

GALATIANS CHAPTER 5 SERMON NOTES (by Matthew Janzen)

Galatians, pt. 47 "A Yoke of Slavery"

Read 5:1-6

So today we begin in chapter 5. I just read the first 6 verses, but after I ended chapter 4 last week, I thought about teaching through the first 12 verses of chapter 5 this week. I know some of you are laughing inside, thinking, "there's no way brother Matthew can cover 12 verses in 1 sermon." And... you are right, lol.

I want to stay focused and try to get through chapter 5 during the winter months, but I don't want to rush anything. I want to make sure I concentrate on the verses, so that even if you don't grasp it all in one setting, you can go back and listen to the recording, with an open Bible, for years to come.

So today... I'm going to cover 1 verse, Galatians 5:1. We will branch out from this verse to other verses that parallel or compliment this verse, but in Galatians, we aren't going to leave 5:1.

It says again, "Christ has liberated us into freedom. Therefore stand firm and don't submit again to a yoke of slavery."

So there we have it. "Why can't we see that the law is slavery? We've been freed from the law by Christ, and we should stand firm in that freedom."

That's how a lot of Christians read that verse. Even the NLT (a translation I enjoy reading) cites the verse like this: "So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law." That's why you need to read multiple Bible translations, and have a good teacher. For the record, I don't agree with the NLT here.

Is the Law Slavery?

So... today I observed the Sabbath. I began last evening. I've been working hard all week, every day. Laboring. My right knee has been hurting. I cut a few of my fingers. I've lifted some heavy things throughout the week, and walked more steps that I could count. Last night, all that stopped. I've been home all day, resting. I did do some Bible reading and study, but I slept in this morning, and took a nap this afternoon. Sabbath means rest. It's been wonderful.

And the same goes for the rest of the commandments. I seek to honor my parents, and that brings light to my life. I don't want to murder my neighbor, or hate my neighbor in my heart, but speak words of peace and thanks to those I meet. I'm faithful to my wife in marriage, and we live a life of deep love and friendship with one another. I don't want to steal something from my neighbor, and I don't want to be stolen from. I want to speak the truth and not be lied about, and I want to be content with what I have, and not desire my neighbor's things, or get caught up in coveting what I don't have.

These commandments make my life a great life. And it's not just these, but it's those that often get neglected too. We just finished the Feast of Tabernacles. It was a wonderful time. So much good food and wine, and so much good Biblical discussion and fellowship. One new brother that came told me he already couldn't wait until next year. Another brother told me he didn't want it to end. We laughed, we cried, we studied, we sang, we talked, we hugged. It wasn't something I wanted freedom from, I can tell you that.

Everyone is a Slave to Something

Let me share with you a concept that many people do not realize. *Everyone is free from something* and at the same time *everyone is a slave to something*.

A man may be married, with children, yet be a slave to his car and job, and free from his family. He can work so much and take so much pride in his achievements that he neglects his wife and children. He experiences freedom from his family, because he is a slave to something else.

A person can decide one day that they want to leave everything they know behind and try heroine or cocaine. They may become free from responsibilities, but they become a slave and addicted to drugs.

You might be a rock'n'roll addict prancing on the stage
 You might have drugs at your command, women in a cage
 You may be a business man or some high-degree thief
 They may call you doctor or they may call you chief
 But you're gonna' have to serve somebody
 Well it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
 But you're gonna' have to serve somebody (Bob Dylan, 1979)

The Apostle Paul (same author) put it like this (Romans 6:16-18, 22):

16 Do you not know that if you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, **you are slaves of that one you obey**-either of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness?

17 But thank the Almighty that, although **you used to be slaves of sin**, you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching you were entrusted to,

18 and **having been liberated from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness...**

22 But now, since **you have been liberated from sin and become enslaved to the Almighty**, you have your fruit, which results in sanctification - and the end is eternal life.

The point is that you can't get around serving *somebody* or serving *something*. Every person in the world today serves something, and at the same time is freed from something. No person is free from everything.

Back to Galatians 5:1

So what did Paul mean in Galatians 5:1 when he said, "Christ has liberated us into freedom. Therefore stand firm and don't submit again to a yoke of slavery"?

Paul wasn't talking about freedom from the law, but instead *freedom from what certain people among them were teaching about the law*. **Huge difference.**

A person can misuse a scripture or a law, teach that misuse, and permeate it throughout the people, the people adopt the misuse, and thus become *slaves to a misuse of law* rather than liberated and free to walk in truth.

The influencers or Judaizers were using circumcision (short-hand for proselyte conversion) as a means of the forgiveness of sins and right-standing with the Almighty. In teaching the command *this way*, they were causing people who had already placed their faith in Messiah to doubt their forgiveness, and submit to an additional ritual in order to be forgiven or saved (in their minds).

Paul says "No, the Messiah has liberated us into freedom. You have been forgiven. All of your sins were paid for by the Messiah. His work is what accomplished your salvation, so stand firm in that, and do not submit to this yoke of slavery that is being pushed upon you. Do not submit to this misuse of the law."

The Pharisees Teaching Method

We see this also in Matthew 23:1-4. Yeshua says that the scribes and Pharisees sit in the chair of Moses, so what they tell you to do, do it, but don't do according to their works, for they say and do not. He goes on to say that they tie up heavy loads upon the people, but aren't willing to use even a finger to lift the load.

Some people think these heavy loads that are hard to carry are the man-made traditions of the Pharisees. I used to think that, but I changed my view a few years ago, because of verse 3. *Do what they tell you... but don't do what they do*. Did they practice their traditions? Of course they did. It was the law they did not do. Some outward aspects yes, but as a general rule, no.

This means that verse 4 about the heavy loads is about the law, but... it is about *the way in which the Pharisees taught the law*. Their misuse of the law became a heavy load to those who sat up under their teaching.

A hammer can be used to build something great. That same hammer can be used to tear something down.

If you use the law to just hammer, and hammer, and hammer people over the head. Piling up law after law after law, and making them feel so overwhelmed and even un-forgiven... the person will eventually crack under the weight of so much pressure.

But the Pharisees didn't care. They wanted people to feel dirty. They wanted people to feel bad about them self. They weren't interested in dressing the wounds of the people. They were only interested in making them selves look good and everyone else look bad.

Yeshua's Teaching Method

Yeshua on the other hand taught the law as a way of life, tempered with grace, mercy, forgiveness, longsuffering, kindness, and gentleness. This is actually why he said, "Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. All of you, **take up My yoke and learn from Me**, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. **For my yoke is easy and My burden is light.**" (Matthew 11:28-30)

This verse is on coffee mugs and t-shirts, and used as wall decor, but few understand its original intent. Yeshua is contrasting his teaching methods with the teaching methods of others in his day. While the teaching of the Pharisees was heavy, and made you feel worthless, the teaching of Yeshua was easy and light. He said "take up my yoke and learn **from** me." Not learn *about* me (that comes too), but learn **FROM** me.

When people would come to Yeshua, or listen to Yeshua teach, he would welcome them in. He went to visit the tax collectors, and let a known prostitute wash his feet with the tears from her eyes. He brought in who would be called the lowest of the low. He welcomed all those who knew they had need of a doctor, and he gave them the medicine they needed: **truth**, but *with love and gentleness*. He used the hammer to build rather than to destroy. He taught law as a way of life, not as a way to be forgiven.

The Significance of a Yoke

And notice he refers to his teaching as a yoke here. Remember Galatians 5:1 speaks of a yoke of slavery. Here Yeshua says, "my yoke is easy and light." Why yoke?

A yoke was a wooden crosspiece that was fastened over the necks of two animals and attached to the plow or cart they had to pull. A yoke fastened two things together.

To be yoked to a teacher meant you sat under the tutelage of that teacher (cp. Zephaniah 3:9 LXX). Yeshua's yoke was easy. Yeshua helped pull the load. One commentator I read (Jeremy Taylor) said this: "*Christ's yoke is like feathers to a bird; not loads but helps to motion.*" Yeshua taught with patience and gentleness. The Pharisees taught with rigor and condemnation.

Paul's Admonition in a Nutshell

When Paul told the Galatians to "*stand firm in liberty and don't submit to a yoke of slavery,*" it was in reference to how a certain law was being taught to them, not in reference to the law itself. The Galatians were forgiven of their sin in Messiah. They shouldn't allow someone to come in and start trying to beat them over the head with a hammer, telling them they aren't really forgiven until they do things their way.

Closing Encouragement

So I close today with these words of encouragement today. If you have repented of your sins and placed your faith in the Messiah, you too are forgiven. You are somebody. There is no need to punish yourself, because you don't feel good enough. There's no need to listen to the many voices in the world that tell you "do this" or "do that" in order to amount to anything. You're the best you that you could ever be in Messiah.

Sometimes we struggle with feeling needed in this world. People wonder at the end of the day if it really mattered if they lived or died that day. Do you really make a difference? The answer is yes! You are special! Yahweh loves you! Brother Matthew loves you! You are needed.

Your life is worth something. Don't doubt that. Yahweh loved you so much that he gave his only begotten Son for you. He bought you with a price. Don't listen to anyone who tells you that you'll never amount to anything. You've already got everything. You have eternal life. You have the best thing that anyone could ever have.

