

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 12, 4Q 2011

Living By The Spirit

Memory Verse, “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16

Do you believe it?

What does it mean to “walk by the Spirit”?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Walking...” thoughts?

Do you like the idea that Christianity is not merely a set of beliefs, doctrines, or concepts but a way of life?

How would you describe that way of life?

Read second paragraph, “Conduct in the Old...” thoughts?

Do you agree? Was the Old Testament “walking” in the law?

Does it sound like this paragraph is supporting the idea of a split dispensation, a dispensation of law in the Old Testament, and a dispensation of grace in the New Testament? Is walking in the law different than walking in the Spirit? What if we define the law as the law of love? Walking in the Spirit, is always walking in the law of love, is it not?

But when we assume an “Imposed” law, a set of arbitrary rules, then walking in the law takes on an entire different meaning. This is how the lesson seems to understand walking in the law. And thus they see the Old Testament different than the New, but was it really?

- Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away. Genesis 5:24

- Was Enoch walking in a system of rules?
- Was he walking in the Spirit?
- Was he walking in the law of love?
- Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. Genesis 6:9
 - Was Noah walking in a legal system of rules?
 - Was he walking in the Spirit?
 - Was he walking in the law of love?
- Then he blessed Joseph and said, “May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day... Genesis 48:15
 - Did Abraham and Isaac walk in a legal set of rules?
 - Did they walk with the Lord? In the law of love?
- God said to Israel,
 - Walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess. Dt 5:33-6:1

What do you think this means? Is God saying, “Walk in the legal system of rules, and if you do, then I will use my power to miraculously make good things happen for you”?

Or is, God saying, “Live in harmony with the laws I built the universe to run upon, which the ordinances are designed to teach you, and you will prosper as you thrive in harmony with my design”?

- And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul... DT 10:12

What does this mean? Does this sound like walking in the law? Where does this idea of walking in a legal system of rules come from?

Satan – Satan is a legalist. Satan has worked from the beginning to distort God’s law away from the natural law He built the universe to run upon, to a system of rules imposed by God so that he could misconstrue God’s character as one of an arbitrary judge and rule enforcer.

Now, God did give much law at Sinai – if He is not an imposer of law, if He does not want rule observance and is not a rule enforcer, than how are we to understand His use of such law in the Old Testament?

It was added to diagnose and protect, very much like a parent who sets rules for children, brush your teeth, no sweets before bedtime, no theatrical television... why?

Because children don’t understand the natural law their health is built to operate upon and will ignorantly live out of harmony with God’s design bringing pain and suffering.

Parents set rules for children, waiting for the children to grow up and understand the reasons, understand the natural law the rules were based upon and freely live in harmony with God’s design and then the rules are no longer needed.

What a wonderful God we have who would stoop to help us in such a way. Yet, Satan has twisted God’s actions and people see God through the lens of a law imposer and enforcer and live in fear and dread of Him.

MONDAY

The lesson focuses us on the conflict between the carnal nature and the spiritual nature, read first paragraph, “The struggle...”

What do you think? What is this battle about?

From my paraphrase:

Gal 5:16 So I tell you plainly: Live by the methods and power of the Spirit and you will not practice the selfish, survival-of-the-fittest methods. 17 For the selfish nature desires to promote self at the expense of everyone and everything else and this is exactly the opposite of the Spirit of love, and the Spirit of love desires to promote the good of everyone else at any expense to himself. The selfish nature and the Spirit of love are diametrically opposed to each other, so that if you follow the Spirit of love you will no longer do what your selfish nature wants. 18 Therefore, if you practice the methods of the Spirit, you no longer need to be quarantined and supervised by the written law.

How do we experience this?

Because of Adam's sin, we are born wired with fear and insecurity. Our brains are out of balance. We are wired to watch out for self, survival of the fittest. The New Testament speaks of dying to self, of having our brains rewired. In the Old Testament David wrote a Psalm that describes this process.

