoke of bondage. But Christ says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

You will notice that in the fifth chapter of Galatians Paul has worked himself down to the contrast between the flesh and the Spirit. And we are still contrasting the Law and the gospel. The flesh was the power under the Law. The Spirit is the power under the gospel of grace.

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

Galatians 5:16

This suggests that there are two ways of walking. One can walk according to the Law. This is a works way of walking.

This is a flesh way of walking. This is legalism. This way of walking says, "I can make God accept me by doing this or doing that." And you work as hard as you can and you do as much as you can and you are as religious as you can be and you do it all by the power of the flesh. And in the end you find that your life is nothing more than the sum total of the works of the flesh. And you are cursed by the Law.

But for those who simply believe in Christ, God gives a new way of walking. It is a Spirit way of walking. Now this sounds very mystical. But I don't think it is intended to be so. I think what Paul is saying here is that when you abandon all hope of proving yourself righteous by the Law and you cast all your hope in Jesus Christ by faith in His work then you are led by the Spirit.

It seems to me that one of the principles that Paul lays out in Galatians is that our Christian walk works by the same principle as our conversion.

Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Galatians 3:3

What did we say when we were converted? We said, "Lord, I am a sinner and I have no hope of heaven but by your grace through Christ." And you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and his work and you were justified.

And now you are wondering how you can possibly live the Christian life. After all, you still have that same old flesh. That old sin nature has not been taken away. It is still there, isn't it? And you can operate in the Christian life by one of two methods. You can operate by law or by grace. You can operate by legalism or by freedom. And which is the preferred way?

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

Galatians 5:1

We always have a tendency to want to fall back under legalism.

“I’ll show God how good I am. I’ll show how righteous I am.”

And you are on the road to a great fall because that is legalism and legalism is powered by the flesh.

But we are not under the law, we are under grace. The law stirs up the flesh, but grace by faith stirs up the Spirit. How do we walk by the Spirit? We confess our sins and live by faith and stay as far from legalism as we possibly can. Legalism does nothing but activate the flesh. And if we can keep the flesh as quiet as possible, then we will be led by the Spirit.

Walking in the Spirit is the opposite of living under the law.

If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.
Galatians 5:18

Legalism says, “I can be saved by obeying some law.” Legalism says, “I can live the Christian life by obeying some law.” Legalism says, “There is something good in me.” Legalism says, “I am not suffering from an incurable fallen nature.” Legalism says, “I am better than my neighbor.” Legalism says, “I am righteous and I don’t need a Savior.” And legalism is never an the proper principle in the Christian life.

If you can ever get away from a legalistic framework and learn to live with a keen understanding and an utter reliance on God’s grace, then it seems to me that under that circumstance the Spirit of God will power your life rather than your flesh.

What the Spirit of God Produces in Your Life

But, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

I. This is in stark contrast to that which is produced by the flesh. You will notice the gross sins that are produced by our fallen nature. (Galatians 5:19-21) Now of course, the flesh operates under a law system. So, under the Mosaic Law it was the flesh that worked. The Law required righteousness and the

flesh produced unrighteousness. Every time Moses read them a law, Israel said, "We will do it." And they went out and their flesh did just the opposite. How frustrating that must have been. God required them to be holy, and their flesh was thoroughly unholy.

Notice the first word in verse 22. Paul says, "But." This is a word of contrast. The flesh produces these things, "but," the Spirit produces something else.

II. The flesh produces works.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest.

Galatians 5:19

The flesh produces works because the flesh operates in a works system. The flesh went crazy under the Mosaic Law. The flesh loves law because the flesh loves to break the law. The flesh thrives on being a law breaker because that's what the flesh is. The flesh is corrupt and it loves to do corrupt works. And the law stimulates the flesh into action.

III. The Spirit produces godly character.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:22

The Spirit of God in sanctification, takes a lawless sinner and makes him lawful. The Spirit actually changes a man's heart so that no law is really necessary.

So God operates by grace. He actually saves you by his initiative and changes your heart by his initiative. And he gives you the Spirit by his initiative. And there is no law anywhere that forbids love and joy and peace and all of the other fruit of the Spirit.

Let's not discount the work of the Spirit in our hearts. I know we are not perfect. But He has made drastic changes in us. We are not the same person we were before. We are certainly not what we could have been. God has sealed us with

His Holy Spirit and he is transforming us day by day. And His Spirit is bearing fruit.

The Fruit Itself

I. Love

It seems appropriate that Paul would mention this quality first because love fulfills the Law.

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Galatians 5:14

It seems that love is the crown jewel of Christian qualities. It is the all in all. The whole law is summed up in one word - love. Love is the greatest distinction between the flesh and the Spirit. It is the most apparent difference between the man under the law and the man under grace. It is the glaring difference between the lost and the saved.

The lost man is motivated by self. He only thinks of how he may gain the advantage. He always asks the question, "What is in it for me." He has no particular interest in others except for what they can do for him.

