

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church
107 East Austin
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

A1030 – July 25, 2010 – Galatians 5:17-21 – Failure To Inherit The Kingdom

Let's pick up where we left off last time with Gal 5:16. Gal 5:16 begins a series of contrasts. There are two ways you can walk as a Christian. This is all discussing Christians. This is not contrasting Christians with non-Christians. This is contrasting two ways Christians can walk. One way we can walk is by the Spirit. That's a dative of means or instrument which means we are to walk in dependence upon God the Holy Spirit, walk by yielding to Him. The way it's expressed in the life of Christ is when Christ said, I come not to do my own will but the will of Him who sent Me. That's the attitude involved in a walk by the Spirit. It is submitting our will to the Lord's will. Walk by the spirit is not some kind of mystical, ooey, gooey feeling, it's simply saying step by step, day by day in all the situations of my life I'm not going to do what I want to do, I'm going to do what God says to do. I'm going to trust His word and obey Him.

Now the other way a Christian can walk is by means of the flesh. And every believer has the flesh. The flesh is not eradicated at the moment you believed in Christ. The flesh remains with you until you die and go to be face to face with the Lord. But until that you still have the flesh and you can walk by means of the flesh. We said the flesh is the Greek word *sarx*, s-a-r-x and it's been described a number of ways by theologians. We don't mean the physical *sarx* in this context but it is closely related. Paul thinks of the fallen physical flesh as closely linked to the fallen spiritual flesh and this has to do with the transmission of the flesh through inheritance, from father to son, father to son down through the human race. How do we define the flesh? We can say it's a principle, we can say it's a law in our members; we can say it's a disposition or we can say it's the sin nature. I'm just going to refer to it as the

flesh, if you want to supply sin nature, that's fine with me, I'm simply more comfortable saying "the flesh" because that's what Scripture says.

So we have these two principles at war in our members, the flesh and the Spirit. We found last week that though this war is waging in our members yet the flesh and Spirit are not of equal strength. Thankfully, God the Holy Spirit is always more powerful than our sinful flesh. It's good to know that because when we get into walking by the flesh we can generate habitual sin patterns and we think we can never get out of them. So to know that He is more powerful than our flesh is encouraging, to know that yes, these habitual sin patterns in our life can be defeated by dependence upon Him.

Now this dependence upon Him requires the believer to go positive to the word of God and walk by the Spirit. That word walk, *peripateo*, is a command in the original Greek text. Walk. God's Spirit isn't going to do that for you. That's your responsibility to do. Your volition is involved at this step. You have to make a conscious decision in the daily situations of life, "Am I going to walk by the Spirit or am I going to walk by the flesh?" I can't be there as your pastor to hold your hand 24 hours a day. Pastors aren't supposed to be there 24 hours a day. The pastor's job is to train people in the word of God so they don't have to hold your hand. Now I don't mind holding your hand and helping you through a jam, but I'd much rather you take a hold of the Spirit of God's hand in your day by day life. I can't hold you up, I'm just a man and I'm weak like you and I can't hold you up with any kind of omnipotence like God the Holy Spirit can. So we don't make idols out of the pastor, we don't make idols out of any human being, that's not how you walk; you walk by the Spirit.

Now if you do this, verse 16 says you will experience sinless perfection. That bothers people, but that's what it says, "But I say, walk by means of the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." That's an absolute statement. If you are walking by means of the Spirit it is absolutely impossible to carry out the desire of the flesh, absolutely impossible. If you could carry out the desire of the flesh while still walking by the Spirit then we'd have to say the Holy Spirit is the source of sin. But that's not the case because if you look at the fruit of the Spirit in verses 22-23 you don't find any sin, everything in verses 22-23 is righteousness. On the other side, if you are walking by the flesh it is equally impossible to carry out the desire of the

Spirit, absolutely impossible. If you could carry out the desire of the Spirit while walking by the flesh then we'd have to say that the flesh can do righteousness and please God. And that's also equally impossible. If you look at the fruit of the flesh in vv 19-21 there is no righteousness. It's all sin, sin, sin and it's the unfortunate consequences of that sin Paul warns against today.