Yes, you need to be taught, and learn how to love Yahweh. Yes, you need to grow in righteousness and obedience. But it's ok if that takes time. I'm not here to condemn those in Messiah, I'm here to encourage, and teach, and be patient with you. Yahweh will grow you, in His time. And just like a farmer waits patiently after planting for the harvest, Yahweh is waiting patiently with you.

Galatians, pt. 48 "Faith Working through Love"

Read 5:1-6

These verses I just read are often used in an attempt to do away with the law of Yahweh. I hope that all of the time we've spent studying this book has helped you understand these verses, even before I explain them today. But I am here to explain them, and help you get a better grasp at what Paul is saying. That's the purpose of pastoring teachers.

Review

Last week we covered the idea of being set free from slavery, and liberated unto freedom. Being liberated and free does not mean we are free from everything. Everyone is free from something, and at the same time a servant to something.

In the case at hand, Paul tells the Galatian Gentiles that they've been liberated from an abuse or misuse of the law. That's the yoke of slavery, the way in which the law was being taught by the Judaizers.

Paul's Pause

I should note here that verses 2-12 are a pause. It's like Paul stops his sentence in verse 1, adds some thoughts in verses 2-12 (because he feels the need to hit a high point), and then picks his thought back up in verse 13. Reading them together shows how Paul's thought makes more sense.

1 (the) Messiah has liberated us into freedom. Therefore stand firm and don't submit again to a yoke of slavery...

13 For you are called to freedom brothers; only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love.

We even see here in verse 13 the point I made last week. Paul tells the Galatians they are free, but not free to do whatever their flesh desires. They are free to **serve one another**. Free to serve; much like the Israelites were freed from the slavery of Egypt, but set free in order to serve Yahweh.

Forsaking the Messiah

So, let's look at verse 2 now, I'll read it again:

2 Take note! I, Paul, tell you that if you get circumcised (be circumcised, KJV), the Messiah will not benefit you at all.

For starters, if we just read this verse by itself, and take it at face value, we are condemning every single circumcised man. I'm circumcised, and I had all three of my sons circumcised on the 8th day. In this, have we thrown away the Messiah?

What about a male adult who gets circumcised at the suggestion of a physician, for medical reasons? Is the Messiah of no benefit to that man?

We learn a good lesson here about the damage we do in taking a verse away from its context. Of course my sons and I are believers in the Messiah. The Messiah is of great benefit to us, because we confess him, have been baptized into him, and believe upon him as the mediator between us and the Father.

The same goes for a believer in the Messiah who takes the advice of a physician and gets circumcised. This verse has nothing to do with either of these cases... but you see, it could be taken out of context, and made to teach this, by using the verse in isolation.

Are Religious Reasons Forbidden?

Some people teach that the verse is condemning being circumcised *for religious purposes*. I don't see that in the context of Galatians either. I don't believe Paul preached against a Gentile being circumcised for religious reasons. Maybe a Gentile wanted to eat the Passover Lamb. Maybe a Gentile wanted to take upon himself the covenant in the flesh given to Abraham. Maybe a Gentile read about how Abraham had faith, and then later became circumcised, and the Gentile wants to follow in the footsteps of father Abraham. Is Messiah of no benefit to this Gentile man, just because he got himself circumcised for these reasons? Not at all.

Paul's Point

Paul is dealing here with a particular false teaching. A teaching going around that only a Jew or Judahite could have salvation. This teaching went on to say that the way a Gentile could become a Jew, or the way a heathen male could become an Israelite, was through

converting to the Judahite faith through the ritual of circumcision. And according to this teaching, if a Gentile male did not do that, he was not saved from his sins, even if the Gentile male was already a believer in the Messiah.

What Paul is saying here in Galatians 5:2 is this: **if a Gentile male receives this false gospel of being circumcised for salvation, the Messiah is of no benefit to him.**

In such a case, a man has taken the salvation found in Messiah, set that to the side, and grasped hold to an act of obedience as the basis of his forgiveness. The man has said through his actions, "Messiah is not enough, I have to also do this in order to be forgiven of my sins."

Our Outward Mindset

It's weird, yet understandable, how we put our focus on the outside. It's like putting a ring of gold in a pig's snout, or as we say in later years, putting lipstick on a pig. That seems silly, but yet people do it all the time with them selves and with unbelievers.

We focus on the outside because it's quick and easy. It virtually takes no work, no time, no effort, no labor, no study. It's a result of our laziness. It's a result of us accepting looks over heart. It proves we don't want genuine repentance, and long, hard work of years and years of discipleship with people.

I can take a rank heathen, make him quit shaving, put a set of tassels on him, tie a phylactery around his hand and his forehead, and teach him the SHEMA - in Hebrew... but it doesn't mean anything if his heart is not changed.

My High-School Friend

I remember having a friend in high-school. I was around 15 to 16 years old, and I was on fire for the Lord. I wanted everybody to be on fire like me. I wanted everyone to want to come to church like me. I wanted to everyone to sit in the front row and soak in all the preacher had to say.

I had this buddy of mine, that I loved, and he came and sat with me at a Sunday morning service. I wasn't sure of his salvation. He had a church-going Mama, and he came to church once a month or so, but I was worried about him, so I tried to talk to him about the Scriptures, and cleaning up his act.

After the service we prayed at the altar, and we even baptized him. We ended up shouting and rejoicing, and later that night (at the Sunday night service) he came back with his haircut, new clothes, a totally new look. I still remember standing beside him before church that night, and hearing him tell someone else, "This is the new me."

Part of me was happy, but there was another part of me that was disturbed. I was young at that time, and ignorant on so much in the Bible, but I knew something wasn't right.

You Can't Force Salvation

What I tried to do, and what my friend was trying to do, was force salvation through works. *Works flow from salvation, but you cannot force salvation through works.* Salvation is from the inside out, not the outside in. You don't take a pill and get saved. Yahweh changes your heart. What you do on the outside doesn't effect the inside, but if a supernatural occurrence takes place on the inside it will effect the outside. (ref. Matthew 23:25-26)

The Judaizers were trying to force salvation through circumcision. They held that rite up, higher than anything else. They held it up as the channel through which a heathen changed his identity. They believed they were saved by the blood; not the blood of the Messiah, but the blood that came from being circumcised.

For a Gentile to receive *this teaching*, and become circumcised for *this reason*, made the Messiah of no effect to that Gentile. Yeshua was of no benefit, because Yeshua, and all that the Father did through him, was replaced with the act of circumcision. The gospel stopped being about Yeshua, and became whether or not you had converted to being a Judahite through circumcision.

Obligating Yourself to the Impossible

3 Again I testify to every man who gets circumcised that he is obligated to keep the entire law.

Paul uses the word "again" in verse 3, because he's saying the same thing he's just said in verse 2 in another way. Every man who gets circumcised, in submission to the false teaching and misuse of the law by the Judaizers, is obligated to keep the entire law... *for salvation*. That's the understanding, in context.

Every follower of Yahweh is obligated to keep the whole law... at least the whole law in the sense of what applies to you as male or female, laymen or priest, Jew or Gentile. We know that every single law doesn't apply to every single person. But nonetheless we are obligated or called to obey in every area applicable, and that comes with mercy. Within the law itself comes forgiveness, through the gracious sacrificial system, even under the Old Covenant.

So why does Paul place emphasis here on obligation to keep the whole law? I believe the train of thought is this: If you hold up the rite of circumcision as the means of your forgiveness; if you deem that outward work as what justifies you, or puts you in a right relationship with Yahweh, then you are not just accountable to keep that one law for justification, you are then accountable to keep all of the law for justification.

What does that mean? Well, it means you are doomed, because you haven't kept the law perfectly, nor will you ever keep it perfectly in your flesh. It's like me saying, "You have to jump off the roof of your house and fly to church in order to be justified." It's not happening.

So Paul is telling these Gentiles, if you accept this false teaching, this is where it leads. You are placing yourself under a burden that is impossible to bear.

Justification is not by Law

And that's why he explains in verse 4, "You who are trying to be justified by the law, you have fallen from grace!" The issue here is not obedience as an outward flow *from* salvation, but obedience for the purpose of trying to *force* salvation.

This is the difference of justification by the works of the law or justification by faith. One is like me trying to save my friend by making him go through the outward motions. The other is Yahweh saving a man and placing faith inside him, thereby changing him from an old creature to a new creature who desires to do what his Creator asks of him. Faith produces works, but works do not produce faith.

What about Verse Five?

Look at verse 5: "For by the Spirit we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness from faith."

At first this verse seems out of place, but think about it for a second. For by the Spirit, I take that to mean the Holy Spirit. The Spirit that is placed in us by the Almighty, a portion of Him - which causes us to have faith, and in turn be faithful. It is by this Spirit that we wait with eagerness for the hope of righteousness, *from faith*.

The hope of righteousness is complete, actual righteousness at the resurrection of our mortal bodies. That's why Paul says we WAIT for it.

We are waiting... those of us who have salvation are waiting for the hope of righteousness. And how does it come? From faith. Not from works. Not from putting a ring of gold in a pig's snout. Not from lining people up and handing out tassels. Not from memorizing a prayer, or *looking* like a Hebrew, that's not how the hope of righteousness comes. It comes from FAITH.

