

Galatians chap. 5

Faith which worketh by love

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. 5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. 7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? 8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. 9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. 10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. 11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. 12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you. 13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. 16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 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. 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, 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. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

This chapter begins with Paul urging the few faithful to stand fast in the liberty of the gospel. He again reminds Christians that if they trust in circumcision for justification, Christ will profit them nothing. Those who trusted in circumcision did so out of fear of the law and frustrated

the grace of God - Gal. 2:21. It can never be stressed how easy a matter it is to fall from grace. I am convinced to this day that the only reason I made it out of adventism in one piece is because others were praying for me. The one thing I did have going for me is that I was never lukewarm. Back when I was into the law I really didn't know the gospel so I was the best legalist I could be. God can work with believers who are hot or cold, it's the lukewarm professors that he can never stomach. Now does this mean we should be the best legalists we can be? No, but if God could reach me in the dark place I was in then he can reach anybody. I often hear Christians who say that believers can never fall away and this is just naïve and foolish to think. When grace is taken away your whole world will come crashing down on top of your head and there is not a single thing you can do to stop it. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him - Amos 5:19.

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Protestants have historically faulted Catholics for insisting that love is a component of justification and on this issue I must unfortunately side with the Catholics. Love is a component of justification and if anything it is the most important component of all. Martin Luther who spoke almost exclusively on faith said very little about love and on a few occasions even spoke of it in the negative. In his defense the love of his day had morphed into the works based charity or 'caritas' but this is still no excuse. Even Paul with his incessant focus on faith understood that love is the highest and that without love faith is meaningless - 1Cor. 13. Now by saying that love is a component of justification I am in no way saying that justification is a process where we start out a little bit justified and then later on down the road we become more justified. We are fully justified the moment we believe in Christ for justification but in order for that faith moment to happen God's love had been wooing, leading and drawing us to the foot of the cross long before the blessed event ever took place. Those who become disillusioned by the world are often longing and seeking after something better and that missing component is God's love which passes knowledge. Faith is only alone by the grace of the Queen of Heaven. Therefore, Justification is of grace alone by faith alone through love alone.

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There are three spiritual laws that reign supreme in the gospel of the kingdom: Spirit of grace Zech. 12:10; Heb. 10:29. Spirit of faith 2Cor. 4:13. Spirit of love 2Tim. 1:7; Gal. 5:22. We violate the Spirit of grace when we try to merit or earn God's favor. We violate the Spirit of faith when we believe in anything outside of Christ alone. We violate the Spirit of love when we love ourselves more than others. Spiritual law can only be obeyed by those who have the

Spirit of Christ or the Holy Ghost. All the endless rounds of worthless ritual and ceremony and dead religion are worth nothing in God's eyes without a living connection to the Spirit of God. So how do we know if we have the Spirit of God or not? Does the newly married bride know her husband differently after the honeymoon? Of course she does and the relationships that God has given us on earth are meant to teach us the great spiritual truths of his kingdom. Jesus is the one who coined the phrase 'new birth' as the minimum requirement for entering his kingdom. When we look at natural birth God plays the role of the man and his people or church play the role of the woman. Conception would be the moment that a new life is created in the woman. Spiritual conception would be the moment that the Holy Spirit regenerates our dead heart when we believe in Jesus Christ as our savior.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, 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. It is important to state that those who commit the sins of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God. My focus is always on the inward experience over the outward actions so those who resist God's grace and are filled with unbelief and have no love for their fellow man will always fall into and commit the sins of the flesh. Jesus reiterated the same principle when he said: clean the inside of the cup and the outside will take care of itself - Matt. 23:26. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. We need to remember that Jesus has a full spectrum character and Satan has a full spectrum character. What this means is that Jesus can often become angry and jealous and Satan can often be kind and compassionate. Just because someone is angry, jealous, kind or compassionate does not make them good or evil. This is why it is so important to be able to discern the spirit that someone has more so than their words and deeds. If we only go by the words and deeds that people use we can be deceived.

Paul ends the chapter with a warning against arrogance, presumption and envy. The most shocking thing that I discovered when I was an adventist is that the vast majority and I met thousands over ten years despise the law and know that their whole religion is a lie. Adventists are force fed the law almost from birth so they learn at a very early age the 'sink or swim' mentality and for the most part the majority do figure out that it's a dead end. Yet they refuse to part with their dead religion and hawk it from their pulpits as if it were truth in verity. I guess the mindset is that since it was forced on them at such a young age they have the right to force it on others which is just a vicious cycle that never ends. They have such a fear of all

things Catholic that I almost wish the pope would rise up and condemn 7th day adventism as the Judaizing heresy. The Catholic church for all her faults does uphold grace, faith and love so they are not the monster they are so often made out to be. And if we are honest, Martin Luther would not even of had a bible to read if it weren't for the faithful stewardship of the Catholic church thru the dark ages. The real monsters are the Judaizers who knowingly teach a 'doctrine of devils' to the unsuspecting masses and feed spiritual poison to the babes in Christ. Catholic and Orthodox Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ whether Protestants can admit this or not is irrelevant.