Now some people come into the fruit of the flesh and by the time they get to verse 21 they've lost all their marbles. They hit grease because they don't know what to do with the end of verse 21. "Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." You can tell that puts the fear of God into people. What do you mean if I do some of those things in the list I'm not going to inherit the kingdom of God? And people don't know what to do with that so they retreat to their theology. So if they're an Arminian they start importing loss of salvation into the text. Oh, if you do those really bad sins in the list then you will lose your salvation. Or if you're a Hyper-Calvinist you start importing the idea that if you do one of those bad sins on the list then you never were really saved to begin with. In which case, Arminianism and Hyper-Calvinism have a point of agreement; the people in this verse will not go to heaven because they did bad things. Now that's stated roughly but I state it that way so you can see the point. Basically both positions say if you do those things in the list of vv 19-21 you will not be in heaven. Now friend, that's bad theology, that's a works-based theology. That is saying salvation is by works. And I'm very sad for these people because they're on a performance basis. If they really are saved, of course they're going to heaven, but they've so distorted grace that they don't know it, they don't have 100% assurance when God's word says you can have 100% assurance. You may not feel too saved but if you have believed, Jesus said, you have eternal life. And since Jesus is the God of the universe then He doesn't lie and so if you've believed that Jesus died for your sins and rose again on the third day then you are saved, you are justified, you have eternal life. Now a person can believe that at some point in his life and then retreat into this works based performance stuff and not be sure they are saved but that doesn't mean they aren't saved, it just means they do not understand grace at that time and consequently they are not enjoying assurance of salvation. They may be 99% sure but 99% sure translates to 1 day out of 100 days I'm not sure. Why am I not sure? Because my life isn't measuring up, I've got some of the filth in these verses and so maybe I'm not really saved, or maybe I lost my salvation. In either

case I have no assurance because I'm basing my assurance on my own works. So these people are very confused and I'm sad for them because if they really grasped the nature of God's grace in the cross of Christ they wouldn't be looking at their works, they'd be looking at Christ's work.

We'll answer from the Scriptures what this bit about not inheriting the kingdom of God is all about. But if you in your mind leave the context for one moment you'll be lost. So here's the context: the believer can walk one of two ways. Notice, I said believer. The context is all about believers. It has nothing to do with people who think they are believers but are not. So the Calvinist approach is already out. How could you say verse 7 of unbelievers? "You were running well." I never met an unbeliever that was running the Christian life well. Have you? Obviously that's referring to believers. What's the implication of verse 7? Believers can run well and believers can run not well. That's no different than verse 16. A believer can walk by the Spirit and a believer can walk by the flesh. There's been no change in the people Paul's talking to. He's not writing a letter to unbelievers. He's writing a letter to believers. And we know from Paul's other letters that Paul didn't believe in loss of salvation. Paul said in Romans, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, nothing, so if nothing can separate us from the love of Christ then can idolatry separate us from the love of Christ? Can sexual immorality separate us from the love of Christ? Nothing in that list or beyond that list can separate us from the love of Christ.

If it could separate us then King David is going to hell because King David was guilty of coveting, adultery, conspiracy, and murder; King Solomon is going to hell because he committed adultery and worshipped idols and Moses is going to hell because he was guilty of anger and murder. So Arminianism is out. And whatever Paul means by the end of verse 21 by those who do such things will not inheriting the kingdom of God, it cannot mean, they're not really believers (Hyper Calvinism) and it cannot mean they lose their salvation (Arminianism). It must mean something else.

Now to see that failure to inherit the kingdom as a common teaching of Paul turn to 1 Cor 6:9. Here again Paul gives us a long list of sins and says if you do these things you will not inherit the kingdom of God. "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor

homosexuals, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.” Now the question here is the unrighteous, who are the unrighteous? The *adikos*? Well, what is the context? The context is church discipline, the leadership in the church handling a sin situation. Now sometimes believers get it in their head we are never to judge anyone? They just show they’ve never read the Bible. Oh really? They say they’ve read the Bible but they didn’t read too carefully. In 1 Cor 5 there is a believer in the Corinthian church committing fornication with his father’s wife. I don’t know if his father had married some young thing, but whatever it was it was a horrible sin going on in that congregation in chapter 5 and Paul is pretty upset because the church isn’t doing anything about it. They’re just sitting there letting this sin go on and everyone knows it’s going on and Paul says the job of the church is to take charge of the situation and judge the fellow believer. Oh, we can’t do that; it might ruffle someone’s feathers; that’s getting in people’s business. Oh, get over it. God says you better interfere, a case of public sin requires public action. Private sin requires private action, public sin requires public action. If you don’t deal with it next week you’ll have brother John sleeping with his step-mother. Will not a little leaven leaven the whole lump? In other words, you let this fornication go on and you’ll have fornication all over the place. Corinth naturally trended toward licentious living anyway; you could pick up a girl on any street corner you wanted. It was so bad that when people came back from vacationing in Corinth their friends would ask them, “So did you Corinthianize?” Which meant, did you sleep with a Corinthian prostitute? And tell us all the details. It was a rampant practice in Corinth. And so we have worse things going on in the Corinthian church than in the whorehouse. At least in the whorehouse it’s not your father’s wife. So in 5:12 he says, “For what have I to do with judging outsiders?” You know, I have no business judging people outside the church, but then he says, “Do you not judge those who are within the church?” Of course you do, you’re supposed to, and this is church discipline. Verse 13, those who are outside the church we are not to judge, we let God judge them. Yet the exact reverse is what most people of the church do. We judge the world, we get so upset when the world acts unrighteously and we go to *point* the finger, but when it’s a fellow believer we won’t even *lift* a finger. Problem Paul says this is exactly wrong. Then in chapter 6 he says when you judge a fellow believer you should do it out of pagan courts. Why should Christians go before pagans to have pagans resolve the problems? If Christians have a problem aren’t they big enough boys to handle the

