

The Church of the Servant King

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Survey of the Bible Series – Paul’s Letter to the Galatians

(SB_Galatians_Lsn11_Chapter 5B)

Chapter 5 (continued)

In our prior study, we examined the first eleven verses of chapter 5. In that passage Paul addressed the subject of “living without the Law” after having established his apostolic credentials in chapters 1 & 2; presented his thesis that salvation was by faith alone in Christ alone at the end of chapter 2; and defended his thesis in chapters 3 & 4. In chapters 5 & 6, Paul extends his instruction to the practical implications in daily Christian life.

In 5:1-12, Paul amplifies what it means to live apart from the bondage of the Law as a believer in Christ. Some of the highlights include:

- If the believer in Christ reverts to a belief and practice of the Law to be righteous before God, then: 1) he has rejected grace in practice; and 2) he needs to keep all of the Law in order to attain experiential righteousness. (See 5:1-4)
- However, if the believer lives in the power of the Holy Spirit (vs. a performance based, legalistic system), then the believer can have a “hope” (confident expectation) of appropriating experiential righteousness, i.e. becoming more like Christ in one’s daily life, walk and testimony.¹ (See 5:5)
- As the believer’s identity becomes less focused upon “self” and more focused upon who he is “in Christ” (i.e. who he is as a result of having trusted in Christ vs. his own self-righteous attainments), the believer begins to appropriate the same love [*agapao* - (*αγαπαω*)] that motivates a faith that is active and that initiates with amazing redemptive results in the lives of others.² (See 5:6)
- Any other position (such as the position of the Judaizers) is contrary to the Truth and is the result of not understanding what occurred on the Cross. (See 5:7-12)

Paul had a perspective on the eternal and the spiritual issues at stake. Paul’s focus and attention span was not consumed with endless or needless discussion of the exigencies and the distractions of the things of this world that offer temporary transcendence and escape from the drudgery of life – things that consume all too much of the believer’s conversation and attention in today’s world. (Examples include endless discussions about the weather, the latest entertainment venue or device, the latest technology item, the latest Anna Nicole Smith theory, etc. – none of which are wrong or necessarily inappropriate, but I’m referring to the dominance of

¹ I use the phrase “experiential righteousness” in distinction from “positional righteousness.” The latter is true of all believers – we are positionally identified with Christ and we are seen by God as being in the same “position” as Christ by virtue of our faith in Christ’s work on our behalf. The former is only true of those believers who, in time, align themselves with the Truth as revealed in God’s Word and through daily faith, appropriate God’s Truth into daily experience. Phase 1 Truth = positional and is associated with our salvation. Phase 2 Truth = experiential and is associated with our daily walk in time (vs. eternity).

² As we observed in our previous session, *agapao* love is not a love that has any selfish aspect to it. This is not a love of this world. This is a love that arises in the believer’s soul that is a genuine heartfelt concern for one’s fellowman – a heartfelt desire (above all other evaluations) to see the lost saved and the fellow-believer advance in Truth with the desire and motivation that Christ be glorified. It is a love for one’s fellowman that is motivated by one’s love for Christ.

such items relative to the time we spend discussing or involved in things that are spiritually edifying).

Paul's perspective on the objectives of God in human history and the eternal allowed Paul to focus on the things that really matter. Which of the other apostles are noted for having shone the spotlight on such error as was being promoted by the Judaizers at this point in the 1st Century (i.e. ca. A.D. 49)? None! As a matter of fact, they showed every inclination to blend Jewish tradition and faith in Christ in such a way that confusion was the order of the day. It took a man like Paul, who was motivated by *agapao* (αγαπαω) love to see the spiritual precipice toward which believers were being led like lemmings. Paul had faith and Paul's faith working through and motivated by love compelled him to deal forcefully with these issues. Note the principles that emerge from our examination of this passage.

Observation: Paul stood alone in his opposition to the Judaizers.

Observation: Paul had to take a stand against the "anointed" and "recognized" religious leadership of his day – e.g. Peter in Antioch.

Observation: Paul endured very personal attacks against his person, his doctrine and his qualifications.

Principle: A leader must have clarity of vision when no one else understands.

Principle: A spiritual leader is one who realizes the spiritual issues at stake, is motivated by *agapao* love, and who promotes God's grace agenda (not his own agenda) in spite of the opposition.

Principle: Sometimes *agapao* love is tough love.

