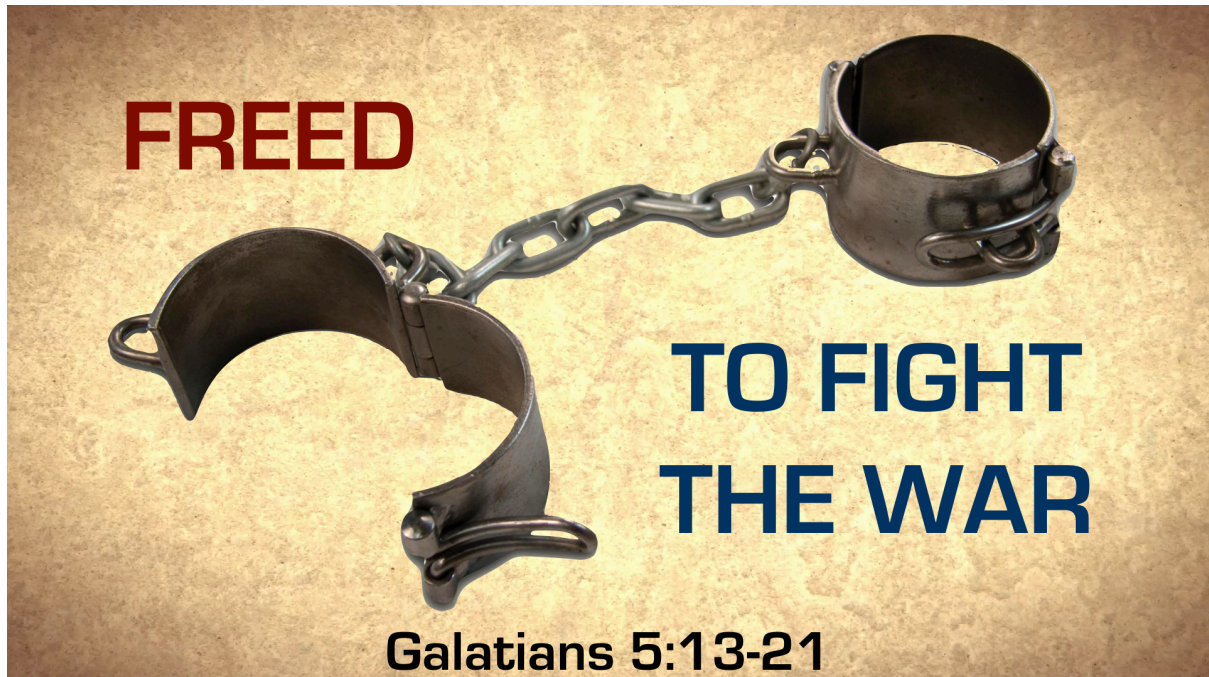


Freed To Fight The War
(Galatians 5:13-21 November 30, 2018)



In the Dark Ages a great King ruled central Europe. He was wise and greatly loved.

He sought to bring justice and peace to the land.

But he was opposed by a vicious tyrant who wanted to rule through fear and bloodshed.

The ensuing war was vicious and brutal.

But a day came when two of the tyrant's lords were defeated and captured.

They were dragged in chains before the great King – fully expecting nothing but a painful death.

But the great King offered them a chance. They could swear fealty, obedience and undying loyalty to the King on their lives and the lives of their families.

They could agree to renounce the ways of fear and bloodshed and seek justice and peace.

Both of the lords professed their eternal gratitude and wasted no time in swearing their loyalty to the King and were released over the strong objections of the King's counsellors.

Not long after – one of the lords showed his true colours by raising up another army and re-joining the war against the great King – but the other lord honoured his vow

and stood shoulder to shoulder with the one he now called King as the honourless lord was vanquished and killed.

Both lords made a vow. Both were freed. Which one was true to the vow they made?

The answer is actually pretty obvious – but it also provides a very sobering wakeup call for me to look at how I am living my life as a Christian.

There was a time when every one of us lived in rebellion against God – we were at war with Him – but very few of us even knew we were at war.

Then the day came that the Spirit of God opened our eyes to the truth – we were in danger of losing our souls for all eternity.

We were profoundly thankful – we vowed our loyalty to the King.

That vow included turning from our desires to serve the desires of the King.

But at that moment we were thrown into the greatest war of our lives.