problem? Why do Christians who have the wisdom of God accessible to them in the Scriptures go before the world to have the wisdom of the world solve their problems? What kind of a slap in the face is this to God? So he says in verse 5, “I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?” What a shame. It would be better for a Christian to lose \$50,000 than to take it before a pagan court to solve the problem. Paul is mad. And look at the end of verse 6, that last word, “unbelievers.” That word is *apistos*, *pistos* means believer, *a-* is a negation, so not a believer or unbeliever. That’s Paul’s word here for an unbeliever, *apistos*. Then in verse 9, he’s still coming down on them for not dealing with this man sleeping with his father’s wife. The man is a believer, they’re not judging him when they should be and then he says this, “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?” See the word “unrighteous? That’s *adikos*, not the word for unbeliever, that was three verses before *apistos*. If Paul wanted to say the man was an unbeliever and unbelievers wouldn’t inherit the kingdom of God he would have said “do you not know that unbelievers will not inherit the kingdom of God. But that’s stating the obvious isn’t it. That’s no surprise. That’s totally irrelevant to the context. What’s relevant is that believers who live unrighteous lives will not inherit the kingdom of God. That’s what they need to know. If a believer lives an unrighteous lifestyle, he trains himself in walking by the flesh then he will not inherit the kingdom of God. Then he gives a list here, very similar to the list in Gal 5, “Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.” So we have Gal 5 saying this, we have 1 Cor 6 saying this, now turn to Eph 5.

These are all in the Pauline corpus of literature. Eph 5 he’s talking again to believers, telling them how to walk the Christian walk, how to live the Christian life. Nobody can deny these are believers without using a rubber Bible. Look at verse 1. “Therefore be imitators of God,” now is that what you tell unbelievers? Imitate God? That’s what you tell believers. So he says, “as beloved children and walk in love,” this is the walk in love section. Then he goes on, “just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. ³But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; ⁴and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not

fitting, but rather giving of thanks, ⁵For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, *has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*” There it is again, a list of sins in the context of believers and a statement that they will not have an inheritance in the kingdom. Verse 3 is remarkably clear that this is among the saints, there’s a lifestyle that believers should live that leads to having an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God and there’s a lifestyle that believers should not live that leads to not having an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

So now three passages in Paul talk this way, Gal 5, 1 Cor 6 and Eph 5. All three say if a believer lives this kind of a life he will not inherit the kingdom of God. Now if inherit the kingdom of God in these contexts means to be saved then salvation is based on works. There’s no other way around it. Somehow you’re bringing works into the equation, either you have to say that if you do these things you will lose your salvation or you have to say that if you do these things you were never really saved to begin with. In either case salvation is not a free gift, it requires human works.

So point one of the context is they are believers. Point two is believers can walk two different ways, by the flesh or by the Spirit. Point three is that if believers walk by the flesh they produce the fruit of the flesh and will not inherit the kingdom; if they walk by the Spirit they produce the fruit of the Spirit they will inherit the kingdom. Now what is fruit related too? Fruit is not related to salvation. Of course you have to be saved before there can be fruit. But what we mean is the fruit doesn’t save you. The fruit relates to rewards, doesn’t it? We’re talking about fruitfulness in the Christian life and the reward of the inheritance.

Let’s talk about inheritance. Just from the standpoint of our day what is inheritance? It’s coming into possession of something. If you inherit some money or property that means that money or property has been transferred to you so that it is now your possession. The word inheritance in the OT and NT means the same thing. The Greek word in the NT is *kleronomia* and its derivatives. It means “to acquire, to obtain, to come into possession of something.”

There are two uses of this word and its derivatives in the NT. There are two inheritances. One, you can inherit salvation and two you can inherit rewards. The same word is used for both of these and it's very clear how to determine whether the inheritance is salvation or the inheritance is a reward. All you have to do is look at the context. If God is the one doing the action then it refers to salvation; if man is the one doing the action then it refers to rewards. I want to quote Dan Inghram, professor of Greek at Capital Bible Seminary and a personal friend of mine; he's a former Marine and a great man. He wrote a paper a few years ago on 1 Cor 6:9-10 which we looked at a minute ago. He says, "While inheritance can refer to salvation, this is never the case where the actions of man are used as a condition for that inheritance. When the noun **klhronomia** refers to salvation, the context addresses the *actions of God* (Gal 3:18; Eph 1:14, 18); when it refers to the possessions of the believer in the kingdom, the context addresses the *actions or conduct of the believer* (Eph 5:5; Col 3:23-24)."ⁱ So let's look at some of the passages.

