

“<sup>13</sup> For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. <sup>14</sup> For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. <sup>15</sup> But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. <sup>16</sup> *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. <sup>18</sup> But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. <sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, <sup>20</sup> Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, 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. <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, <sup>23</sup> Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. <sup>25</sup> If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” (Ga 5:13-26)

The grace of God in Jesus Christ has delivered the child of God from the curse of the law. The deliverance that we speak of is absolute, and there are no qualifications concerning it. “There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,” the apostle said in another place. Jesus said, “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.”

We are therefore free in Christ, for Christ has fully satisfied the claims of the law and we can never come under the wrath of God, for we have been delivered forever. Jesus Christ fully satisfied the law for us, just as the first Adam disobeyed for us. Sin and death came by the First Adam; righteousness and peace comes by the second Adam. If you believe in Jesus Christ, as the Scripture says, you are free from condemnation, and the Lord does not impute sin to you. As Romans 4 says, “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Because Paul knows the nature of the Gospel which he preached, he also knew the nature of the abuses. Men in their wickedness pervert and corrupt the truth, and try to put the truth into bondage to use it to satisfy their own sins. Just as the devil quoted Scripture when he tempted Christ, so he will use the truth in an untruthful way, in order to bring us back into bondage. Let us sin, that grace may abound. We are not under the law, therefore we do not have to be concerned about how we treat each other. These are perverse and ungodly conclusions that the ungodly will draw from the doctrine of grace. The godly answer to these perversions is clear: by no means. Those who say such things do not really understand the gospel of grace; Grace does not teach any such things.

But let us look at the passage before us:

- I. It cannot be that the gospel of Jesus Christ could lead to the mistreatment of one another. The contrast between two different principles of life could not be made more clear than in verse 14,15. There are two mental attitudes that are displayed here: one attitude that produces bickering and fighting and biting and devouring, the body turned against itself, consuming itself. The other is the attitude of mutual service—a healthy body growing, fulfilling the law, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”
  - a. Feeding on one another vs. serving one another. “Let him that stole, steal no more....” Use not liberty for the flesh, but be slaves of each other.” Willing servitude is the idea here. I am willing to be poured out upon the service of your faith... It is not incompatible with Christian liberty to become willing servants of each other.
  - b. These two mental attitudes are also explained by the apostle James in James 3:13-18. There is a wisdom from below that is a consuming wisdom and feeds upon other people. The wisdom of the

Pharisee that stood near the altar and thanked God that He was not like other men. This wisdom is used to condemn and destroy others. Then there is the wisdom from above, from God. This wisdom doesn't have a double agenda, but is peaceable, gentle, and good. It is a joy to be around and takes nothing from you, but gives and serves. The first consumes resources, spiritual and mental resources; the second refreshes and gives, so that all who come into contact with it are refreshed and invigorated. One is a bitter and condemning water; the other is a well of life.