We are at war against the world, the flesh and the Devil.

God had freed us from our sin – but with that freedom came a choice – what would we do with that freedom?

Our passage this morning gives us a reality check – we claim to be children of the King – are we serving the King or opposing the King?

We are nearing the end of the letter to the Galatians. We have seen that the point of this whole letter is clear.

There is – **No Other Gospel!**

The gospel Paul shared with them – faith alone – this is the **only** gospel – the only way of salvation and anything else is accursed.

We are in the midst of Paul's *fifth* and final point:

The Outcome of Heresy – Unrighteousness not Righteousness 5:1-6:18

This gospel of faith *and* works actually leads to unrighteousness – both now and eternally.

We began this section last week. In Galatians 5:1. Paul wrote:

For freedom Christ has set us free.

We saw that Paul argued that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus set us free from *two* things. We are:

Freed From The Penalty of Sin.

We call this **Salvation**.

And we are:

Freed From the Power of Sin

Free to live holy lives now.

We call this **Sanctification**.

Our love for God and the power of the Spirit do not cause us to abuse grace and sin – but cause us to love holiness.

It is this second point – **Freed From the Power of Sin** – that we begin this morning.

This morning, Paul tells us:



We were freed not to indulge the flesh but to crucify it.

We were freed not to indulge the flesh but to crucify it.

God did not free you from the penalty and power of sin for you to use that freedom to once again indulge the sin of your flesh – opposing His commands.

He freed you to fight tooth and nail to crucify your flesh.

Look at verse 13. You were freed so:

Do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh.

Now look down at verse 24:

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

What Paul is doing here is describing sanctification – becoming holy – as choosing **not** to indulge the flesh – **instead** choosing to crucify the flesh.

I want to pause here for a moment to remind us what the Apostle Paul has made abundantly clear so far in Galatians.

Salvation is entirely a work of God.

God the Father determined the plan of salvation in eternity past.

And in that plan – the other members of the Trinity enacted His plan.

Since our works cannot save us – the plan of God was built upon Christ's perfect works.

But how could His works become ours?

The Spirit of God must work in us to produce faith – and that faith unites us with Christ such that His perfect works become ours.

This is the gospel of salvation.

Notice that in the plan of God for your salvation – your works are not involved – we are saved by grace – a gift of God – through faith – that unites us with Christ – based on Christ's works alone.

However, salvation – or justification – is only one part of God's plan.

There is another part of the God's plan for us – **sanctification**.

Romans 8:29 describes this plan:

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.

It is not just that we get Christ's righteousness imputed to us – God is also going to shape you into the image of His Son.

The only perfect One. The only One who never sinned – who always pleased His Father.

God's plan is to shape you from within into the image of Christ.

That is sanctification.

This plan will only be completely fulfilled when you die and are raised from the dead righteous – like Christ.

But in the meantime – the work of renovating you from within has begun.

And once again – the Holy Spirit and faith are involved.

The Holy Spirit begins to renovate and transform our hearts – to cause us to desire what Christ desires – to please God – to do good works.

And again – the Spirit of God gives us the faith that empowers us to begin living holy lives.

So Calvin is exactly right when he says:

Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is never alone.

If you are saved – you **will** bear the fruit of good works.

Understanding **both** aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit through faith is crucial.

Paul knows if you **only** preach salvation by faith alone based on the Spirit uniting us with the perfect works of Christ alone – here is what some hear.

It seems that good works are not important.

If only Christ's works are good enough – if my works can never please a holy God – if my best works are flawed, tainted and not acceptable before Him – then it really doesn't matter how I live – my life is never going to please Him – so it doesn't matter if I just thank God for Jesus – grace will save me no matter how I live – so I might as well give in to my flesh and sin away.

If looking at a woman with lust is as bad as actual adultery.

If getting angry means I am guilty of every part of the Law.

What is the point of trying?

Why bother fighting it?

I should give up the fight and let my flesh run free and let Jesus do the work of satisfying God.

Paul is horrified at this thought.

Listen to him in Romans 6:14-18:

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? **By no means!** Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as

obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

God did not free you from the power of sin for you to turn around and enslave yourselves to sin again.

Here in Galatians 5 – Paul’s argument is that true saving faith **never** leads us to abandon the fight against sin – and that same faith gives us the weapons to win the war.

