

BY LOVE SERVE

Sunday Morning: December 21, 2003

Text: Galatians 5:13-16 "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."

We're continuing our thoughts in the book of Galatians and this morning we're picking up a little bit about serving the Lord, excuse me, about loving each other and fulfilling the law. The book of Galatians is dealing with the law and fulfilling the law and the Lord came not to cancel the law or to do away with the law but to fulfil it. And He demonstrated that fulfilling of the law by the way He loved us and the by the way He served us. And we can fulfill the law in the same way in our relationships with each other. We need to care about each other and we need to respond to each other's needs. I just think about when love isn't working, there's dissention and division and stress. I'm thinking about Paul and Barnabas and Peter all having good fellowship and then when the law giver, so to speak, from Jerusalem came down, Peter said, 'hey I got over here on this side of the fence.' So much so that it affected Barnabas. Barnabas was one of Paul's, Barnabas were working together! And it created some division. And Paul dealt with it, kind of sternly, but he dealt with it. That it needed to, that this shouldn't happen and that's what He's doing here in Galatians chapter five verses thirteen to sixteen. I'm going to read that.

LIBERTY TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER

Galatians 5:13-14 "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** (given to control the flesh) is fulfilled in **one word**, *even* in this; Thou shalt (it takes grace to) **love thy neighbour** as thyself."

One of the problems about the liberties that we have been given in the Lord Jesus Christ causes us to say we can leave something's undone and those things that we leave undone have to do with our brother sometimes. And when I was thinking about the thoughts this morning, about the lesson this morning, I was thinking about the way the scribes and the Pharisees operated when it came to being obedient to the commandments. And in Mathew chapter fifteen verses four through six it says

DO NOT DODGE HIS COMMANDMENTS

Matthew 15:4-6 "For **God commanded**, saying, **Honour thy father and mother**: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. *5.* But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his father* or *his mother*, *It is a gift*, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me (to help them financially); *6.* And **honour not his father** or his **mother**, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye **made the commandment of God of none effect** by your tradition."

You know, you curse your parents; you're stoned to death. That's the death he's talking about, physical death. And so verse five,

What this verse is saying is that God has got commandments. And you figure out a way that you don't have to keep them. And what you can say is well, this money I have in my pocket, it will help my Mom and Dad, oh, this is a special offering for God and so therefore I don't have to help them financially. So you skirt around the law with your liberty and you're making liberty, or taking liberties that you shouldn't take, okay? So that can happen and sometimes liberties cause us to respond to our flesh. Our fleshly desires! When I think about the law, the law was given to control our flesh, basically speaking; because our flesh wants to steal and to lie and to cheat and to commit all kinds of immoral things. Why? Because it's fun and it's profitable, temporarily of course all of this, but the law is as we fulfill the law and we control ourselves by loving our neighbors as our self. If we love our neighbor as our self, we're not going to fulfill the lust of our flesh toward our neighbor. We're not going to treat him mean; we're not going to take things from him.

And so that's what's being said in verses thirteen and fourteen. "Use not liberty for the occasion of the flesh. By love serve one another for the law is fulfilled in one word, even this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And by the way it takes grace to do that. And Paul in verses just before this says that if you're trying to fulfill the law, you're falling from grace, in other words, you're not serving your neighbor. You're not serving the lord in love. Now, we're to love in deed not in word. I think when you read, when I was reading this passage in Mathew, so loving in word and not in deed, he had figured out a way to beat the system and it seems like a lot of Christians today are trying to beat the system. They don't want to love and care for each other like they should.

LOVE IN DEED

1 John 3:17-19 "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? **18.** My **little children**, let us **not love in word**, neither in tongue; **but in deed** and in truth. **19.** And **hereby we know that we are of the truth**, and shall assure our hearts before him."

I was thinking, I need to stop there, I was thinking about this passage of scripture. It says, "how dwelleth the love of God dwelleth in him," this is not my love for God, this is God's love for me. If I can't respond to the needs of my brother or sister, how can God love me? That's what this is saying! How can god love you, when you can't love somebody you can see? We can't see God and so therefore, you know the commandment is to love the Lord with all of our heart, we can't see Him but we need to respond to those we can see. But anyway, "how dwelleth the love of God on Him?" It doesn't! He goes on