- II. These two mental attitudes are the expressions of two principles, which Paul calls the flesh, and the spirit. It is important that we understand Paul's use of these terms.
- a. “Flesh” is literally, the body, but by this to mean human nature. What is human nature. Because we are children of Adam, we are presently naturally sinful and disobedient.
  - b. “Spirit” is the breath, or the soul; so in the Greek philosophy, it came to mean man's higher faculties, as contrasted with the body. But Paul doesn't use it this way; he uses it as the higher, that is heavenly, a new nature received by the work of the Holy Spirit. He follows Christ in this, for Jesus told Nicodemus < “That which is of the flesh is flesh, but that which is of the spirit is spirit. Ye must be born again.” The flesh is that which is born of Adam and is derived from Adam, which is my sinful natural nature, and includes both what we might call by body and soul. What I receive from my natural birth is the likeness of Adam.
  - c. The flesh is a tree that bears fruit. A tree must be true to its nature, and it cannot deny itself. You cannot get pears from an apple tree—the fruit of a tree bears witness to its nature. An evil tree cannot bear good fruit and a good tree cannot bear evil fruit.
    - i. Adam is under the curse, and is in bondage to sin. What I receive from Adam is under the curse of sin and in bondage to sin. Sin is an active principle of corruption and pollution that permeates every part of man's nature, so that Paul writes: “The natural man receives not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Every thing natural about man is corrupt; his knowledge is corrupt, his moral sense is corrupted, his religious sense is corrupted, he is under the power of the devil and under the law of sin and death.
    - ii. This sinful nature, derived from Adam, bears the fruit that is illustrated here: Adultery—making the body an instrument of sin:
      1. Fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness. —all kinds of sexual immorality;
      2. Idolatry, witchcraft: Spiritual sins.
      3. Hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions —social sins
      4. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings and such like: moral sins.
      5. And such like: Paul is not categorizing or making a systematic examination of ethics—he simply pours out illustrations of the fruit of man's nature—what we would now call human nature: sinful.
      6. Do not claim to be walking in Christ when you display such behavior.
    - iii. This sinful nature is energized by the law, according to I Cor. 15:56: The strength of sin is the law. Because Adam disobeyed God, he came under the curse—it is the curse that gives strength to sin, and the curse is from the law. The law is good, but man is a sinner. As long as he is considered a sinner under the law, the curse devours man, for he is alienated from God and without hope.
  - d. But Spirit is also a tree that bears fruit. What is the use of “spirit”? It means the new man in Christ. That which is born of the Spirit. Both of these are me. There is something in every believer from Adam; there is also something eternal from Christ through His Word and Spirit.

- i. There is no law which concerns this new man. He is free in Christ. He is blessed of God and cannot do evil.
- ii. This new man is in opposition to the old man. There is war: the desires of the old man do not correspond to those of the new man, so that the soul of every believer is a battleground.
- iii. The fruit of the new man in Christ are these which are always welcome and blessed of God
  1. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance..
  2. Neither is this a complete list, or a systematic examination of ethics.
- iv. This new nature is energized by the Gospel of Jesus Christ: according to Gal. 3:1,2 This is expressed by Romans 8, in the passage we read a few minutes ago. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death”
  1. The law of sin and death: “Cursed be all those who do not continue in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.”
  2. The law of life: “The just shall live by faith.”
  3. There can be no reconciliation between these two principles: for Paul says that one feeds the flesh and produces the sins of the flesh; the other feeds the new man, and produces the works, against which there is no law.

### III. Finally, we will consider several very important verses:

- a. Vs. 18 “If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” If you follow the new man in Christ, you are free in Christ. Make much of the Gospel and forgiveness of sins. Make much of the mercy of God in Christ, and do not live in bitterness, wrath, strife, and hatred. Don’t walk in vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.
- b. Vs. 24. Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lust. The Gospel of Jesus Christ lays the ax to the flesh. We have agreed with the cross of Christ, that there is no merit in anything I do or can do. I am justified by grace alone in Christ, so that everything inherited from Adam is rejected as a means of peace with God:
  - i. Not brains, intelligence, works of righteousness, proud adult powers, etc. “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and works that I now do in the flesh, I do by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”
  - ii. You are forgiven all your sins. You do not have to prove yourself. You are accepted by faith alone.
- c. Vs. 25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. The Christian life is lived the same way it starts: by faith in Jesus Christ. It is by faith in Christ that we live: from start to end. He is the beginning and ending of our faith.

This Gospel was preached by Isaiah many years ago in anticipation of the coming of Christ:

- 1 ¶ Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
- 2 Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which is* not bread? and your labour for *that which* satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which is* good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.
- 3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David.
- 4 Behold, I have given him *for* a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

- 5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation *that* thou knowest not, and nations *that* knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.
- 6 ¶ Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:
- 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
- 8 For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
- 9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.
- 10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:
- 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.
- 12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.
- 13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign *that* shall not be cut off.

May God bless you.