Look at how he makes this argument. Galatians 5:13:

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

We looked at this last week.

Our good works – our serving others – must flow from understanding the incredible love of God in saving us – and that leads to us loving others – serving others.

Paul argues – **forcefully** – that the Holy Spirit and faith do not just produce salvation – they *also* produce sanctification.

Let me ask you this. What is the prime role of the Spirit of God?

It is not a trick question – it is to make us holy.

That is why Scripture calls Him the **Holy** Spirit.

He is not called the Holy Spirit because He is the good member of the Trinity who has His act together – that He is holier than God the Father or God the Son – but because He enables **us** to be holy.

Both – ultimate holiness – or salvation.

And present holiness – or sanctification.

And Paul argues that the correct relationship between salvation and sanctification is this:

True salvation is **always** accompanied by sanctification – good works.

If the Spirit is in you – if you are saved – then you **will** bear fruit.

But also:

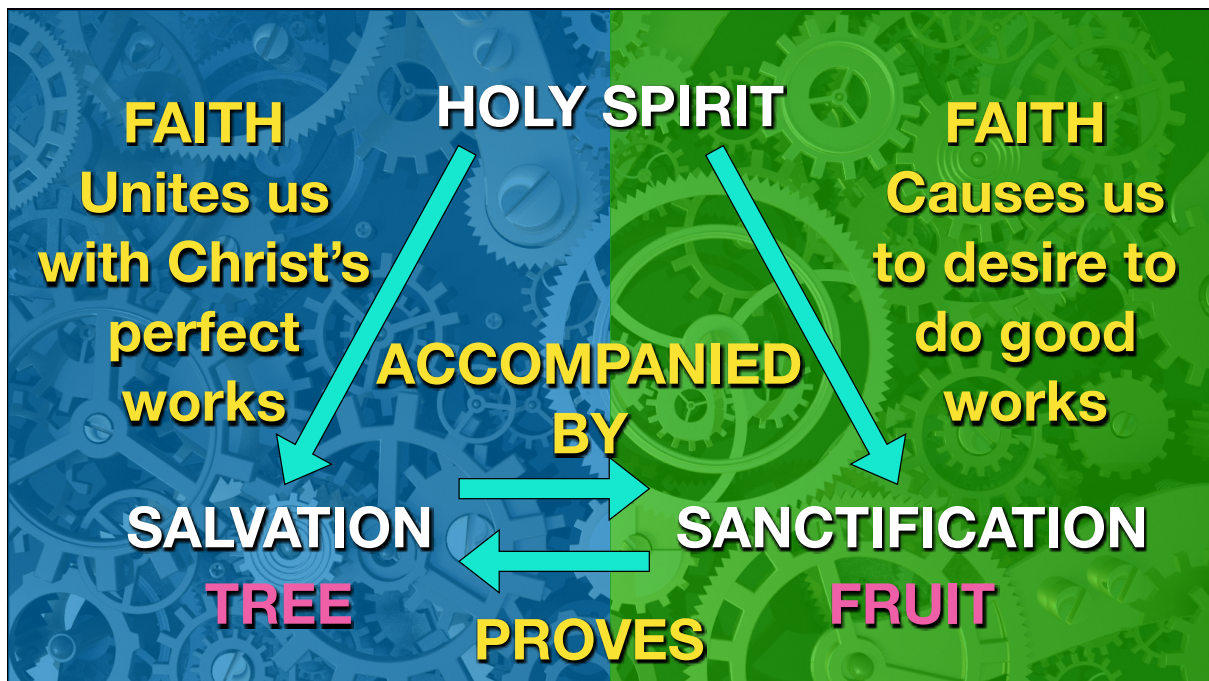
Sanctification – good works – are what proves that your salvation is real.

If you have no good works – your salvation is not real.

James 2:26:

Faith apart from works is dead.

Perhaps I can explain it this way.



The relationship between salvation and sanctification is like the relationship between a tree and fruit.

An apple tree has apples. Not oranges, not no fruit – apples.