How do we know that we are of the truth? Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. The Holy Spirit is the One who comes and teaches the truth, which are good things to come having to do with the Kingdom. Part of growing in Kingdom truth is responding to a brother. In fact Mathew twenty five talks about ministering to the **least** of these my brethren. And brethren are those seeking to enter into the Kingdom. And so when we think about responding to the, responding to the needs of a brother, we are ministering to the Lord and if we're ministering to Him, Hebrews chapter six verse ten, says God's not going to

unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward to His name in that you've ministered to the saints and do minister. He's not going to forget that. But we can also know that we are of the truth. That we are making progress as far as standing in His presence approved and hearing, "well done thou good and faithful servant" and ruling reigning in His coming Kingdom. If we're sensitive of other people's needs that will assure our hearts, that will give us some encouragement. Let me tell you, seeking to rule and reign and to stand in His presence is not easy to do. It means persecution, it means rejection; it means not being in the 'big group'. In other words, you're not going to have a lot of people that want to hear it does make a difference how you live. All they want to hear is "I'm saved and I've got the whole pie in the sky and I don't have to worry about a thing." That's not true. The Word of God is very plain that it does make a difference how you live and God will honor the faithful and those that are seeking to do the will of the Father. So we want to be, we want to have our heart assured before Him and we do that by ministering to each other. Now Romans twelve ten

BE DEVOTED TO ON ANOTHER

Romans 12:10 "Be kindly affectioned one to another with **brotherly love**; in honour **preferring** one another;"

Part of brotherly kindness and ministering to each other has to do with preferring one another. Not always wanting to be first. I was looking at another translation about the word 'affection.' Be devoted or they translated 'be devoted one to another.' Kindly affection seems a little, a little soft. But to be devoted! That means you're committed to each other not you know, you know warm and fuzzy affection; we need to be committed to each other, devoted to each other and in honor preferring one another.

PROVOKE UNTO LOVE

Hebrews 10:24 "And let us consider one another to **provoke unto love** and to **good works**:"

Part of our ministry is considering one another. That means I've got to encourage you and you've got to encourage me. Because that's what it means to consider. And part of my considering you, I want to provoke you not to anger or road rage! I want to provoke you to love and good works. Love the brethren; love your neighbor unto good works. In other words, not in word only; but in word and in what? In deed, deed! Now,

LIBERTY IS NOT A CLOAK

1 Peter 2:16-17 "As free, and not using *your* **liberty** for a **cloak** of **maliciousness**, but as the **servants** of God. **17.** Honour [value] all *men*. **Love** the **brotherhood** [brethren]. **Fear** God. Honour [value] the king."

In other words, we're free, we've been called unto liberty, we're free, we're children of the free. We're to be associated with Isaac according to Galatians chapter four. It says as free and not using our liberty for a cloak of maliciousness. But as the servants of God honor all men, love the brethren. It says 'brotherhood' but it's really 'brethren'. Love the brethren and fear God and honour the king'. The word, 'honour' in this verse can be translated, 'value.' In

other words, 'value the king', value all. IN other words, we're all worth something. We're all not worthless in the sight of God. We are worth something and we need to value them and we need to love the brethren and I tell you, there are times when it takes the fear of God to do that! We're not always lovely, are we? We have good days and bad days, just like our hair days, you know? There are good ones and bad ones! So but anyway, it takes the fear of God and it takes grace to do that. Now,

DON'T LIVE LIKE ANIMALS

Galatians 5:15 "But if ye **bite** and **devour** one another, take heed that ye be not **consumed** one of another."

In other words, Paul is saying don't live like animals! It's really what animals do, don't they? They bite and devour each other. This passage of scripture says, quit devouring a brother. You're supposed to be building up a brother! You're supposed to be serving a brother and not serving him on a platter that you can bite or in other words, devour! I guess that's kind of twisting it in there but anyway this is one of the things that can happen with doctrine. It causes division and strife and we're not to let that happen. Now we are to deal with false doctrines. There's no question about it and deal with it not partially but sternly and decisively and if a man creates division what are we supposed to be doing with that individual? He's to be excused, he is to be allowed to leave and we've done that here from time to time. But we're not interested in devouring one another. The law and grace and emphasis on the law and the keeping of the letter of the law and the grace of God defeated division in the church in Galatia.

Leviticus chapter nineteen verse eighteen is a good verse to consider

DO NOT AVENGE

Leviticus 19:18 "Thou shalt **not avenge**, nor **bear** any **grudge** against the children of thy people, but thou shalt **love thy neighbour as thyself**: I *am* the LORD."