Principle: The subjective (versus the objective) person will react (versus respond) to tough love. The subjective person does not possess the humility to process the issues at stake because the subjective person is too occupied with self. (This can be aberrant behavior or a pattern and I'm referring to a pattern as demonstrated by the Judaizers. Peter demonstrated aberrant behavior and had the humility to respond appropriately to Paul's rebuke).

Application: If you are a spiritual leader, don't look for someone else to pave the way for you. You will likely be alone; you will be misunderstood; you will face reaction vs. response; and you will be tempted to become discouraged. All of this will occur even if you are extremely tactful and considerate in your dealings with others.

As we shall see and have seen already, Paul's development of the practical implications of his thesis (salvation is through faith alone in Christ alone apart from works) is consistent with our previous studies of the spiritual life of the believer – particularly the topic of the divine power sphere and the various components that comprise that insulating influence in the spiritual believer's life. The components of the divine power sphere provide which we have examined in some detail previously provide an excellent conceptual framework to which such passages as ours can be compared.

In the way of brief review of these components and comparison of them to our passage at hand, note the following:

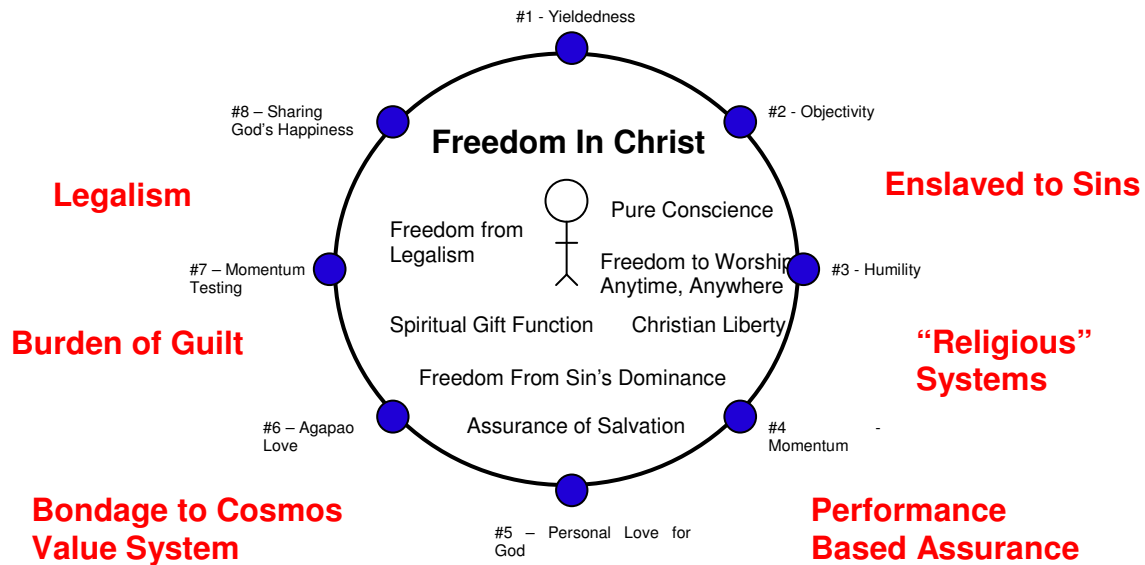
- Component #1 – Yieldedness to the Holy Spirit – Paul states in verse 5 – "For we through the Spirit, by faith are waiting for the hope of righteousness [experiential righteousness]"
- Component #2 – Objectivity – The Judaizers were not listening to Paul's logic and superimposing their subjective (vs. objective) agenda to continue the observance of Jewish tradition and the Mosaic Law. They subjectively equated something that was then allowed as a part of the believer's liberty (i.e. the observance of Jewish tradition by

- Jewish converts) to a requirement for satisfying God's righteousness. Paul demonstrated objectivity as he evaluated the Judaizers as well as the Apostles teaching and actions. Paul showed no partiality regardless of friend or foe. Yet, he demonstrated great tact.
- Component #3 – Humility – Paul was patiently leading the Galatians through a well-developed and supported argument that would leave the “teachable” (i.e. humble) with all the information they needed to respond.
 - Component #4 – Momentum – The Galatians “had run well” (5:7) at one point and developed momentum; however, they had stumbled and lost the protective insulation of the divine power sphere. With their spiritual armor, their divine power sphere, breached, they were vulnerable to the lies and deceptive logic (weapons) of the enemy.
 - Component #5 – Personal Love for God – This is the motivation for the agapao (5:6) love mentioned by Paul that works in conjunction with faith to accomplish spiritual results.
 - Component #6 – Impersonal love for mankind – Paul demonstrated this concept through his extensive labors and pains to travel to the region of Galatia and continue to pursue the maturation of this group of Christian babes. He did not desire to see them entangled in the guilt and legalism of a system that demanded observance of the Mosaic Law.
 - Component #7 – Momentum testing – The Galatians were failing their momentum test (5:7).
 - Component #8 – Sharing God's happiness – Only the believer who is walking by means of the Spirit and living by faith has the possibility of experiencing “hope” and “love” (5:5-6) that brings joy to the believer's soul – the very happiness and contentment of God.