In order for there to be genuine works there must first be genuine faith. That's why anyone who seeks for righteousness apart from having this faith is fallen from grace.

You cannot force salvation or justification through a work of law. And you aren't to believe that you possess salvation because you obeyed a work of law. An outward work is not the means by which you eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. You can only have genuine hope if you have genuine faith, and you can only have genuine faith if it has been given to you by gift-giver, Almighty Yahweh.

What Really Matters

6 For in Messiah Yeshua neither circumcision nor uncircumcision accomplishes anything; what matters is faith working through love.

Oh... that's such a good verse. So in this vein of thought. In this context. Neither circumcision or uncircumcision matters. It doesn't matter if you are a believing Hebrew (circumcised) or a believing Gentile (uncircumcised). It doesn't matter as it pertains to your salvation or right-standing with the Almighty.

What matters is **faith - WORKING - through love!** Faith is what works. Faith is what produced obedience in Abraham's life. Abraham received the sign of circumcision because he had faith in what Yahweh said. That was his faith working through love.

Outward works are beautiful... if they are produced by genuine faith. If you get circumcised because your heart belongs to Yahweh, and you want to obey all of his commandments, that's faith working through love. But if you get circumcised because you think that particular outward law is what forgives your sin, that's trying to earn your salvation.

If you wear tassels because you love Yahweh and want to be reminded of his commandments all the time, that's faith working through love, but if you wear tassels because you want to look saved, and think you're better than everyone else, and look down on all those who don't wear tassels, that's trying to earn your salvation.

Tassel wearing or non-tassel wearing doesn't accomplish anything; what matters is faith working through love.

Final Admonition

Don't settle for the quick fix. Don't believe you can coerce salvation in yourself or in a person. We are not the Savior. We do not create clean hearts in people. Yahweh is salvation. He is the Creator, both of the natural man and the spiritual man.

If it was up to you and me, we'd mess up everything. Thankfully, it's not up to you and me, but we have to remind our selves of this, lest we fall into the same trap as some were here. Let's preach grace and faith. Let's love people. Let's keep the commandments. But let's not ever think we are pulling the strings or making everything happen. Let's keep Yahweh on that main throne. He is the ALL-mighty. Salvation is by His design. No amount of work we do could ever save us from our sins.

Yahweh forbid that we ever hold up and outward work of law as the means to our forgiveness. Yahweh sent His Son to be the means to our forgiveness. He didn't send us. He didn't send our measly works either. May we never focus more on ourselves and what we do, over and above Yahweh and what He has accomplished.

Galatians, pt. 49 "The Offence of the Cross"

Read 5:7-12

In my last two lessons, I went through Galatians 5:1-6, showing what it means to be free in Messiah, and also showing that what matters most is faith, working through love.

No one will ever be justified by an outward action or work. Justification takes place inwardly, and works its way out. Faith is placed in a person's mind and heart, and that faith then works through love.

Something I have learned as I've studied through this epistle, and I think it will help you to remember this. Just as a person can have faith without works (as James teaches), a person can have works without faith (as Paul teaches). Neither is sufficient. What we want is faith working through love (Galatians 5:6).

Exposition on Verses 7-8

We come today to verses 7-12, and here Paul just continues to express his disdain of the message of the influencers. We'll begin in verse 7.

7 You were running well. Who prevented you from obeying the truth?

The image here is of someone cutting off a runner in a race. One person was doing good in the race, and someone else cut in front of them and tripped them up, or got them off course.

The Galatians had been doing so well in acceptance of the gospel message about Yeshua, but the influencers came in and began to teach them another gospel, tripping them up in their walk.

8 This persuasion did not come from him who called you.

The way in which the Galatians were being persuaded wasn't due to Yahweh working on their hearts, but rather by them being influenced by false teachers.

False Doctrine Creeps In

9 A little yeast leavens the whole lump of dough.

Paul uses an analogy here about how yeast spreads through dough in the bread making process. When you mix yeast (or a starter dough from a previous loaf) with flour, water, and salt, you eventually get a raised loaf of bread. It just takes a little yeast, not a lot. Just as the yeast leavens a lump of dough, false doctrine can come in and influence an entire group.

This is why it's important not to just listen to anyone teach the Bible. Some people think we need to be open-minded to listening to what anyone and everyone says about the Bible, or a particular Bible verse. That can be dangerous. There are a lot of people out there who have all sorts of strange ideas about what Bible verses mean, and many of them aren't even part of a congregation, and don't have a pastor or elder over them.

There is also criteria listed in Scripture for ruling elders. You can find these in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3. You can also find some qualifications listed in Exodus 18 and Deuteronomy 1. The point in the criteria or qualifications is this: before you trust a man

and his message, examine his life. Any teaching elder or ruling elder is not going to be a perfect man, but his life will be exemplary. He will have the characteristics listed in Scripture, because Yahweh has chosen him for the task.

Just be careful. Some people love to come into a congregation and stir up stink, like the influencers. They stir it up simply because they aren't the ones who have to deal with the aftermath. Like Apostle Paul, it is a pastoring teacher's job throw out the yeast and drive away the wolves.

It only takes a little yeast to make a leavened loaf, so be careful who you listen to. You can be running well, and then someone come along and cut in front of you and trip you up.

Paul's Encouragement

10 In the Lord I have confidence in you that you will not accept any other view. But whoever it is who is troubling you will pay the penalty.

I love how Paul is an encourager. He rebukes, but he also builds people up. He has a good balance. It's okay to give out rebukes and constructive criticisms, but don't let that be all you give out. If you aren't going to spend time speaking encouragement and healing into a person's life, then you don't get to speak a rebuke into that person's life.

After Paul speaks of someone cutting the Galatians off in their race (vs. 7), and the possibility of Messiah being of no benefit to them (vs. 2), he tells them that in spite of this, he has confidence in them, in the Lord. In other words, he who began a good work in you will finish it until the day of completion.

Sometimes false doctrine or just a struggle of life comes along, and begins to make us doubt, or trips us up so we stop running, or sets us on another path. If Yahweh is on our side, He picks us up, brushes us off, mends our wounds, bandages our sores, and says, "It's ok my child, I've got you. Get back in that race."

I've seen people go through rough patches in their life, only to come out on the other side stronger than they've ever been. The trying of our faith works endurance. When we are put to the test it builds our spiritual muscles, making us stronger for the next struggle we face.

So Paul has confidence that the Lord will guard and protect his sheep so they don't stray permanently, but he says that whoever is troubling the sheep will pay the penalty. Paul is very upset with the false teachers here. We'll get more to that in a moment.

Answering an Accusation

11 Now brothers, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished.

It sounds like Paul is been accused and he is defending himself.

The accusation? That Paul *still* preached circumcision; not meaning the preaching of circumcision as an act of loving obedience to the covenant sign given to Abraham, but that he still preached circumcision as the means which a Gentile was forgiven of his sin and brought into the faith.

Preaching circumcision here is something Paul used to do (evidenced by the word *still*) but no longer did. Instead, he welcomed the uncircumcised Gentile converts on the basis of their faith in Messiah. He didn't preach that they had to undergo proselyte conversion to Judaism for their salvation. They were children of Abraham, and ultimately children of Yahweh, by faith.

Did Paul Preach Circumcision?

But why would Paul be accused of still preaching circumcision? Well, Paul never stopped teaching the Israelites that they needed to circumcise their sons. You'll find that in Acts 21. There was a rumor going around that he had stopped, but it was false. He still taught the Israelite believers in Messiah to continue circumcising their sons as they'd done for thousands of years previous.

There were also times when Paul believed adult, male Gentiles should be circumcised. Look at Acts 16:1-5.

- 1** Then he went on to Derbe and Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman, but his father was a Greek.
- 2** The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him.
- 3** Paul wanted Timothy to go with him, so he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, since they all knew that his father was a Greek.
- 4** As they traveled through the towns, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem (Acts 15) for them to observe.
- 5** So the churches were strengthened in the faith and were increased in number daily.

So Timothy had an Israelite mother who believed in the Messiah, but his father didn't grow up in the faith of Yahweh, keeping Torah. That's what Greek means here. It's synonymous with Gentile; people raised outside of Torah, often in worship to other mighty ones.

So Timothy, having a Greek father, wasn't circumcised at 8 days old, yet he became a disciple of Messiah (as verse 1 tells us), and there were brothers at the cities where Paul and Barnabus planted churches that spoke highly of Timothy.

Paul wanted Timothy to go with him on his missionary journeys, but Paul was going to go preach to unconverted Jews, and these Jews knew of Timothy's family, and that his father was a Greek, so... Paul had Timothy circumcised to head off any problems in witnessing.

What's interesting is that this is written in Acts right after the Jerusalem council in chapter 15, where the apostles and elders decided and ruled that a Gentile convert did not have to be circumcised to be saved, yet Paul takes Timothy and circumcises him. The key is that Paul didn't do it because he believed Timothy was lost until he got circumcised, Paul did it to help in their missions to the unbelieving Judahites.

These reasons are probably why some accused Paul of still preaching circumcision. In one sense, he did still preach it, but not in the sense of demanding or forcing Gentile converts to go through proselyte conversion.