I'm telling you! I'm the Lord! So what does it mean to love thy neighbor? Well, first of all you don't get even with your neighbor. Vengeance is mine saith the lord. That's hard to do. And but we're not to revenge. We're not to be, have any grudge. We're not to be angry with our neighbors and a grudge is something that's not just anger, it's something that works on you, isn't it? A grudge is something that grinds and grinds and grinds! And you know what it does to the lining of your stomach? It just simply eats it away! Next thing you know, your stomach hurts and you got a knot and the abscess won't go away. We're to grudge not against each other. Don't hold grudges. But love your neighbor. Serve your neighbor with love. You know what, when you're serving you're not going to have time for grudging. When you're serving you're not going to have time for avenging. In fact the scriptures teach us to heap coals of fire on our enemies head, right? Ell, how do we do that? Giving something to drink and giving something to eat. Not literally heaping coals of fire on our enemies' head. We're to minister to our enemies and then the Lord will want to shovel the coals! I guess that's one way to look at it. But anyway, so loving our neighbor will keep us from avenging and bearing grudges against them.

DO ALL THINGS WITHOUT DISPUTING

Philippians 2:14-15 "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15. That ye may be **blameless** and **harmless**, the sons [mature children] of God, **without rebuke**, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"

Well, if a church or body of believers is murmuring and disputing and biting and devouring one another, you know what? We're not going to have a testimony of being blameless. We're not going to have a testimony of being harmless. We're not going to have a testimony of being mature; acting just like a bunch of kids, in fact carnal kids, fleshly kids. They'll be able to rebuke us because of our behavior and let me tell you, we're living in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation of perverse nations and they need a testimony! Well, what's happening in the church today is really not... hindering or giving a very good clear testimony to the world around us.

In First Corinthians chapter one Paul rebukes the church in Corinth about divisions. He says:

DO NOT BE DIVIDED

1 Corinthians 1:10 "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and **that there be no divisions among you**; but *that* ye be **perfectly joined together** [one word, be made complete] in the **same mind** and in the **same judgment**."

The word 'perfectly joined together' is one word in the Greek text and it means to be made complete in the same mind and the same judgment. Now this doesn't mean necessarily that we all have to agree on everything in doctrine, but one thing that we need to all agree on is that there should be no bickering divisions in our midst. We may have differences of views on different passages of scripture but it should not create an issue. It should not create a division. It should not create sects in our fellowship. And we should not be stressed over somebody having a different view. You know, that's just something that doesn't bother me. Used to, but it doesn't anymore. And because I know that there are going to be varying degrees and eventually everybody's going to believe what I believe anyway! No! Anyway, we need to be complete and of the same mind. We need to care about each other not tear each other down, okay? That's the whole idea.

Because Paul rebuked them about being carnal in chapter three verse three.

THE CARNAL ARE DIVIDED

1 Corinthians 3:3 "For ye are yet **carnal** [fleshly]: for whereas *there is* among you **envying**, and **strife**, and **divisions**, are ye not **carnal** [fleshly], and **walk as men**?"

Carnality is walking as a man. And we need to walk in heavenly places. And I'm just thinking about envy and strife and divisions having to do with doctrine is that we envy someone who is more popular than we are. I've been there. I've had that happen. And it creates strife when we have envy if somebody is, you know, I just think about people who have money, denominations who have piles of money and we have to watch and pray for ours, they don't! 'Seems like to me!

Anyway, envying, that creates strife and it creates division and we should not allow that to happen in our lives. So we need to walk in the spirit.

WALK IN THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:16 "*This* I say then, **Walk in the Spirit**, and ye shall not fulfil the **lust of the flesh.**"

There won't be divisions, there won't be biting, devouring each other. The works of the flesh will be put on the back or they'll be done away with and we'll be able to serve each other in love and walking in this spirit, I do not believe it is the Holy Spirit. I cannot relate to walking in the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit. I know the Holy Spirit indwells me, I know that the Holy Spirit provides peace at times, and it also provides motivation to do things like buy airline tickets, things like that. I know that the Holy Spirit does move in our hearts and lives. But what is more meaningful to me is that this spirit that he's talking about in the book of Galatians that I can dig my spiritual teeth into is the spirit that the Son of God had. In Galatians chapter four verse six

WHAT SPIRIT?

Galatians 4:6 "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth **the Spirit of his Son** into your hearts, crying, **Abba, Father.**"

Or because ye endure as sons. Walking in the spirit is walking in the Abba spirit. What is the Abba spirit? The Abba spirit is found in Mark chapter fourteen verse thirty six

THE ABBA SPIRIT

Mark 14:36 "And he said, **Abba, Father**, all things *are* possible unto thee; **take away this cup** [the desire of the flesh] from me: nevertheless **not what I will, but what thou wilt.**"

I'm not saying Jesus Christ was in the flesh but He did not want what was going to have to happen. And yet what He said, nevertheless not what I will but what thou wilt. That's the Abba spirit. You live like that, you're not going to be worried about the divisions in the fellowship or somebody being over you or ahead of you. And so that's the spirit. Now the evidence of that spirit is, I believe, is found in Galatians five twenty two and twenty three and we'll be going back to this from time to time because we need this over, we need this repeated.

