

1PP Root to Fruit! Going Deep, Growing Up

Part 12-Galatians 5:24-25, *The Fruitful Life*

3/24-25/2018

The Christians at Galatia were struggling in their spiritual walks, no differently than we do. To some of the believers, the Christian walk was a tedious, boring, impossibly difficult life of despair, something you just have to try harder to get right but seeming never able to do. To other believers, the Christian walk was their ticket to get the best of heaven with the best of earth thrown in, enjoying pleasures here as if Christ could care less. Paul wrote this letter to set them straight: You have been set free from the power and penalty of sin by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and you've been set free for a life of living out the will of God in love. So Paul returns to these thoughts after concluding his list of the deeds of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. He just showed what the flesh will produce if it has its way, and what the Spirit will produce if He has His way. But now, he explains for us the power to live fruitful lives: crucify the flesh, and keep in step with the Spirit.

2PP 1-The crucified life

“And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”
Galatians 5:24

This is a remarkably powerful verse with some crystal-clear points

3PP First, all those who *‘belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh’*

Denise and I belong to each through marriage, our rings are the symbol of that belonging.

They signify to others that we each belong to another in a covenantal union.

When Paul wrote, *‘those who belong to Christ Jesus’*, he was using covenantal, marriage language, which he made clear in **Romans 7**.

4PP *“For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage...But if her husband dies, she is free from that law...Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to Him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.”* **Romans 7:2-4**

Marriage binds two people together legally and releases them only when one of them dies.

Paul applied that principle to the Christian with the truth that every person is born into a relationship with the law, the moral law which has absolute dominion.

Every person who rejects Christ has the accusatory finger of the law aiming at them: *‘Guilty!’*

The law pounds the gavel on every single person and says *‘Guilty on all counts’*, we have sinned and fallen short of the perfect, holy, right demands of God, and we deserve His judgment.

5PP And it is *“binding on a person only as long as he lives.”* **Romans 7:1**

It took our death to break free from the law of sin in us.

6PP *“But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.”*

Romans 7:6

By faith, we count ourselves as having spiritually died to sin, no longer bound to it and under its dominion, but instead we now *‘belong to Christ Jesus’* **Galatians 5:24**

7PP Second, the means of our death is crucifixion

'those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires' 5:24 'have crucified the flesh' makes this a past event we have done

But this may seem confusing, especially as we look at **Galatians 2:20** where Paul said on behalf of every Christian that he had *'been crucified with Christ'*

There, crucifixion was done to us, and joined us into the crucifixion with Christ

How many people were crucified that horrible day when Jesus was on that cross?

Himself, two criminals, and Christian, you, and me, and millions of other Christians

To belong to Christ is, in some sense of the word, to have been crucified

You see, each of us was born with a nature to sin, caught up and held in dominion by that nature

No parent has to teach a toddler how to sin, but you do have to teach good manners

Sin comes natural to the old self, the sin nature, and it must be completely severed before the new nature of Christ can begin in anyone

What was crucified was the old self, and it was nailed there by God when we believed

So if our old nature was crucified with Christ, why, in **5:24**, did Paul say we have crucified the flesh?

The enslaving, ruling, nature of a sinner is gone because of the death and resurrection of Jesus

We have been severed from it and have a new nature in Christ

But we still live in this body of flesh, and it pulses with a flood of desires contrary to God's

Therefore, every day we remember what it means to be a follower of Jesus:

8PP *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."* **Luke 9:23**

We deny ourselves, seeing our old self nailed to the cross, its dominion over us broken, and we pick up the cross, the means of killing it and follow Him every single day

There is one way this can happen...faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Have you realized your great problem of sin and felt the terror of the law's accusing finger?

Have you come to the despair of realizing that you have no defense...you are guilty!

Have you believed that the sacrifice of Jesus was a personally meant for you?

Have you accepted that Christ's death was in your place, where God transferred your sins to His Son on the cross, declaring His Son guilty in your place

Have you seen yourself the way God now does, that you are entirely innocent of wrongdoing?

There's a story about a wealthy Englishman who many years ago, purchased a Rolls-Royce and took his new car to France. It had been advertised as the car of all cars—a problem-free automobile. But when the man got his car to France, it broke down. So he called the Rolls-Royce folks in England. They flew a mechanic to France to fix the man's car. Of course, the man expected to get an expensive bill from Rolls-Royce, since they had flown all the way out of the country to fix his car. But months passed by and he never heard from them. So finally, he wrote to them and said, "I can pay the bill, just send it to me." Rolls-Royce sent him a note back that said, "I'm sorry, sir, but we have no record of anything ever having gone wrong with your car." To his surprise, there was nothing owed

When someone believes the gospel and places his/her faith in Christ, they receive forgiveness and righteousness and God looks at them and says, *"I have absolutely no record of you having ever sinned."*

You are dead to the law, and alive in Christ Jesus, praise God for His grace

Christian, your former relationship with your flesh is dead, the old self was crucified on the cross Furthermore, you crucified the flesh and its passions and desires by putting your faith in the Son of God as your Lord and Savior, rejecting your old way of sin and asking for eternal life

You nailed that flesh on that cross, rejecting it, and choosing by the gift of faith, Christ

And you must remember that crucifixion was always, 100% effective

The victim always died, but his death was usually slow, and that's how it is for us isn't it?