For anyone reading these notes who has not studied with me the concept of the divine power sphere with its eight components, please do not misunderstand. The divine power sphere is merely a Biblically based conceptual framework I have adopted in order to assist believers with the assimilation of spiritual Truths from God's Word. That is one of the beautiful things about “concepts.” Different terminology can be used by different people and all can attempt to describe the same concept. I've simply tried to standardize and introduce some consistency with this set of terminology as we acknowledge a conceptual framework related to the spiritual life of the believer. This conceptual framework has been useful in the process of categorizing spiritual principles that have emerged from our study of various passages in the Pauline corpus, James, and other non-Gospel, New Testament literature. We will continue to refer to it as we progress through our Survey of the Bible series and examine these non-Gospel letters of Paul and others.³

³ For those who might be interested in a more detailed analysis of the conceptual framework I've labeled the “Eight Components of the Divine Power Sphere,” please see the page on our website under “Archives/Special Studies” labeled “Spiritual Life of the Believer” found at <http://www.cotsk.org/archives/SpiritualLifeOfTheBeliever.html> - lessons “8a” thru “8g.”

THE INSULATING PROTECTION OF THE DIVINE POWER SPHERE



Living Without License to Sin (5:13-15)

13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **14** For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." **15** But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another.⁴

Paul recognizes the potential for the believer to choose against God's desire and against the purposes for which Christ bought our freedom. God loves us enough to give us the freedom to discover the misery of life lived apart from Him – apart from the insulation of His power sphere. Our liberty from the bondage of the Mosaic Law allows us to enjoy God's grace to the fullest – unshackled from legalistic restrictions. However, Paul recognizes the ease with which a believer can step over the line and abuse freedom to the point of sinful indulgence of the flesh. For instance, believers are free to enjoy a glass of wine, smoke a cigar, enjoy a football game, see a movie, buy things for personal enjoyment, etc. However, the believer can easily allow any of these things (and many others) to become an addiction as they provide temporary escape from the drudgery of life's details. An addiction is the same thing as an idol, the worship of which was prohibited in the Law (specifically the 2nd of the Ten Commandments) and the believer of the present age is exhorted to avoid idolatry. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." (1 Jn 5:21 cf. 1 Cor 5:11; 6:9; Eph 5:5). To engage in any of these activities to the point of addiction is an abuse of Christian liberty and an indulgence of the flesh versus life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The believer who has developed a personal love for God (component #5) through a life that is being characterized by faith will find power through the Holy Spirit to love (*agapao*) mankind without regard to personal merit (component #6). Thus, Paul's statement in verse 14,

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from *The New American Standard Bible*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation, 1977).

that “For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”

Obviously, if believers do not possess the above mentioned attributes, they are not insulated by the divine power sphere that God provides. Unshielded from the ravages of this cosmos and from the power of their own sinful tendencies, believers will resort to worldly means to exert power and protect themselves – e.g. sins of the tongue that arise from wrong thought patterns and that are manifested in “biting” and “devouring” one another.

No other group of people is more effective at bayoneting the wounded than are Christians. I have observed the talk within Christian circles for years that attends the exposure of someone who has had a previously unknown addiction or has been suffering spousal abuse or whatever that may “shock” the sensibilities of “decent” folk. If talk could be transformed immediately into something tangible, it would take the form of a bayonet or a knife or some other weapon used to maim and kill another soul. Instead of creating an environment where the wounded and fallen believer hides, shrinks and withdraws, Christian circles should manifest spiritual gifts such as exhortation (encouragement), helps and mercy – an environment in which love and genuine concern prevails in actions. For this to occur, there must be a cadre of spiritual believers who are insulated from the world’s power sphere and who are operating in God’s sphere of power. Only then is *agapao* love present.

We will finalize chapter 5 – “Living by Means of the Holy Spirit” (5:16-26) in our next session.