Paul's point in Galatians 5:11 is that if he did still demand Gentiles be circumcised to be forgiven and saved, why is he being persecuted for the cross of Messiah? Paul believed that what took place upon the cross is sufficient to save a Gentile from his or her sins. They don't have to convert to become a proselyte. They are forgiven based upon the life, death, and resurrection of Yeshua.

The Offense of the Cross

What does Paul mean by "the offense of the cross"? Something about the cross was offensive (a stumbling block or an occasion to stumble) to people. I think the immediate context is this: it was offensive to Israelites that people from the heathen nations could be forgiven and join the community based solely on the work of Messiah. That was a stumbling block that many Jews could not get passed. Paul was being persecuted for believing and teaching this, so the offense of the cross had not ceased in his life.

The cross was also offensive, and a stumbling block to the Judahites, because Yeshua died as a criminal. People who were hung on crosses had committed crimes. Yeshua had not committed a crime, but was wrongly accused of crimes and then hung naked on a torture stake. That was offensive to many Jews. How could that act be what takes away sin?

As Galatians 3:13 says, "Messiah has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written: Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." So he did become a curse, but he did so: FOR US, not because he was guilty himself. But it was hard to get passed this for many of the Judahites. It was offensive to them that a man who claimed to be their Messiah would die the death of a criminal.

This was weak and foolish in their eyes. A crucified Messiah. The real Messiah would have never let that happen. The real Messiah would have been boss from the start.

No, not so with the workings of Yahweh. Yahweh often does this backwards from the way that us humans think things should go. Look at 1 Corinthians 1:18-25.

18 For to those who are perishing the message of the cross is foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is [Yahweh's] power.

Sometimes we share the Word with people, and we try to make it palatable to their ear. It's okay to speak the truth in love, that's how it's supposed to be spoken, but it's not our job to make the truth more acceptable to the human mind.

A dying Messiah, one who became a curse, doesn't make sense to people. We seek fame, and power, and prestige. He didn't. We seek to rule and domineer over others. He didn't.

19 For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will set aside the understanding of the experts.

20 Where is the philosopher? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Hasn't [Yahweh] made the world's wisdom foolish?

21 For since, in [Yahweh's] wisdom, the world did not know [Yahweh] through wisdom, [Yahweh] was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of the message preached.

The foolishness of the message here is the crucified Messiah. It is not foolish in the spiritual, but it is foolish in the natural.

22 For the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek wisdom,

23 but we preach Messiah crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles.

Salvation comes through a suffering Messiah. One who was wounded, bruised, and beaten with stripes for our transgressions of the law. The prophecy said that many would think he was smitten and afflicted by the Almighty for something he did. But he was smitten by the Almighty on account of the sins of his brothers, and sisters.

24 Yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, (the) Messiah is [Yahweh's] power and [Yahweh's] wisdom,

25 because [Yahweh's] foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and [Yahweh's] weakness is stronger than human strength.

We don't operate like that. We think we have to sound the most intelligent, and appear as the strongest. We think we can't make an impact upon the world unless we have this degree and that degree, and unless we are strong-willed and don't let people run over us.

But was that our Messiah? Not at all. He was a humble, quiet man, who appeared weak to many. When he was reviled, he didn't revile back. When he suffered, he did not threaten. He just committed himself to the One who judges justly, and it brought him favor with the Almighty.

Paul says in Galatians 5:11, "If I still preach circumcision (to Gentiles for salvation), why am I still persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished."

The offense of the cross was not abolished in Paul's preaching. He preached Messiah, and him crucified, and it remained a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. But to those who were repenting of their sins and placing faith in the Messiah, this message was powerful and wise, because they began seeing with spiritual eyes and hearing with spiritual ears.

Paul's Strongest Rebuke

12 I wish those who are disturbing you might also get themselves castrated!

Do what? This makes you do a double take. Did Paul really say that? Yes, this is an excellent translation here from the Greek text. Paul is making a play here on the false circumcision message preached by the influencers. He's saying that they are so worried about a Gentile male having his member snipped, that he wishes they would just go the whole way and cut it off completely.

I dare you to bore me with the Bible.

There's a couple things to mention here. For one, there was a group in Asia Minor, and possibly right inside Galatia, called the cult of Cybele. Cybele was said to be the offspring of Zeus and mother earth, born a hermaphrodite, but castrated at birth. Those who worshiped Cybele would work themselves up in a frenzy and then castrate themselves in "her" honor. It's likely that the Gentile converts knew of this, being that they came out of such heathenism, and Paul in writing to them is letting them know that the influencers who preach circumcision for salvation are no better than the pagan followers of Cybele.

What I think is even more likely is that Paul is playing here off of Deuteronomy 23:1.

Years ago I called into a radio program where a Bible teacher was discussing the law and how it wasn't really relevant to the Christian, and I got a few seconds to express my views before he said something like, "So, you really think the law is applicable... okay, I'll just randomly pick a law... here, what about Deuteronomy 23:1?"

This guy acted like he just closed his eyes, opened the Bible, and put his finger down on the page, and it landed on Deuteronomy 23:1. I'm gonna' go out on a limb here and say that he was being strategic in quoting this verse. Why? Because to the average, Christian (and non-Christian) listener, they would have been repulsed as soon as they heard it.

Deut 23:1 KJV - "He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of Yahweh."

I'm gonna' also go out on a limb here and say that we might be the only congregation who ever deals with this in a sermon from the pulpit.

The HCSB is more revealing, but you get the idea from the KJV. It's talking about castration, or at least a man being wounded in that area by someone else for whatever reason.

What's significant here is that the word Paul is used in Galatians 5:12 (apokopto) is the same word used in Deuteronomy 23:1 in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). Translated "cut off" in both texts in some translations, but literally meaning *castrated*.

The radio show host I talked about earlier asked me if we believed in and enforced this law in our congregation. I said that we'd have to cover what the word congregation meant, but then I was quickly interrupted, and he moved on to his next shot-gun point.

It's debated what "congregation of the LORD" here means, but what has to enter the discussion is Yahweh's words in Isaiah 56. Yahweh speaks to a discouraged eunuch here. The eunuch is sad because he cannot father children physically. He says, "I'm excluded, and I'm a dry tree." Yahweh tells the eunuch that if he keeps the Sabbaths, chooses what pleases Yahweh, and holds fast to the Covenant, that he will receive a memorial name better than sons and daughters, and that name will never be cut off. The castrated man could bring a sacrifice to Yahweh, and have a place in the house of Yahweh (meaning the Tabernacle or Temple).

Isaiah 56 let's us know that the "congregation of Yahweh" is not a church service, or even the people of Israel as a whole. That's not what the eunuch is being excluded from in Deuteronomy 23:1.

What is likely the case with this law is that the eunuch is being excluded from holding a leadership or authoritative position in the congregation of the elders of Israel. His physical blemish, and whatever negatives may come with that excludes him from leadership. That is one use of the word congregation in the OT (see Leviticus 4:12-14 and Numbers 35:12, 24-25).

What Paul may be saying in Galatians 5:12 is that he wishes the influencers would be castrated so that they wouldn't hold a teaching position, and be able to teach the Galatians in the first place. He was calling for their leadership to be revoked. He wanted them removed from the congregation of elders, per Deuteronomy 23:1.

Galatians, pt. 50 "Don't Abuse Your Freedom"

Read 5:1, 13-16

Today we begin with verse 13 in Galatians 5, and if you'll remember back a few sermons, I explained how verses 2-12 were a pause in Paul's thought, and that verse 13 is best viewed as a picking up of Paul's thought in verse 1.

Verse 1 is a call to not submit to the misuse or abuse of the law taught by the influencers. That's the yoke of slavery, the heavy yoke. You're free from the teaching that presents certain outward aspects of the law as the means by which you are justified.

Then in verse 13, Paul balances this. Paul is not teaching the Galatians that they're free to do whatever they want. Remember, no one is free from everything. Everyone is free from something, and a servant to something.

So in verse 13, "For you are called the freedom brothers, but don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. Serve one another through love."

The Flesh

What does he mean "the flesh"? The word *flesh* has a range of use in the Bible, but whenever the term "the flesh" is used in opposition to "the Spirit" in Scripture (like in verse 16), it is a term that describes our sinful nature; the desire in humans to commit sin.

Some people do not like this teaching, but the more I read and study Scripture, and the more I just live and meditate upon it all, *we all fell in Adam*. Adam, in the Garden of Eden, acted as what is called our *federal (or representative) head*. When he fell, we fell. Romans 5 is the best text to show this, and then you can branch out from there with other texts in both the Old and New Testaments.

Let me illustrate it like this: the battle between David and Goliath. Both David and Goliath *represented* their armies. If David won the battle, all Israel won the battle. If Goliath won the battle, all Philistines won the battle. Neither all Israel, nor all Philistines fought; only David and Goliath, and each stood as a representative of the whole.

Such is the case with Adam. Yahweh infallibly chose Adam as the perfect representative for humanity, and Adam failed. Since he represented us, we fell. This is why every person you know that is born, and looks like a cute, little innocent baby, ends up sinning. You'd think that if we were all just born morally neutral, half of us, or at least some of us would never sin; we'd choose to always do good. But no, all of us end up sinning. You don't have to teach your children to sin, they sin.