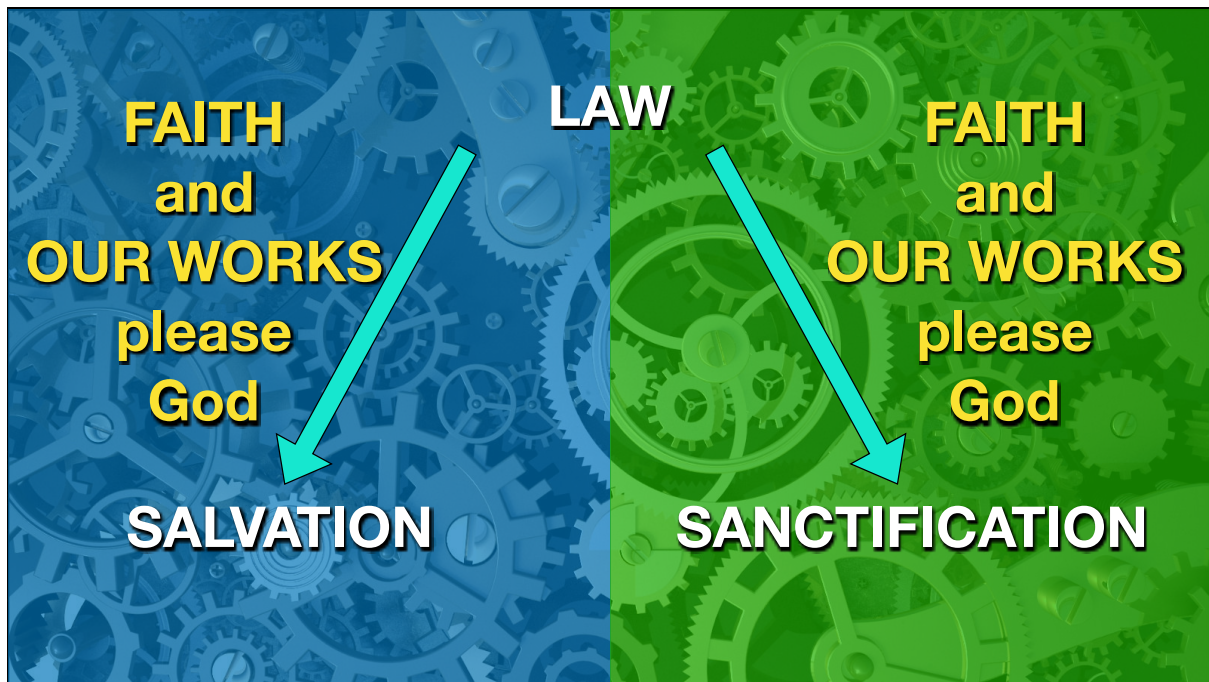
And if a tree has awesome delicious apples on it – it proves that the tree is an apple tree.

If the Holy Spirit is in you – not only are you saved – but you will bear the fruit of the Spirit.

And this fruit confirms the presence of the Spirit – it confirms your salvation.

That is Paul's gospel.

But, the Judaisers who were influencing the Galatians taught this.



They taught that salvation and holiness are not the exclusive job of the Spirit.

Law takes pride of place and we also put up our hand to claim we have a big part in our own salvation and our own sanctification.

They taught that Law working through – faith **and** our works – is what is crucial.

Paul has dealt with this error that Law is involved in salvation in the first four and a half chapters.

Now he is looking at this error – that the Law has a central role in our sanctification.

What Paul is going to show us this week and next – is that the Law working through faith and works **cannot** crucify the flesh – it can only indulge the flesh.

That is as much a false gospel as the teaching that works save us.

Paul is adamant. This is another gospel. This is heresy. This is a lie from hell.

The Law cannot save us **nor** can it make us holy.

The Law shows us we need a Saviour – and the Law shows us what godly Spirit inspired desires look like – but it does not and cannot save us.

I love John Bunyan. He summed this up in a little ditty I wish I had written:

Run, John, run, the law commands
But gives us neither feet nor hands,

The Law commands us to be holy but it gives us no power to actually live holy.

Far better news the gospel brings:
It bids us fly and gives us wings

It is the gospel that empowers us to fight sin and live holy.

This is God's saving plan.

Today and next week we will look at sanctification.

Now, when I diagram the theology out – it looks straight-forward.

You get saved – and you become holy – easy right!

I want to say right up front – it is anything but straight-forward or easy.

The problem is that in sanctification – we are dealing with our far from perfect works.

Holiness is a war – and while Christ will ultimately win the war for us – we sure lose our share of battles along the way.