The flesh is nailed to the cross, and we cry out, when will it die?

Well the Romans learned to hasten death by breaking the legs of its victims

It would prevent them from pushing up to exhale...you see that is what is so difficult when a person is being crucified, exhaling

You can breathe in, but to breathe out one had to relax the diaphragm muscles to exhale

But when their legs were broken, it was only a matter of time before their arms were too weak to pull themselves up, and they would begin to asphyxiate and soon die

Christian, by faith, we must break the legs of the flesh and hasten its death

Every day we look upon the cross and see there again our old self crucified, the power and dominion of sin broken, the penalty of sin paid for

Remembering, I am not powerless in sin, I can say no, I am not who I was, I am new in Christ

I do not need to wallow in shame and guilt, it was all put on Christ on my behalf

This is why we are to continue to participate in the Lord's Supper regularly

It lifts our gaze to the cross where we see Jesus, and where our old self is nailed

It empowers us to struggle, and battle and hasten the defeat of the flesh's *'passions and desires'*

9PP (Only bold) Christian, you can begin every day with the thrilling assurance that **You are accepted by God not on the basis of your own efforts, but on *'the basis of the infinitely perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ'* Jerry Bridges**

Do you believe this?

We crucify the flesh and its desires by faith, trusting that what Jesus has done through His death and resurrection accomplishes all of these glorious truths for us!

This is what Paul means when he said, **PP** *"So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."* **Romans 6:11**

The power, dominion and penalty of our sin is broken, crucified on that cross with Christ, and by faith we can see it there, and battle with the Spirit to hasten its demise

10PP 2-The Spirit-led life

I'm going to read you a 4-line poem that in an easily memorized way sums up our second point

11PP Run, John run, the Law commands
But gives me neither feet nor hands
Better news the gospel brings;
It bids me fly and gives me wings

12PP God will give us the power to do all that He asks!

Paul says, *“If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”* 5:25

‘If’ is better translated *‘since’*, continuing the thought of verse 25 of having crucified the flesh Paul brings us back to the intensity of the battle for *‘keep in step’* was a military word used to get soldiers in marching formation

His point is that since we belong to Jesus, and have crucified the flesh, and live by the Spirit, we have everything we need for victory in this battle

We cannot fight the battle against our flesh in our strategies and strength

Because our old nature was crucified with Christ, and because we have crucified the flesh, we live in confidence that we will never be dominated by it again

Yes our desires rail against us, and yes we lose skirmishes, but there is truly no power any longer in our flesh to master us, unless we volunteer ourselves to its service

And this we must not do!

Christian, get in formation, trust in God and keep in step with the Spirit

When He says, through His Word, don’t step foot on that path, then stay in formation and obey

When He says to move and follow Him, don’t hesitate even a moment

Spend more time in relationship to Him than thinking about the war with sin

As you look to Christ, your desires will change, and you will have the strength to say no to sin and yes to righteousness

Bill came to know Christ and his friend Jim said to him, *“Bill, I feel sorry for you, a man who used to love the high life. Look at you now, settled down, going to church, reading the bible, praying...you never have a good time anymore.”* *“But Jim”* replied Bill, *“you don’t understand. I get drunk every time I want to, and flirt and carry on with women every time I want to, and buy whatever I want. I’m flying higher than ever.”* *“I don’t understand”* said Jim, *“I thought you had to give all that up when you find religion”*. Bill said to him, *“Jim, you have it all wrong. I found religion in a relationship with Jesus and He took the ‘want to’ out of my life when He saved my soul. He made me a new person in Him.”*

The crucifixion is a picture of absolute relentless, ruthless putting to death of sin

If certain books are leading you into sin, quit rationalizing, quit justifying, burn them

If certain music is leading you into sin, get rid of it

If certain friends are leading you to sin, change your friends

Be ruthless, be relentless, don’t be polite, don’t delay, don’t take a few weeks to make a decision, you make the change

13PP *“The secret of holiness lies in the degree and decisiveness of my repentance.”* Alistair Begg

You say, but I cannot give these up, I’m not strong enough!

This is the reason Paul wrote about the war on the flesh of the Holy Spirit

Why he explained what the Spirit is producing in us giving us power to do what God asks of us!

We are freed from the power, dominion and penalty sin through the death and resurrection of Christ, and freed to live out God’s pleasure in a life of love by the power of His Spirit

Amen?

Pray