We may think that it's not fair that Adam is our head. Number one, Yahweh is the one who created Adam and picked him to be our representative, so I think Yahweh knows more than we do. Number two, do you think you would have done differently than Adam? I think you and I would have done the same thing, and I think anyone who is honest will admit that.

The good news is that in Romans 5 we not only learn that Adam is our representative, and that we are fallen in Adam, we also learn that the Messiah - the second Adam (new creation) can be our new head or representative. Just as through one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also through one man's obedience many will be made righteous (Romans 5:19). So by being given the gift of faith in Messiah, we go from being represented by Adam to being represented by Yeshua.

The Battle After Regeneration

Now, when we experience the new birth, when Yahweh changes our hearts and minds to do His will rather than our own, we also experience a battle in our lives between the *Spirit of Yahweh* and the *desires of this flesh* that we are still in. Although the new man or woman can choose to obey the law, we still battle with sin because we are in this corruptible body. Thus the flesh (humanity) verses the Spirit (Yahweh).

Love through Service

So, us believers are called to freedom (verse 13), but we aren't to use this freedom to do what our flesh desires. Instead, we are called to SERVE one another in love. Love is service. If you love someone, you don't harm them, but treat them with dignity. You obey all of the commandments on this horizontal plane, from person-to-person.

And that's what Paul writes in verse 14, "For the entire law is fulfilled in one statement: Love your neighbor as yourself."

Points on Verse 14

Now I have to stop here and talk about this for a bit, because it is one of the most misunderstood statements in the Bible, by those who hold to the position that the law of the Old Testament has no relevance in the life of the Christian.

Not a New Teaching

First of all, Paul is quoting Leviticus 19:18 here. Love your neighbor as yourself isn't something new; it isn't something Paul came up with.

More Than a Feeling

Secondly... love is not *just* a feeling. Love *is something you feel* for someone, like when a husband tells his wife, "I love you so much sweetheart." That's feeling, right? Sure it is, and that's ok. Love does equal affection and feeling, **but it never stops at a feeling.**

You may have a false sense of love towards someone, that only amounts to a feeling, but that wouldn't be true love. True love begins with a feeling, and manifests itself by how one person treats another person. That's how you know when someone is loving you; by how they treat you. You can tell me "I love you" all day long, but if you do not treat me as Scripture commands, you do not really love me.

The last 6 of the 10 commandments are directed at person-to-person relationships, beginning with honor for one's father and mother. If you love your parents you will respect your parents. As they grow older, you will make sure they are taken care of. You will serve them when they can no longer serve their self. This is love.

Same with the rest of the commandments. Do not murder. If you love a person, you won't murder them, and there's much more to it than that, but that's the minimum. If you love your spouse, you will not commit adultery against your spouse. You won't steal from a person. You won't bear false witness against a person, and you won't covet what belongs to another. The picture here is that **love equals service**. Serve one another through love, because the entire law is fulfilled in this one statement from Leviticus 19:18.

Is the Law on Your Heart?

Now, thirdly, let's look at what Paul means here by "the entire law is fulfilled." Again, I have heard so many people say that this means we don't need to look to the law anymore, we just love.

Listen, you may have some vague understanding of what it means to love someone else, but unless you read the law of Yahweh, you will not know what it means to love your neighbor. Loving your neighbor means not charging him interest on a loan. Loving your neighbor means taking care of a widow. Loving your neighbor means leaving the borders of your garden for the poor. Loving your neighbor means releasing your neighbor's debt on the Sabbatical year. Loving your neighbor means paying him at the end of a day's work. We learn these things by reading Holy Scripture.

Some people say, "Well the law is on my heart now, so I don't have to go read all of that stuff." What's funny is that the people I hear say such never know what the law says. If the entire law is on your heart, then you should be able to tell me what, let's say... Leviticus 19:35 says. Anybody? (*Somebody thinks "let me get my phone out..." Lol*)

This is why we still need to read the law and be taught the law. The "law on the heart" promise is *a process*. It is a heart change, produced by Yahweh, and then a gradual writing of His law as you read, study, and learn it over a period of time. You'll eventually have the entire law written on your heart, and you won't need any man to teach you, because you'll know it perfectly. That's in your glorified, resurrected state.

And another thing... **the "law on your heart" means that Yahweh's law is on your heart, not that your heart is now the law.** Many times, when someone says "but the law is on my heart," what they mean is that they think their heart is now their rule of law. No, that is completely wrong. No one should go by what they feel or think, because we are still incarcerated in this realm of "the flesh." In spite of Yahweh's work upon our heart, (inward person) we are still in a body that has the ability to commit sin, so the last thing you need to do is think you don't have to read the law, and just make decisions on your own as to what is right and what is wrong. Don't fall for that lie.

The Entire Law?

Fourthly... when Paul says here "the entire law is fulfilled" he is talking about the entire *horizontal* law. The entire law that pertains to human relationships, not the law in it's every detailed commandment. There are some laws that pertain human to Yahweh, vertical laws. Paul is not dealing with those here, because he is talking about us serving *one another*. This is why he quotes Leviticus 19:18, "love your neighbor as yourself."

The Opposite of Love

Then in verse 15 he says, "But if you bite and devour one another, watch out, or you will be consumed by one another." He's just saying that biting and devouring is the opposite of loving and serving. We are called to love and serve each other, not bite and devour each other. If we choose to bite and devour we will end up getting nowhere, and non-existent in the kingdom of Yahweh.

The Main Point

So, what is Paul's main point here to the Galatians? He has just finished explaining to the Galatians that they are not required to proselytize to Judaism to be forgiven or saved. This entire epistle centers in on telling adult Gentile males (and females) that they do not have to obey the outward markers in the law (those markers that outwardly distinguish Jews from Gentiles) to be forgiven. That's what Paul means when he teaches against justification by law.

Paul balances that out by telling these same Gentiles, "This doesn't mean you do not have to obey Torah." Gentile converts still needed to obey Torah, but they did not need to obey certain outward markers in the Torah *to be forgiven*. A Gentile would learn over time, and could gradually go on to obey these outward markers, and that is wonderful. It's just that they didn't have to convert to become a proselyte Israelite to be justified or saved.

Don't Abuse Your Freedom

So... you've been called to freedom, but don't use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. Rather, obey all the commandments that apply from person-to-person in your community. Fulfill the law by loving your neighbor as yourself.

Just because you aren't justified by the law doesn't mean you don't have to be obedient to the law as a believer. There must be a balance. We shouldn't slide too far to one side or the other. The Judaizers (and some people today) slide to the extreme of thinking a Gentile isn't forgiven until he gets circumcised, or starts keeping certain laws. Others slide to the extreme of thinking the OT law has no place in their life, and it's just all about grace, no works. Both extremes are wrong, and both lead to heresies of either (1) denying the work of Messiah, or (2) turning grace into a license to sin.

Listen, Yahweh's grace and mercy is not given to a sinful person to okay what they've been doing. That's not what grace means. Grace isn't a stamp that says, "It's okay how you've been living, you're covered no matter what."

If a teenage boy steals money from his Grandmother's purse, and then comes back later and tells her, genuinely sorry for what he's done, and the Grandmother says, "I forgive you son," is she okaying the action? No, grace and mercy do not okay the action, they simply let go of the hostility or penalty for what has taken place.

If a friend of mine racks up ten grand in traffic fines, and is about to be jailed because he can't pay the fines, and I step in and give him the ten grand, and tell him, "Don't worry buddy, I'll take care of it for you," that does not mean my friend should drive away recklessly from the court house, running over mail-boxes, and side-swiping cars on the highway. Mercy releases you from the penalty of the law, and grace gives you the opportunity that you don't deserve, but neither of them are saying that the wrongs you've committed are okay.

How would you feel? How would you feel if someone took advantage of your kindness. You gave them ten thousand dollars free and clear, and they hugged you and cried, but

then they immediately went back to doing what got them the fines to begin with? How would that make you feel?

Yeshua didn't give ten grand. **He gave his whole life.** He was mocked, beaten, spit on, tortured - all for our transgressions of the law. How then does it make him feel when we continue in the sin that he gave his life for? How does he feel when we "Eh, that's just Old Testament, the blood has got me covered"?

Paul is teaching the Galatians here that freedom from the yoke of slavery, freedom from the teaching that we are justified by the law, doesn't mean we can live with a grace license to do anything our flesh wants. As heretical as justification by law is, antinomianism is just as heretical. There will be people who end up in hell for both. People who thought they could earn their salvation by outward works, and people who thought that grace means anything goes.

If you are a genuine believer, the Spirit of Yahweh (a portion of it) lives inside of you, and you have the ability by that Spirit to put to death the deeds of the flesh. I realize it is an everyday battle, but you can do it, by the Spirit. You must stay in the Word, in prayer, in meditation. You must constantly work-out your spiritual muscles. What you put in will be what you get out. Don't expect to be an over-comer if you never spend time doing anything spiritual. That's like expecting you'll pass a chemistry test even though you never listened to the teacher or studied the material.