In fact there are no easy battles. Every battle we win on the way is a vicious knife-fight that we win by the skin of our teeth.

So Paul wants us to know – growth in holiness is never a straight line.

But he also knows the flesh brings a gun to this knife-fight so you better bring *everything* the Spirit of God provides.

All this to say, I have never met a Christian who finds that holiness comes easily.

If it comes easy to you – we need to talk.

But, by the Spirit – battles can now be won.

Believe it or not – now we are finally ready to begin to look at how Paul fleshes this out.

This passage divides up like this:

Flesh working through Law leaves us unrighteous now	5:13-21
The Spirit working through faith makes us righteous now	5:22-6:6

So do not submit to the yoke of present unrighteousness	6:7-18
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Today, we will only get to the first point:

Flesh working through Law leaves us unrighteous now	5:13-21
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As we saw earlier – the Law can't free us or make us righteous.

In fact, as Paul pointed out in chapters 3 and 4 – the Law enslaves us and leaves us lost in our unrighteousness.

Our flesh is weak – it cannot keep the Law. It cannot please God.

We will always fail.

And in terms of sanctification – the Law actually feeds the flesh and makes us more unrighteous.

Remember Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the tax-collector?

The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'

Trying to keep the Law led to the sin of pride and it led him away from thinking he needed a Saviour.

It also deceives us. We can think – I am doing so well in some areas I can slack off in other areas.

Matthew 23:23–24:

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

We have all been there.

You are driving to work in heavy traffic. Some fool cuts you off. You hit the horn – give him a piece of your mind – until you remember – whoops I have a GBC sticker on the back of my car.

You say sorry about that God.

Then your heart says – what are you apologising for? That really wasn't a big deal.

You gave your tithe. You did not look at anything bad this week. You bought the wife some flowers. You prayed two – maybe even three times this week. You are doing good – for you.

So, I think your little slip up with anger and road rage didn't tilt the scales of Law against you.

Relying on the Law alone can never crucify the flesh – in fact it ends up feeding the flesh.

Law has a place – but the crucial weapon in the battle is the Spirit of God.

Paul explains this using two points. First:

You are now free to choose 5:13-15

Let's look again at Galatians 5:13-15:

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. But through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

Over the years I have people tell me that they are called to be missionaries, pastors, mothers, doctors – but I have never had anyone tell me that they were called to freedom.

Yet you better believe it – **every** Christian is called to freedom.

But what does that mean?

Freedom is a buzz word today. Freedom is seen as a right.

I am free to choose the course of my life. I can choose my religion, my occupation.

I can choose where I live, who I love, what I do.

I can wear what I want, say what I want, believe what I want.

I am free.

I would like to argue the validity and merits of that type of supposed freedom – but not today.

What I do want to do is point out that there is one thing a non-Christian is not free to do.

And that is – they are not free to not sin.

Many centuries ago, Augustine summed up the freedom and bondage of man in his **Fourfold View Of Man**:

Pre-Fall Man	Post-Fall Man	Reborn Man	Glorified Man
(Adam)	(Unsaved)	(Saved)	(Heaven)
able to sin able not to sin	not able not to sin	able not to sin (but not perfectly)	unable to sin

Augustine choose to use a lot of double negatives – not able to not – so it can get confusing.

But, here are the two states of man I want to look at.

Post-fall man – unsaved men and women – you and I before we became Christians.

We were **not able to not sin**.

We could not stop ourselves from sinning. Lust, greed, envy – all the time – all day, all night.

Unsaved man in the power of the flesh – does not want to fight sin and even if he did – he can't – he would lose. He has no desire and no weapons for this task.

Please don't hear me wrong. This does not mean that a non-Christian never does anything good.

They do. It is just that the motivation does not ultimately come from the indwelling Spirit.

It might be a selfish motivation – if I do something nice I will get something in return.

It might be their conscience convicting them – they know what is right.

It just does not come from the Spirit of God within.

And false motives actually render their actions sinful and not pleasing to God.

But here is the wonderful truth – Reborn man – saved men and women – Christians in the power of the Spirit – want to fight sin and **can** fight sin.

By the power of the Holy Spirit we can now do something we never could before – we can win some battles. Our weapons – our resources are powerful and adequate to the task.

The hard part is this – because we still bear the flesh – our ability to refrain from sin is anything but perfect.