But the man who has the Spirit of God is a man who considers others. He loves his neighbor as himself. (v.14) And he thinks of others as better than himself. (Philippians 2:3) Jesus even encouraged the Christian man to love his enemies. (Matthew 5:44)

This type of love is self-sacrificing. This kind of love is not produced by the flesh. This kind of love is produced by the Spirit of God.

II. Joy

It seems that Paul emphasizes this characteristic by putting it high on the list – right after love. Joy is an essential characteristic. It is what the Spirit produces. "The fruit of the Spirit is . . . "joy."

How depressing it is to see Christians moping around, always disturbed about something, always down and out, oppressed, burdened under trials and circumstances.

But what does this say? The fruit of the Spirit is joy! Joy should be springing up inside of you. Look what Christ has done. He has loved you. He chose you. He set his love upon you. The God who created everything has determined to love you. He has forgiven your sins. He has set you free by his matchless grace. He will not charge sin to your account. (Romans 4:8) He has given you a sure hope of heaven. Of all men we should shout for joy for we have hope for the future. We have joy because as David said,

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.

Psalm 23:6

There is joy in everything in the Christian life. There is great joy in serving Him. In fact, I would suggest that the greatest joy you will ever have is in serving Him. Whatever your ministry is, it should bring you the greatest joy. When you lay your head down at night, and you have done some good deed in service to your God, then you should be filled with joy and satisfaction.

This year, serving as pastor of this church, has been the greatest joy of my life. It is just sheer joy to actually serve a function in Christ's church, to be useful, to be active, to be using whatever gifts God has given. This is joyous.

III. Peace

The Spirit also brings us peace. Peace is a sense of reconciliation with God. It is that calming sense that God is no longer angry with me. He has forgiven me. I am reconciled to him through Jesus Christ. Peace is a sense of family. It is the assurance that I belong to Him and nothing can ever change that.

It is the Holy Spirit that gives us peace. This peace can never be attained under the Law. It can only be had by grace. Peace is only mine when I know that God loves me in spite of my sin. God has overlooked a thousand times a thousand sins. He

has not cast me out even when I would have cast myself out.
And the Holy Spirit convinces me that God loves me anyway.
And this is the peace of the Holy Spirit.

IV. Longsuffering

The Lord has taught us by his Holy Spirit to be patient during trials and during afflictions. We don't flail away against our circumstances as those who have no hope. But we patiently endure and we wait for our deliverance. This is what the Holy Spirit works in us. This doesn't come by the flesh. It comes by God working it in us by His Spirit. When others hurt us, and say all manner of evil against us, we are longsuffering. Why is that? It is not because our flesh is naturally that way. It is because God has worked in us. And we are willing to patiently endure by the power of the Spirit.

V. Gentleness

Gentleness is the same word that is translated in other places as kindness. (II Corinthians 6:6) Gentleness is a fine Christian quality that is produced by the Spirit of God in us. Perhaps it is the opposite of "hot tempered" and "rash". To be gentle is to have a certain calmness of spirit. To be gentle is to be a kind person with respect to the feelings of others.

To be gentle in a physical sense is to handle something with extreme care.

Example: If someone hands you a newborn baby, you hold him softly and with great care. You move slowly and you lay him down easy. You make sure that nothing disturbs this little infant.

And this is the kind of gentleness that we should have for one another. We should be so careful that we don't cause some hurt to someone else. This is gentleness and kindness.

Now the flesh is not gentle. The flesh will hurt someone without taking one thought about it. But the Spirit of God is kind and gentle and he works gentleness in us.

VI. Goodness

It seems here that goodness is the disposition to do good to others. When the Spirit of God works in us, He causes us to be beneficent toward others. We are alert to ways to do good unto others. We enjoy doing good. This is the fruit of the Spirit in us.

VII. Faith

The sense here is that the Christian man is faithful in his dealings with other men. He is a man that can be trusted. His word is true. You can depend on him. Now the fleshly man will do half the job and if you pay him he will not come back to finish. But the Holy Spirit in a godly man will cause him to be faithful in his work and practice.

VIII. Meekness

Meekness is patience in the face of injuries. When someone slaps you - you may respond with fierce anger or you may turn the other cheek. And it depends on whether the Holy Spirit has worked meekness in you.

Can you think of anyone in the Bible who was meek? Moses was the meekest man on the earth.

Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.

Numbers 12:3

Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ . . .

II Corinthians 10:1

Meekness is not weakness. Just consider how strong Christ was and yet he did not strike back when he was struck.

VIII. Temperance

We think of temperance in a very narrow sense. We think of temperance as being moderate in the consumption of alcohol. And this is one of its meanings. But this word has a

broader meaning in the Scriptures. It means to be moderate in all things. The Christian man does not over indulge in anything. He is a man of self-control. He is not controlled by his appetites but he lives moderately in all things. And this is the work of the Spirit in his life.