Closing

Our life as a believer is a constant battle; a war between our flesh and the Spirit of Yahweh He has placed within us. You may say, "Brother Matthew, I've been struggling. I don't want to sin, but it keeps coming up. Sometimes I choose the good, but other times I choose the evil. I feel defeated and so sorry for how I have treated Yahweh."

If that is you, take heart. The struggle means you are Yahweh's child. The desire to perform righteousness means you belong to the Almighty. It's the people who do not struggle that I worry about. Those who can sin and feel no remorse, or those who think they don't sin and are righteous in themselves.

As you get older in the Spirit, you can do better, but you must constantly and purposefully put forth the effort to be obedient. Don't ever let your guard down. But... there will always be a struggle, because you are still in the flesh. Keep struggling my friend. Keep fighting. Pray... fast... read... study... do acts of charity... do those things that keep the Spirit man strong. And know you are forgiven, by grace.

Galatians, pt. 51 "The Works of the Flesh" (Read 5:16-21)

Walk by the Spirit

I've got a lot to cover today, so we will move right into this by beginning with verse 16, (again), which says:

16 I say then, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

When Hebrews discussed the way in which they were to fulfill Torah, how each commandment applied to their life, they would call it "they way we walk."

In your individual life, family, and congregation, over time, you develop understandings of the commandments; ways in which you believe the commandments to be best fulfilled. This is called the manner in which you "walk out" the commandments.

1 John 2:6 is a good parallel verse here. It says, "The one who says he remains in him should walk as he walked." If we claim to abide in the Messiah. If we say we have a relationship with Yeshua. Then we should walk as he walked. That doesn't mean we have to imitate his steps, or move our legs like he did, it means we live out the commandments as he lived out the commandments.

I believe Paul was alluding to two texts in Ezekiel. He doesn't quote them directly, but by mentioning "walking by the Spirit" he is directing the reader to Ezekiel 11:19-20 and Ezekiel 36:26-27.

Both of these Ezekiel texts speak of Yahweh placing a new heart and new spirit in a person. He says "I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes " (36:27, KJV). The Spirit is given to enable you to obey the law.

Being Spirit-led does not mean you follow your inner promptings. It doesn't mean you walk around doing what you feel is best. Yahweh doesn't put His Spirit inside of you so that you just make decisions on your own. **He puts His Spirit inside of you so that you connect with His ways**. A portion of Him is living within you, and this causes you to not just read/hear the letters of the law, but have a desire to be obedient to what you read/hear.

This is why if you WALK by the SPIRIT you won't carry out the desires of the flesh (vs. 16). The desires of the flesh are sins, therefore walking by the Spirit is the opposite of sin. If sin is the transgression of the law, the opposite of that is obedience to the law. Being obedient to the law then is the Spirit-filled life.

The War Inside of Us

Look at verse 17:

17 For the flesh (our sinful nature) desires what is against the Spirit (Yahweh's Spirit placed inside of us), and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want.

When Yahweh places His Spirit inside of you, you want to obey. You want to keep all the commandments. You want to live a holy life. But, you don't always do what you want. Why? Because your flesh (human nature) desires what is against the Spirit (Yahweh's nature). It is a constant, every day battle.

Whichever you feed the most will grow the most, and carry out its desires. It is important that you do things that cause spiritual growth. You pray. You read the Scriptures. You come to church. You talk with a brother or sister about the Scriptures. You encourage people, help people, be kind to people; you share the law and the gospel. You give of yourself to others. You be a servant.

When we do these things often, we feed the Spirit. If we do not do these things, we feed the flesh. I think some days we feed the Spirit, and other days we feed the flesh.

If you are Yahweh's child, on the days you feed the flesh, you will feel horrible. You'll feel defeated. This is because what you've been doing grieves Yahweh's Spirit He placed inside of you. You are His, so when you carry out the desires of your flesh it never makes you feel good afterwards. You can't just sin and not care because you don't belong to yourself. You belong to the Almighty.

Not Under the Law

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

I think many people read that and think: "Now that I have the Spirit. I don't have to worry about the law anymore." But is that what Paul is saying here?

We just covered how "walking by the Spirit" means walking in accordance with the law, based on the promise Yahweh gave in the book of Ezekiel. So being led by the Spirit means keeping the law. Why does Paul then say here: you're not under the law? The proper interpretation of this is that if you are led by the Spirit, and thus walking in the law, you aren't under the penalty of the law, because you are obedient to the law.

If I walk into the grocery store and don't steal anything, I'm not under the law of thou shalt not steal. The law doesn't condemn me, because I'm Spirit led, not flesh led.

That's what verse 18 means. If you follow the leading of the Spirit, you don't fall up under the penalty or condemnation of the law.

The Works of the Flesh

And then Paul names some of the works of the flesh in verses 19-21

19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions,

21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar, about which I tell you in advance - as I told you before - that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of [Yahweh.]

The works of the flesh are all transgressions of Yahweh's law. You can find each of these sins listed somewhere in Genesis through Deuteronomy.

Sexual Immorality

The first three (sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity) have to do with sins that violate Yahweh's sexual ethic. Basically put, anything outside of Yahweh's design for a male and a female to come together in love, commitment, and care. Yahweh did not create intimacy for frivolous use.

I like to put it like this. Yahweh made Adam. Then he made Eve for Adam, and brought her to Adam. That was the first Father giving away his daughter to be a bride. Anything outside of that design falls under these categories here in Galatians.

A man taking another man's wife, two unmarried people sleeping together, a person who sleeps around, friends with benefits (as it's sometimes called today), men sleeping with men, women sleeping with women (homosexuality), rape... All of these violate Yahweh's standard.

To the Young, Unmarried People

Let me speak to the young people who are old enough to do things on their own, but yet not married. And I don't just speak to those here today, but any of them listening by way of the internet, or any who may hear this for years to come.

I realize this is easy for me to say as an adult man who has been married now for 22 years. But... I promise you - when you get married, you will be oh so glad if you saved yourself for your spouse. You will be forever thankful that you didn't share that intimacy with anyone else, and you will also be thankful if the same holds true for the person you married.

I am not saying you can't be forgiven if you mess up. We've all sinned against Yahweh in here. Don't let anyone hammer you with the law young person, because that person hammering you can be hammered right back in some other area of the law.

I'm just encouraging you to make refrain from intimacy until you get married. If you ever need someone to talk to, young men, you can come to Brother Matthew and I will listen, and do my best to guide you. Young ladies, seek out a trusted sister in this assembly.

To the Married

And the same thing goes with us married men and women who fight temptation in areas of sexuality. These are real matters that need discussed. Some of the discussions need to be private, because they are sensitive. If you need help or counsel brothers, seek out a trusted brother. Sisters, seek out a trusted sister.

We must keep ourselves diligent, lest at any time we fall away. We are bombarded on a daily basis with an unlawful sexual ideology. I saw something the other day called "Drag Queen Story Telling Time," where people bring their little children to a bookstore, and men dressed in drag read stories to them. That's a violation of Deuteronomy 22:5. I was

shocked that parents allow this, but after all, the world does not go by Yahweh's standard. So as long as a large group of people agree on something, they say it's ok.

But this is not all we are bombarded with. We are hit with homosexual promotion. We are hit with sleeping around promotion. We are hit with the mentality of "don't worry who you marry because you can just divorce them in a few years" promotion. We are hit with all of this in the world today, and people love it because it feeds the flesh. It feeds the sinful nature in men and women. It gratifies our own desires, but it **grieves** Yahweh's Spirit.

As Yahweh's people, we are called to be set-apart. People should see in us an example of what **marriage** and **love** and **togetherness** is supposed to look like. Commitment through good times and bad times. A joy of love after 22 years... after 30 years, and 40 years, and 57 years (like my grandparents).

My wife is my definition of beautiful. When she turns 40, and 50, and 70, and beyond... she is still my definition of beautiful. She's my sweetheart. I don't need what the world offers. I've got everything I need in her. *And I think she has everything she needs in me.*

Men and women today become unlawfully sex-crazed because it feeds the flesh. A pretty face or sweet nothings in your ear don't last. People who feed on the flesh aren't interested in serving Yahweh. Run away from all of this brothers and sisters. This world has nothing to offer you that is of any value. It will only bite you, chew you up, and then spit you out, and not care what turmoil you end up in. Only Yahweh's ways bring life.

Husbands, love your wives. Wives, love you husbands. Be intimate with one another, and not just that, but hold hands, kiss foreheads, scratch backs (I love that one), and smile at each other. Make your spouse feel like the most loved person on the planet.

Idolatry and Sorcery

The next two on the list are idolatry and sorcery. Idolatry goes back to the second commandment against making and worshipping idols. Idol worship was prevalent back then (and now) in heathen nations. Forming an image of something, and then bowing down to it in homage or worship. Idolatry also includes trying to worship Yahweh in a way He has not commanded or sanctioned.

And sorcery; some Bible's say witchcraft. This is listed in Deuteronomy 18. Things like contacting the dead, fortune telling, and casting spells. The Greek word used here is *pharmakeia*, from where we get our English word pharmacy. *Pharmakeia* does mean drugs, and it's used in relation to sorcery and witchcraft, because drugs and potions were (and are) often used by sorcerers and witches.