But that does not negate the truth that when you became a Christian – for the first time in your life you now have a choice.

You were freed such that now – you are able not to sin.

Listen to Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10:

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you.**

You now have a choice to turn from sin.

Every baptism – we hear the same story. I was addicted to alcohol. I was an angry violent man. I was a woman who always said something nasty.

I tried to stop – but I was powerless.

Then Christ saved me and I became a new person.

Again, don't get me wrong. You can still choose to give in to the flesh and indulge your passions – but now you can also choose to put on the armour of God and by the power of the Spirit – you can fight tooth and nail against sin.

It means you have a choice – to use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh or through love to serve one another.

You now want to keep the Law – and for the first time you can.

Not perfectly – not salvation perfection – not even close – but sanctification type fruit.

You can choose to keep the Law by loving your neighbour.

Or you can choose to bite devour and consume your neighbour.

Turning to Christ frees you to have a choice.

So choose to crucify the flesh by the Spirit not by Law

5:16-21

Verses 16-17:

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

If you walk by the Spirit – are led by the Spirit – listen to the Spirit – follow the Spirit – he says you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

But, this verse is often misunderstood.

Some Christians read this as:

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will **never** gratify the desires of the flesh.

They sin and say – well obviously I'm not saved.

But, Paul does not mean a Christian who is indwelt by the Spirit never sins – does not give in to the desires of the flesh – I wish!

The Apostle John says this in 1 John 1:8:

If we say we have no sin – you got it right!

No! We deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

So, Paul is not saying we never sin.

He **is** saying that if you choose to follow the leading of the Spirit, choose to use the weapons of the Spirit and fight the desires of the flesh – the flesh will not always have its way unopposed. It will not always be gratified.

Salvation means there are times – and hopefully a growing number of times where the Spirit wins.

Unfortunately – because the flesh is so powerful – at times we do not walk in the Spirit – and we choose to follow the leading of the flesh, lay down the weapons of the Spirit and give in to the desires of sin.

But Paul's point here is this – if you are choosing to fight the flesh and not gratify the desires of the flesh – this **has** to come from the indwelling Spirit.

One of the marks that the Spirit is within you is that you are at war with the flesh. You hate it when you sin. You don't want to sin. And by the power of the Spirit you can have victories over sin.

Before salvation – I loved my sin. I saw nothing wrong with it.

I still sin – but now I hate it. It grieves my soul.

What changed?

Jesus captured my heart – the Spirit entered my heart – and the battle of my life began.

I realised so many things I loved were in fact poison to my soul and abominations to a holy God.

By choosing Christ – I chose to hate the things He hated.

But here is the problem that you and I live with every moment of every day.

After the fall – our will, our desires, our inner being was corrupted.

The flesh is us in our weakness.

We could not choose to fight sin.

We could not choose holiness.

And the world around us is fallen. We are surrounded by a sea of temptations. And we have the Devil fanning the flames.

We were **not able not to sin**.

Then God had mercy on us.

But here is what we have to grasp. Salvation did not end the weakness and desires of our flesh. It did not kill Satan and remove the temptations of the world.

Those things are coming praise God – but not today.

Instead the Spirit of God came to live within us.

The Spirit now gives us new desires that oppose the desires of the flesh.

He strengthens us to do right.

He convicts us of sin.

He begins to renovate our hearts.

But the flesh remains – so the war rages – and we do not fight the war perfectly.

The flesh – the old me – the me in my human strength – is still drawn to many of the things God hates.

And the battle – an almighty life and death battle is waged every moment of every day within me – and within you.

The Spirit opposes the desires of the flesh.

The flesh opposes the desires of the Spirit.

There is a part of me that hates this battle.

Sometimes I feel I am losing this battle. I long for the day when this battle is done.

But, our passage teaches us – that this is a battle we should thank God for.

This is the battle you want.

Why? Because the battle is proof of the presence of the Spirit.

There was no war before you were saved.

It was flesh 24/7. Before you were saved there was no conflict – no turmoil – you simply gave in to the flesh.

So the presence of turmoil – knowing there is a battle – feeling the pull to sin and hating it is a good sign.

You need the Spirit to have a war.

It takes two to have a battle.

But the battle means choice.

Will I fight the flesh or feed the flesh?

Will I serve my own passions or serve others?

I am free – but with freedom comes great responsibility.