EVIDENCE OF THAT SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is **love** (for the brethren), **joy** (in the hope of glory, Romans 5:2), **peace** (that passes all understanding), **longsuffering** [patience], **gentleness** [kindness], **goodness** [beneficial, from a word translated benefit], **faith** (faithful), 23. Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

I know I'm walking in this spirit when I have love for His word, for the brethren, for my neighbor, for this is, I mean I can experience this! I know when I'm caring about those that are in the fellowship and my neighbor. A fruit of the spirit, the Abba spirit is joy. Well, what joy? It's the joy of the hope of glory. Am I filled? Do I still have the hope of glory? Is there joy in my heart anticipating the glory of the coming Kingdom? I can relate to that. Is there peace that passes all understanding in my life? Or am I always being anxious about things? When

we're anxious about things, the Abba spirit's not working. We're not being lead, we're not walking in that spirit. Long suffering, that has to do with patience. Gentleness is also translated, 'kindness', also goodness, that's beneficial. In other words, it can be translated 'beneficial' from a word translated 'benefit'.. also translated that way. In other words, am I a hindrance or am I beneficial to the fellowship or to those around me? That's what I associate with goodness. Faith, well I can't put faith in a basket though it is a noun, but I can demonstrate faithfulness. That's a fruit that I can demonstrate and you can see faithfulness in my life and I can see faithfulness in your life. So part of the fruit of that spirit is faith or faithfulness. Meekness, temperance, we could go on. I think of meekness as, meekness is I'm teachable. "Come and learn of me for I am meek and lowly of heart." There are different things that we could talk about that, about meekness. But we are to walk worthy of the Lord

A WORTHY WALK

Ephesians 4:1-3 "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye **walk worthy** of the vocation [calling] wherewith ye are called, 2. With all **lowliness** and **meekness**, with **longsuffering, forbearing** one another **in love**; 3. Endeavouring to keep the **unity** of the Spirit in the bond of **peace**."

Is that what we've been talking about? Absolutely! That's exactly what we've been talking about and you know what? That's a worthy walk! We are walking worthy of the calling where we've been called. If we are walking this way, we're going to stand approved. And enter into the calling. Colossians also talks about the elect

AS THE ELECT

Colossians 3:12-15 "Put on therefore, **as the elect** of God, holy and beloved, **bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering**; 13. **Forbearing** one another, and **forgiving** one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye. 14. And above all these things *put on* **charity** [love], which is the bond (the glue) of perfectness. 15. And **let the peace of God rule** in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye **thankful**."

These are all fruits of the spirit, the Abba spirit. Love is the glue! Love is the covenant, which we'll see in Galatians five six. So love is the glue of perfection and let the peace of God rule in our hearts and then lastly, love can make the difference.

LOVE CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

1 Peter 4:7-9 "But **the end** of all things **is at hand**: be ye therefore **sober**, and **watch** unto **prayer**. 8. And above all things have fervent **charity** [love] among yourselves: for **charity** [love] shall **cover** the **multitude of sins**. 9. Use **hospitality** one to another **without grudging**."

Notice where it's placed, 'above all things.' The Lord's coming. He's close and we need to be watching and praying and above all things we need to love fervently. Where? Among ourselves, not our families, but among ourselves! For love covereth what? A multitude of sins! And we sure need that. I need it, I need to have a little covering called love, okay? Because I know I don't do

everything right. I don't push all the buttons correct! No, I know that's not a sin but anyway, I know I stumble. And then it says, 'Use hospitality one toward another without grudging.' Isn't that something? If you're in a grudge are you going to invite anybody over for dinner? No! So you've got to get rid of the grudges, got to get rid of the back biting and the biting and the devouring and have somebody over for supper or lunch or whatever and again

LOVE IS THE CATALYST

Galatians 5:6 ". . . faith which worketh by love."

You want to please God? You've got to love and love means service. Serving who? Each other and your neighbor!

May the Lord help us to apply these thoughts this morning because when we think about the works of the flesh, that's not a very good line of thinking but it's needful. Paul brings it out and he gives a big list because it has to do with your inheritance and we'll talk about that next Sunday.

Father, I just pray that you bless the word to each of our hearts this morning. We thank you for your faithfulness to us and we pray you'd help us to have the faith of the spirit that would bring blessing to other people around us and that we would not bite and devour each other but that we might serve each other with love being kind and compassionate and considerate and observing and provoking to love and to good works. There's so much here, Lord, we just pray you'd help us to assimilate it and to apply it in our lives toward each other. It's true that we want you to love us and we just pray that you would help us to serve you. For these things we ask in Jesus Christ's name, amen.