Ps 23:

- The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want
 - God is watching out for me and I don't need to worry about where my support will come from. He will provide all my soul needs.
- He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside the still waters
 - He will first provide soul nurturance, support, sustenance to strengthen me and prepare me
- He restores my soul
 - He will heal my inner man, cleanse my conscience, and restore my individuality
- He leads me in the path of righteousness for his name sake
 - He will lead me in the path which restores me to

righteousness, the path that makes me right inside, like He originally intended, so that He and His ways will be glorified in my life

- When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for you are with me.
 - He, then, after providing for me, strengthening me, cleansing my conscience, removing my guilt, restoring my individuality, leads me in the path to ultimate righteousness, the path which is through the valley that feels like I am going to die. The valley in which self surrenders and is crucified, the valley which frees me from the domination of fear and selfishness.
- Your rod and staff comfort me
 - He comforts me with his shepherd's rod and staff, which is used by the shepherd to beat back my attackers, and lift me out of the ditch when I fall
- You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies
 - With my critics and accusers and enemies all around He provides me a rich bounty of spiritual food to strengthen and develop my soul
- You anoint my head with oil
 - He provides His Spirit to enlighten, cleanse, renew, and give wisdom
- My cup runs over
 - My heart, renewed, cleansed, and freed from fear and selfishness runs over with love for God and my fellow man
- Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life
 - Living a life of love results in goodness and mercy following in my wake wherever I go
- I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever
 - And, having been recreated by God I will forever be a living stone in the Lord's heavenly temple!

This is God's plan, to heal and restore us, in reality!
 What counterfeits exist in the world to God's plan to overcome

through the Spirit?

Eastern mysticism, what does Eastern mysticism offer and why is it becoming so popular in the west?

We are wired with fear and insecurity because of sin. Fear results in activation of the stress pathways, which result in multiple health problems like ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, irritability, depression, dementia etc.

Eastern religions have as a primary part of their worship experience focused meditation in which the mind focuses on emptiness and nothingness. Such meditation results in calming the fear circuitry and thus results in improved physical health.

Because eastern meditation is documented to provide measurable positive effect on health it is making inroads into the west and Christianity.

Strengths of Eastern Meditation:

1. Multiple studies document it has beneficial health effects, reduces heart rate, blood pressure, anxiety, improves depression, better recovery from illness, less pain after surgery.
2. Improves attention, concentration and performance in school

These results are better than what is experienced by traditional Christianity – why?

Because traditional Christianity teaches a false system of beliefs infected by Imperial Rome, with an imposed law, imposed penalties, punishing and wrathful God, all of which incites fear and activates the fear circuits of the brain resulting in worsening physical and mental health.

Fear inducing religions, activating fear circuits, inflame the system – as soon as Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid

because they were afraid. Perfect love casts out fear. The Christianity taught by Jesus was a love based Christianity, which removed fear. But Christianity, after being infected by Imperial Rome's imposed law and government concepts, became a beastly religion of power, might, threats, and projected this concept onto God who is a cruel judge, who must use His power to torture and destroy.

Such concepts are damaging to mind and body.

If eastern meditation is inconsistent with God's principles then why do we see positive health benefits and what are its weaknesses?

The way the brain is wired is that the prefrontal cortex is designed to calm the fear circuits. Eastern meditations result in activation of the prefrontal cortex, with subsequent calming of the fear circuitry, and thus the positive benefits seen above because of the decreased activation of the stress cascade.

But, the problem is that this mediation

- doesn't enhance understanding of God's universe, provide insight into the human dilemma, or bring truth into the mind.
- It doesn't bring us to a knowledge of God, His methods, principles.
- It doesn't result in the death to "self" and the experiencing of a new heart and Christlike character.
- It doesn't resolve the distorted beliefs with the truth.
- It does not create a trust relationship with the Creator
- It promotes a greater self-centered focus on one's own ability to heal and fix oneself
- It doesn't recreate the Spirit Temple into God's dwelling place, useful for God to enlighten and shine through with saving truth in a dying world.
- Thus, its function is to stunt the growth of the individual, impair true enlightenment and avoid the experience of unity with Christ.

- It undermines individuality for the transcendent experience of unity with cosmos.
- Eastern mysticism also fails to understand the real problem, what is wrong with us, and thus its interventions come up short.