The question for you and for me is this – what are we going to do with our freedom?

Because we are not puppets – or robots – God graciously allows us a choice.

We can use our freedom for selfish reasons – to gratify the desires of the flesh – or we can choose to walk in the Spirit.

Verse 18:

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

If you are saved – if you have the Spirit – if He leads from within – you are not enslaved by the Law.

Then in verses 19-21 – Paul outlines the works of the flesh.

These are the type of things that the Spirit of God opposes.

I want to be clear – this is **not** an exhaustive list.

Me – I don't see how anyone could read this list and not be convicted.

But Paul felt the need to say – **and things like these** – in case anyone might argue – well I don't see my exact sin struggle here – I'm OK.

Verses 19-21:

Now the works of the flesh are evident:

Paul gives **four** broad categories of works of the flesh and **one** catch all category.

Sexual sins:

Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality.

Everything that flows from lust is included here. Adultery, fornication, homosexuality, porn.

Sacred sins:

Idolatry, sorcery.

Anything that replaces God. I think you could put greed, religion, atheism here.

Social sins:

Enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy.

Sins against your fellow men and women. This is broad – add in gossip, backbiting, bullying – any social oriented sins.

Selfish sins:

Drunkenness, orgies.

Orgies does not just refer to sexual indulgences. This is any sins that seek satisfaction apart from God.

You could add in gluttony, drugs, addictions.

The word comes from the wild parties of the day. Think Schoolies – and you are close.

And in case you think you escaped there are – **Supplementary sins:**

And things like these.

Gotcha – whatever your area of weakness is – Paul says – it is a deed of the flesh.

These are the type of desires that the flesh leads us toward.

Now – please listen up.

The question I get asked all the time regarding this passage is this.

Is Paul saying that if you have any of these deeds in our life – you don't have the Spirit and are not saved?

Then throw in verse 21:

I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

I know this is a verse that has crushed many saints.

I will not ask for a show of hands – but I doubt there is a Christian here who reads this list and can say – I have crucified every one of these sins.

In fact – I suspect in the last month you have been guilty of most of them.

And many Christians do then think – I have done such things – I'm not saved – I will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The key is verse 17. There is a war within us. Flesh battling Spirit.

The war ebbs and flows.

Paul is not describing an absolute state. It is not that we are all flesh then become all Spirit.

He is not saying Christians never sin – that none of these deeds of the flesh ever darken their doorstep.

No. The Apostle John made it clear – If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

The image is of a war – that waxes and wanes.

You know you are losing a battle if these works of the flesh are becoming evident.

You know the Spirit is having victory if the fruit of the Spirit is becoming evident.

But, today – no one refrains from sin perfectly.

John Newton – the former slave trader who wrote *Amazing Grace* gets it right:

I am not the man I ought to be, I am not the man I wish to be, and I am not the man I hope to be, but by the grace of God, I am not the man I used to be.

I am not who I ought to be or want to be – but by the grace of God – I am not the man or woman I used to be.

I hate my sin when once I loved it.

I fight it when once I gave in.

I have victories when once I always lost.

I am growing more like Christ. I am winning more battles.

I see less of the deeds of the flesh. I see more of the fruit of the Spirit.

But, if these deeds of the flesh are persistent – no victories – no diminishing – no growth – then Paul says – there is no battle – and there is no Spirit – so you will not inherit the kingdom.

Now – working out if someone is a true Christian but getting whipped in a battle – or a non-Christian who is not even in the battle – can be really hard.

I read an article recently discussing whether churches should discipline someone out of the church – as a non-Christian – if they keep falling into sin.

The article then looked at one difficult sin in particular – porn.

If someone keeps falling into that sin – are they saved – will they not inherit the kingdom?

Wow is that a hard question.

Porn is perhaps the most addictive, soul destroying, blight on the church.

90% of women don't get that when I say that – 10% of men don't get that – the rest absolutely get it.

I regularly sit with men who fail – repent – fail – repent – fail again.

They are crushed. They doubt their salvation.

This article tried to help us think through whether there is actually a battle going on or not.

It gave a series of ten questions to ask. These are great questions to search the heart regarding any sin.