Because of this, some people have the mindset that medicine is a sin, so the extreme view is that they never take any medicine. I believe this is the wrong view, and even though it's not in the scope of this lesson, I want to take a moment to explain something here.

I learned this next point from brother Arnold. If a merry heart doeth good like a medicine (Proverbs 17:22), then a medicine doeth good like a merry heart. If one is true the other has to be true, because medicine is put here in a positive light.

Medicine that helps and doesn't hinder is never condemned. There are people who have mental health issues that are real; just as real as a broken leg or a brain tumor. Medicines exist today that help these people balance out things in their body, and be able to function normally. Any medication that helps you act normally and properly is not a sin to take.

Any drug that causes you to act abnormally or sinfully is a sin to take. Now, certain drugs are used in operations to knock you out so a doctor can work on your body. That is fine. The doctor is there to either save your life, or help your body out in some way. It's not a sin to be knocked out so your wisdom teeth can be removed, or so that a physician can operate on your heart or stomach.

But there *are* drugs that are taken that do nothing but wreak havoc in a person's life, and often lead to death. When people take these drugs, it causes sinful actions to take place, like sexual immorality, theft, and sometimes even murder. These drugs do fall under sorcery or witchcraft, and should be shunned by believers.

I've seen drug users steal from their closest family. I've seen drug users lose everything they own, and end up sleeping under a bridge. I've seen drugs destroy people's lives, even to the point of death at a young age. This is all sorcery. Stay away from all of this.

Hatred and Anger

Then we have hatred, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, and envy. These sins poison your body. We aren't to walk around with hatred in our heart, with a chip on our shoulder, looking for an argument, or fight, or something to complain about. We aren't to just "look out for number one" (as we say), but to seek to help others, and consider others as more important than ourselves. We shouldn't be envious or covetous of other people's belongings, and we shouldn't try to cause divisions, lose our cool in an instant, and get angry at one another. Anytime we do any of these things we have given in to our flesh and grieved the Spirit of Yahweh living in us. We are to be people of peace and not turmoil. We are to seek to unify not tear apart.

Drunkenness and Partying

Then we have drunkenness and carousing. Drunkenness means drinking too much alcohol. You'll hear me from time to time poke fun at some pastors in modern Christianity who teach that all drinking is sin. I poke fun because it is humorous to listen to their explanations of certain texts. I once heard a preacher say that 1 Timothy 3 teaches that an elder shouldn't be drinking too much fruit juice and sugary drinks. That is so silly.

Drinking alcohol is not a sin, but overdrinking is a sin. Wine was given to make man's heart glad; it was not given to make you go out of your mind. A gladdening of the heart is permissible in Scripture (Psalm 104:14-15), but a drunken stupor is not. Proverbs 23 explains this well. A drunk man ends up sleeping with silly women, and gets in a fight

without even knowing what happened. A drunk man doesn't know his left from his right. Drunkenness is a work of the flesh and not of the Spirit.

Listen, drinking wine or beer doesn't mean you're a spiritual person. I've had all sorts of people agree with me when I explain to them the Torah's position on alcohol, yet they don't want to give me the time of day when I explain to them the Torah's position on modesty, or Sabbath-keeping, or sexual pureness, or a proper diet.

Drinking wine or beer in moderation is a liberty Yahweh's gives *His people* to enjoy. **But, agreeing with the Torah on alcohol doesn't make you a Torah-keeper. I think a lot of people agree with me when they hear me teach on alcohol because they want permission to indulge their flesh.** I'm not giving anyone permission to indulge their flesh. I don't believe in drunkenness. It's a sin. If you try to act like you love the Bible because it teaches you can drink alcohol, but you ignore everything else Yahweh says, you are foolish. Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is coming.

Carousing in verse 21 goes along with drunkenness. It refers to a type of party where people go to for the purpose of license or libertine-ism. They go to get drunk, use profanity, and have illicit sex. It's wickedness. It's like many of our modern day clubs. I've heard of people going out "clubbing." That's a sin. There's nothing going on in those places that you need to be involved in.

We need to show our children we can have a good time at Yahweh's Feasts or at a Wedding celebration, without giving in to the flesh. It's okay to dance, and drink, and have a good time, but we must do everything in moderation, and always realize Yahweh's rule of law needs to be number one even when we are having fun.

Those Who Practice Such Things

All of these things (vss. 19-21) are works of the flesh, which means all of these things are transgressions of the law. The Galatian Gentiles were being taught by Paul that they should NOT follow their flesh, and in verse 21 Paul says that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of Yahweh.

Practicing these sins will keep a person out of the kingdom. And that's scary, because as I go down through this list, I see sins here that I've committed. That's true with all of you too. Everyone in here has committed either one or more of the sins listed here.

How then will any of us inherit the kingdom? **Grace, mercy, and repentance.**

A genuine believer can fall into any of these sins. Look at Prophet Moses, King David, or the Apostle Peter. In a moment of weakness you can give in to your flesh and grieve the Spirit of Yahweh inside of you. That's why Paul said back in verse 17 that we sometimes don't do what we want to do. We want to obey, because the Spirit is leading us to obey, but sometimes we don't obey, because we give in to our sinful nature.

Proverbs 24:16 says, "Though a righteous man falls seven times, he will get up, but the wicked will stumble into ruin." It is possible for a righteous man to fall into sin, but if he or she belongs to Yahweh, they will not stay in or live in that sin. If you are righteous, you won't walk in the flesh, but rather walk by the Spirit.

When we give in to our flesh, and carry out the desires of our flesh, we must repent and then walk by the Spirit. Repentance means sorrow for our sin, asking forgiveness for our sin, a turning our back on sin, and then a walking in the righteousness of the law.

You say, "Brother Matthew... I've done that, but the sin keeps coming back up. I keep finding opportunities for my flesh. I don't want to give in, but I am weak. I need help."

If you are wanting to stop, and seeking for help, that is a good sign you are Yahweh's child. If you don't want to stop and aren't seeking for help that is a bad sign, because you may not be Yahweh's child.

We can go through terrible times, even if we are Yahweh's children. We can go through periods in our life where we *almost* give up, but if you are His child, you won't be able to give up. This is where practicing those things that make you strong in the Spirit come into play. You can't just sit around and do nothing and expect to get better. You can't isolate yourself and expect for your sin to go away. You must do things that strengthen you in the Spirit, and you must seek help and counsel from a trusted brother or sister.

Whatever it is that makes you slip back into a sin, cut it off. Get rid of the temptation. Phone a friend. Go for a walk. Cut off the TV. Put your phone away. Go by yourself somewhere and pray and cry out to Yahweh. Ask him to help you, and then seek the spiritually strong people around you for encouragement and counsel.

One way Yahweh helps us is through people. He places people in your life to be there for you when you are weak. In this assembly, there will always be someone who is strong while you are weak. And then next time, you may be the strong one who helps someone else out who is going through a weak time in their life.

There is a difference between someone who struggles with sin and wants to stop, verses someone who practices a sin and doesn't care or thinks it's okay.

If you are living in any of these sins, and you're at the point where you don't care, and this is just how it's going to be in your life because you like it that way, you will not inherit the kingdom of Yahweh. You will be lost, and suffer the wrath of Yahweh and utter destruction.

But if you keep battling, and keep winning battles by the Spirit, little by little, even if you fall seven times, you will get back up. You are forgiven in the Messiah, and you will not stumble into ruin, because you have a new heart and a new mind.

Galatians, pt. 52 "The Fruit of the Spirit"

Read 5:19-26

In my last sermon, I talked about the battle between our flesh (human, sinful nature) and the Spirit of Yahweh. What makes the battle so strong in us as believers is that we have both of these active in our make-up. Believers have been given a portion of Yahweh's Spirit as a down-payment or first-fruits of our inheritance, but we are still wrapped in our humanity. We have the ability to *not sin*, but we still have the ability to *sin*.

So long as we battle, it is a good sign that we are Yahweh's child. A child of Yahweh can fall into sin, but he or she will not remain (or live) in that sin. A righteous man falls seven times, but gets back up. It is when a person doesn't battle; when a person lives in sin unrepentantly - that is a good sign that the person is not Yahweh's child. The wicked stumble into ruin.

Paul's Main Point Here

Paul's main point since verse 13 is to give balance to the Galatian Gentiles; a balance that we can learn from in our own lives.

He spent Galatians 3, 4, and the first part of 5 showing how that Gentiles - those who did not grow up in the Torah - are not required to keep certain outward aspects of the law in order to be justified in the sight of Yahweh. A Gentile's faith in Yeshua as the seed of Abraham, the Messiah (Son of Yahweh) is what forgave them of their sin. They didn't have to then proselytize to Judaism, and take on those outward aspects of the law in order to be a first-class member in the body of Messiah.

At the same time this does not mean that they were free to live any way their flesh desired. Paul's teaching to the Gentiles, about not being justified by the works of the law, did not mean they weren't commanded to obey the law. That's his entire point in verses 13-26. While they did not have to obey the outward markers of Judaism in order to be forgiven of their sin, they were required to obey the law in general, and if they possessed the Spirit of Yahweh, their obedience would be an out-flowing of the Spirit's work upon their heart and mind.