From our perspective, we understand God's law of love as the design template of life, and sin is lawlessness, or being selfish and out of harmony with God's design. We understand that in us there are two antagonistic principles at war, other centered love and survival of the fittest.

We understand that conversion is not the process of meditation to calm the fear circuitry, but following our Shepherd into the "valley of the shadow of death" in which we die to self.

This is a time of great anguish and anxiety - (Jacob's night of wrestling, Gethsemane, Peter after his denial, David after Nathan confronted him etc.). It is in this anguish, as we confront the truth, intelligently, wrestling with our own selfishness and ultimately surrender to Christ that we experience His love, supernatural regeneration, a new set of motives in the heart and freedom from fear based living.

Few Christians experience this because they have accepted the false system of legal payment instead of God's plan of recreation and regeneration of heart. Thus, the Eastern philosophies, which have the ability to actual cause calming of the fear circuitry is experienced as more "real" and beneficial in our life today than traditional Christianity, because traditional Christianity has been infected with a false "remedy."

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

In light of what we just discussed, read last paragraph, "In

this context...” thoughts?

What corrupt views of God do we struggle with that interfere with experiencing God’s healing in our lives?

Why do false views of God lead to loss of eternal life?

Lies believed break the circle of love and trust, resulting in fear and selfishness. If we don’t know God we won’t trust Him!

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The Ten Commandments...” thoughts?

Does something in this paragraph seem slightly off? Is there something about how this is stated that seems not quite right?

For instance, might it be more accurate to say, the law is love, rather than “love is not in conflict with the law”?

Do the 10 Commandments ever get voided?

Do the 10 Commandments ever become obsolete? When?

When the law is written on the heart and mind and the entire universe is cleansed from sin, the Commandments are not voided, but they are obsolete, why? Because once they are written in the Spirit Temple, they are no longer needed on stone. When everyone is healthy we no longer need the MRI.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – “Although an inward...” thoughts?

Is this exactly true, or a qualified truth?

For instance, are there times in the life of the believer where an internal battle rages, but are there other times in the life of

the believer where there is genuine peace and no internal battle?

Can we live victorious over the fears and insecurities and habits of our life of sin?

Do we have a role to play or is something done in us, with our consent but, without our effort?

Here is how one of the founders of our church put it:

- While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the **divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part.** His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {LHU 193.4}
- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}
- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that

the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding**, but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . . .** Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

How do you see the relationship between Christ's work and our work?

- The Remedy to sin was fully achieved by Christ and no one else.
- We can do nothing to add to what Christ has done to save mankind, but, each person now must choose to open their heart in trust to receive from the Holy Spirit the benefit of Christ's victory in their life.
- Each person must wrestle out the truth in their own minds and confront the lies and misunderstandings they hold in their own minds.
- When we do this a supernatural transformation of character, desire, motive, and attitude takes place.
- In this process there is a daily, ongoing, and constant cooperative work of the individual with the Divine in which the person chooses to continue to follow the direction of the Heavenly Physician until they are one day fully healed and set free to be self-controlled beings operating on the law of love, which has been fully restored into the heart. (Heb 8:10).

FRIDAY

Read top paragraph, "The life of..." Why might the attacks become fiercer as we grow closer to the end? How are Satan's attacks different today than they were in the past?

The unfolding of knowledge, and scientific advancement, and increase in population all contribute to increasing temptation and damage to the human brain.

Consider:

- Designer drugs today, damage brain like never before in human history
- Alcohol, distilled spirits, more available, more forms, more potent
- Fast food, depleted of nutrients, multiple chemical additives, altering human health and physiology
- Pollution, undermining health.
- Internet and information access – increased availability of vices, gambling, perverse activities, lust for things, shopping, etc.
- Entertainment, movies, TV, altering developing brain with less developed prefrontal cortex and more impulsivity and aggression, as well as more mysticism, spiritualism, and normalizing of sinful/lawless living
- Dense cities with increased dens of crime, drugs, gangs, extortion, less time in nature, faster paced life, less time to reflect and meditate
- Normalization of non-marriage living arrangements, devaluing of marriage.
- Evolutionary theories and degradation of God
- Social isolation, families no longer living in multigenerational homesteads or towns

Others?