Let me read the first two:

- **Is there a settled coldness or indifference to the sin?**
- **Have they ceased fighting and largely made peace with their sin?**
- Are they no longer ashamed at the severity of their sin?
- Do the warnings of Scripture no longer carry any weight?
- Do they find ways to make excuses rather than own up to the consequences?
- Do they no longer pursue counsel?
- Jesus calls us to embrace radical solutions in order to cut sin out of our life (Mt 5:29). Are they increasingly unwilling to embrace such solutions? Are they quick to explain why such radical solutions aren't required?
- Is the sin becoming more frequent and/or more deviant?
- Has it persisted for a prolonged period of time, not just weeks and a few months, but many months or years?
- Is it increasingly causing damage in their relationships with their spouse or their relationships with other church members?

Basically – Is there a war?

It is a difficult situation to make hard and fast calls. But, I believe Paul would say that if you haven't given up on the war – if the battle is raging – if you hate that sin – if you are striving to kill it – then I believe he would say the Spirit is at work.

But you will strive to do everything in your power to crucify the flesh.

It is not easy. Every time you crucify the flesh it rises from the dead – and the battle begins again.

To me – the key to the battle is verse 16 – walk by the Spirit – and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Too many Christians make the error of relying primarily on Law.

Take porn.

There is Law you can put in place.

Net-nanny, computer in the living room, accountability.

And you *should* do these things. Please don't misunderstand me.

But, Paul will tell you – if your primary resource is not the Spirit – if the desire for change does not come from within – all the Law in the world is useless.

You have to feed the Spirit and crucify the flesh.

You feed the Spirit primarily through a love for God – through being so thankful for the work of Christ that you long to please Him and not bring Him shame.

Love for Christ is the only desire that is stronger than our lust for sin.

And we have to feed the Spirit through the Word and prayer and fellowship and all the spiritual disciplines.

We have to put on the armour of God daily.

It is not a one-time thing – the flesh never relents – and so we must never relent.

So, brothers and sisters – **how goes the battle?**

You were freed not to indulge the flesh but to crucify it.

If there is no battle. If you barely raise a whimper against the flesh – then yes – by all means repent and get saved.

If the battle rages and you are fighting hard – walk in the Spirit. Do the things that feed the Spirit.

Strive to bring glory to the Lord in your life.

Murray and I share a favourite TV show – The West Wing.

In one episode – President Bartlet pardoned a number of prisoners.

Later he meets with one of them who says, “I can never repay you.”

President Bartlet says, "Oh yes you can. ... If you screw up again you don't just hurt yourself and your family you damage me. ... Ms Holmes you need to take your life in your hands"

"I will sir. I promise."

Brothers and sisters. God pardoned you.

And Him you can actually never repay.

But if you value His pardon – if you love the One who gave His life to pardon you – you will take your life in your hands – you will ask the Spirit for power and strength and fight every day to honour Him by becoming more like Christ.

You will crucify the flesh and bear the fruit of the Spirit.

Freed To Fight The War (Galatians 5:13-21 November 30, 2018)

Main Point: We were freed not to indulge the flesh but to crucify it.

General Questions:

1. What is gospel freedom? What is it that Christ freed us from?
2. Why does the Law actually feed the flesh and make us more unrighteous?
3. Does the Law have any place in making us holy? If so, what is the proper place of the Law in making us holy?
4. What is the proper relationship between salvation and sanctification?
5. Discuss the truths found in Bunyan's ditty:

Run, John, run, the law commands
But gives us neither feet nor hands,
Far better news the gospel brings:
It bids us fly and gives us wings

6. Discuss the biblical reality of Augustine's **Fourfold View Of Man**:

Pre-Fall Man	Post-Fall Man	Reborn Man	Glorified Man
(Adam)	(Unsaved)	(Saved)	(Heaven)
able to sin able not to sin	not able not to sin	able not to sin (but not perfectly)	unable to sin

What is the difference between the Reborn man and the Glorified man in terms of sin?

7. What is the relationship between the deeds of the flesh and someone's salvation?
8. Why is the Spirit-flesh battle one you want?
9. How can you strive to walk in the Spirit?
10. How can you crucify the flesh?

Application Questions:

1. What changes have you seen in your heart and desires from before Christ to after Christ?

2. How do you personally feed your Spirit and put on your armour? Why is this a daily necessity?
3. Does sin cause you to despair or to gear up for the fight?
4. Have you seen growth in holiness and some battles won?
5. Are you honouring the God who pardoned you with your life? If not – what needs to change?