Contrasting Fruit

This brings us to verse 22 about the fruit of the Spirit. When Paul writes "but the fruit of the Spirit," he is contrasting what he just wrote about "the works of the flesh." I want to present to you today that the works of the flesh are *transgressions* of the law while the fruit of the Spirit is *obedience* to the law.

It's the Spirit's Fruit

My first point here, before getting into the characteristics listed as fruit, is to make sure we realize it is the fruit OF THE SPIRIT. Not the fruit of Matthew, or the fruit of any of you. These characteristics we are about to go over are the off-shoot, the product, the result, the fruit... of the working of Yahweh's Spirit in your life.

Meeting a Pastor

Just the other day Josiah and I did a job for a pastor of a Nazarene Church. Nazarenes are an offshoot of John Wesley, so it's pretty much an old-school Methodist mindset, which in some ways is good I believe.

One of the things he told me was that he didn't believe in predestination, and my mind immediately thought, "Well, I could blow that out of the water right now if I wanted to." And you know what? That thought was a work of Matthew; it was pride. He doesn't have to believe in predestination to be saved, and I shouldn't be talking to anyone with the mentality of blowing their thoughts out of the water. That's just a prideful boasting of myself.

Then, I restrained myself, but here's the key: this work of restraint (self-control) was not Matthew. The pride was Matthew, but the restraint was the Spirit of Yahweh inside of Matthew. My sinful thought was Matthew (my flesh), my self-control was the Spirit working in and through me.

Yahweh's Download

The reason a believer is able to have supernatural love and joy and peace is because Yahweh put His Spirit in you. The reason a believer is able to exhibit a special amount of gentleness and longsuffering is because the Spirit of Yahweh inside of you is enabling you. For it is Yahweh who is working in you, enabling you, both to will and to act for His good purpose. (Philippians 2:13).

It's like He took a thumb drive and plugged it into your USB port, and downloaded His program into your computer. You didn't have it before, but now you do, and He is causing you to act righteous. He is not forcing you against your will. He changed your will.

Don't Unsaved People Love?

Now... someone is bound to say something like this: "But I've seen unbelievers love. I've been shown love by someone who doesn't even claim to believe in God."

There is a difference between the love of man and the love of Yahweh. And this will go for all of the fruit. There's love... and then there is **Yahweh's love**. Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, but have not love, I am nothing. Though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, I am nothing. Apostle Paul wrote that.

People can show love for all sorts of reasons. Bragging rights. Pride. Give to charity to write it off on their taxes. You name it. But the love of Yahweh is given from a heart that simply desires to please Yahweh, and looks for no earthly reward.

The natural love that even unbelievers can possess is not the same as the love of Yahweh. What is the love of Yahweh? Anyone? To keep His commandments, that's right - 1 John 5:3. I believe Paul lists love first because love covers it all. Remember that he has already stated that the entire law is fulfilled in one statement: love your neighbor as yourself.

The love of Yahweh is the first characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit. A person born of the Spirit will have a love they never had before. They will see with new eyes and hear with new ears. They will live with new desires. They will desire to serve Yahweh, keeping all the commands. And they will do so, not because they want to brag, boast, or have people think they are loving. They'll do it just because they love Yah.

Why People Change

My friends, this is the reason that people who you thought would never change, change. A class didn't make them change. A book on 10-steps to recovery didn't make them change. Their Grandma didn't make them change. Yahweh changed them. He downloaded His love into their heart.

When Yahweh puts His love in your heart, you will love like Yeshua loved. You will have this desire in you to be kind and gentle to everyone. To be long-suffering with someone who needs help. To practice self-control and restraint in your own life. You will be patient and peaceful with people, and a peace-maker in the lives of others. You will be a happy person, filled with joy. You will be a faithful person, even in the little things. The Spirit of YAH inside of you will bubble up and spill over into the lives of those you meet, and you will have a good impact on everyone.

I have learned that the best witness of your faith to an atheist, or even a Satan-worshiper, is to just be loving and kind. Show them the love of the Messiah. They aren't interested in arguing with you. They need to **see** that there's a difference in you. If you have the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit will slap them up one side and down the other. You'll do more good showing them the Messiah by how you act than all the Bible-training courses in the world.

Centering in on Some Fruit

Each of these characteristics are self-explanatory, so I'm not going to spend time discussing each of them individually, but I would like to cover a few that do not get talked about much in church anymore.

Kindness

Kindness. Synonyms for kindness are pleasant, mild, and benevolent. It's the opposite of being harsh, sharp, bitter, and mean. Be kind, be kind... all the time. Don't let me judge, but be kind. I love that song brother Ron sings.

You know how it feels to meet someone who is kind to you. They don't judge you, meaning they just love you where you are at. You don't have to agree with a person or their lifestyle to be kind to them.

When we meet unbelievers in this world, we are certainly going to judge them in the sense that we don't agree with what they practice. That doesn't mean we judge them in the sense of not being kind to them. **Listen, if Yahweh was only kind to perfect people He wouldn't be kind to any of us.** Yahweh is kind to people who hate Him every day. Yahweh feeds and clothes unbelievers. Yahweh lets unbelievers enjoy good food and

family. He gives them a job. He provides them with the basic necessities of life all the time. That's kindness. Did you know that the Bible says it is the kindness of Yahweh that leads people to repentance? That's in Romans 2, and there's a lot more to it, but it's there.

As Yahweh's children we are to be kind as He is kind. People are to see in us a kindness that amazes them. They should leave us scratching their head wondering how we could be so kind to someone who doesn't agree with us, or who is the opposite of us.

Gentleness

The same goes for gentleness. Gentleness means mildness and humility.

When I talk like this, religious people always want to pipe up and say, "Well the Messiah took a whip and ran people out of the temple!" Listen, yes, that is one thing he did, but that's not the only thing he did. Being gentle doesn't mean there is never a time for righteous anger. The problem is that most people I hear say this use it as an excuse for them to just be a jerk, and walk around all angry and brash at every one they meet.

Our Messiah didn't walk around with a chip on his shoulder, and when he did get angry it was never with the common people, it was always with the religious leaders.

Our Messiah was a gentle man. In Matthew 11 he said, "for I am gentle and humble in heart." He loved people. He was kind, and merciful. If you want to be like the Messiah, you will be gentle. You won't go around looking for a fight. You'll go around trying to make peace; blessed are the peace-makers.

In Titus 3, Paul writes that believers should "slander no one, avoid fighting, and be kind, always showing gentleness to all people - for we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, captives of various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another. But when the kindness of Yahweh our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us - not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy."

No Law Against These Things

All of the fruit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 should be evident in your life as a believer. These are not like the gifts of the Spirit. Every believer doesn't have all the gifts of the Spirit; you have at least one, and sometimes only one. The fruit of the Spirit (all of it) is for every believer, but it does take time and practice. Yahweh gives you a down-payment of His Spirit to enable you (Eph. 1:14; Rom. 8:23), but over time and through practice you can get better at each of these. You have to wake up each morning and purpose in your heart to go out into the world and show people love, kindness, and gentleness - along with all the rest.

Notice Paul ends the list by saying, "against such things there is no law." There's no law against love, joy, peace, or patience. When you read the law, there is no command saying, "Thou shalt not be long-suffering," or "Thou shalt not have self-control."

Paul's saying "against such things there is no law," proves he still believed the law should be obeyed. There are laws against all the works of the flesh listed in verses 19-21, but there are no laws against the fruit listed in verses 22-23.

Crucify the Flesh, Walk by the Spirit

In verse 24 Paul writes, "Now those who belong to the Messiah Yeshua have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." If you belong to the Messiah, you live every day denying what your flesh desires to do. You put it to death. You say no to sin. You don't walk around indulging in unrighteousness. You walk by the Spirit.

When you wake up in the morning you should say, "Alright, time to crucify this flesh. It's time to do those things that make the Spirit in me strong, and put to death anything that gets in my way."

Brothers and sisters, if we live by the Spirit, let us also follow, or walk, by the Spirit. That's verse 25. If we have been made alive by the Spirit of Yahweh, and we have, then we should follow the Spirit's teachings. Our pattern of life should be one which shows forth righteousness rather than lawlessness.

People should know us for our righteousness. When someone says your name, those who hear it should think, "That's a loving person. They sure are kind. Man they're faithful."

We must not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Verse 26. When we lay down to sleep after a day of living, don't get conceited if you had a good day in the Spirit. Don't start thinking that you have the power. Don't try to provoke others to be as good as you. That's not how this works.

You are what you are by the grace of Yahweh. Those of us who've been saved by grace should be the kindest and most patient people in the world. Yahweh's ways had to be plugged into you, they weren't there to begin with. He changed you, you didn't change yourself. There's no room for bragging. There's only room for bowing at His feet and being thankful He got a hold to you.

This is the message brothers and sisters. Let us walk by the Spirit. When you fall, repent, and get back up. When you fall again, repent again, and get back up again. Stay in the Word. Surround yourself with people who build you up in the faith. Pray and ask Yahweh to make you strong for Him. Spread kindness and joy everywhere you go. Make a lawful impact on those you meet. Wait patiently for Yahweh to work in people's lives. You never know what Yahweh has in store. You don't know who Yahweh is going to save next.