For the first category, related to salvation, turn to Gal 3:18. We've already studied Gal 3:18 so this should be easy to see that God is the one who does the action here, it's solely something He does, and not anything we do. "For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise." See, God granted it, it's purely by promise, there are no human conditions attached to it and since the context is justification and regeneration and those are actions of God on our behalf then these fit in the first category of inheritance. Passages which relate inheritance to salvation which is wrought fully and totally by God. So this first inheritance is a possession of all believers.

Now let's look at the second category, where inheritance is related to rewards. Turn to Col 3:23-24, we've already looked at Eph 5:5, very clear that it was related to believers who do not inherit the kingdom because of actions or conduct they do. Col 3:23-24 is another one. This one states directly that there is an inheritance given as a reward due to the actions or conduct of the believer. Verse 23, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve." Notice this comes in the context of labor, having responsible labor, how we labor in this world, in our job, the workplace, divine institution #1 and the Lord says,

when you function in the workplace as to the Lord, not slacking off because your boss is on vacation, but simply doing your work as to the Lord who is always watching, know that you will receive the reward of inheritance. So inheritance here is not for all believers, it's conditioned on the believers actions in the workplace and it's a reward for a job well done, a believer who does always His labor for the glory of God and not to please men. So we have these two categories, let's put down some distinguishing characteristics then I want to turn to Rom 8:17.

First category - salvation as an inheritance. All believers enjoy the first category. It involves aspects of all three phases of our salvation. It is solely due to the actions of God. No human conditions are ever required for this inheritance. Second category - reward as an inheritance. Not all believers enjoy the second category. It is a reward for doing good work. It is conditioned on human actions or conduct. If a believer meets the criteria he will receive the reward of inheritance in the kingdom.

Now, turn to Rom 8:17 to see both inheritances in the same sentence. Rom 8 is the same topic as Gal 5, a walk by the Spirit vs a walk by the flesh. The only difference is Rom 8 is Paul's expansion of it; this is the most in-depth treatment of the Spirit and the flesh in the whole of Scripture. Verse 16, "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, heirs also, heirs of God" there's inheritance number one, salvation, all believers are heirs of God, "and fellow heirs with Christ, if," particle of condition, there's a human condition here, "if indeed we suffer with Him..." the proper exegesis distinguishes between being an heir of God and a co-heir with Christ. All believers are heirs of God but only some believers are co-heirs with Christ. There are no human conditions for being an heir of God, all believers are heirs of God, but the second heirship, co-heirs with Christ is conditioned on the believer suffering with Him. What is this suffering with Him bit? Every believer is called to suffer and given opportunities to suffer, but not all believers do suffer. They may suffer because of their idiotic decisions, that's not what Paul means. Paul means to suffer as Christ suffered, for God's glory. Now do you remember what Hebrews said about Christ suffering? It says although He was a Son, he learned obedience through the things that He suffered. Jesus' sufferings were designed for His own learning and through His sufferings He learned obedience. Now we're called to the exact same thing. He learned obedience through His sufferings

and we are to learn obedience through our sufferings. And Paul knew that some believers learn the obedience through the suffering and others don't. That's why he used the conditional particle in verse 17, "if indeed we suffer with Him..." maybe we do, maybe we don't, but if we do suffer with Him and learn obedience to God then we become co-heirs with Christ and then the passage goes on and gets into the millennial kingdom when the creation is set free from futility and the mature believers are revealed in the kingdom as the co-heirs with Christ and they will rule with Him in the kingdom as co-kings, co-rulers.

The main point is that all believers are in the kingdom but not all believers will reign in the kingdom. That's what this is talking about. The whole creation is eagerly waiting to discover which believers learned obedience through the sufferings, just as Christ did, and will therefore be rewarded with co-heirship and will reign with Christ in the kingdom. We are in training now for reigning, but not all believers will reign. Now, this makes total sense. If you think by way of analogy, right now you are in training, it's sort of like boot camp or job training, you go off and you get trained for the military or to go into some job and be effective. And all the training is preparing you to be fit for service in the military or the job. Now, if you go through the training and you slack off and you fool around you and you don't learn authority orientation then you don't get the job. And the Christian life is a training ground for learning authority, we're in Christian boot camp so to speak and God sends you trials and difficulties, sufferings in the Christian life and he says, alright, are you going to adjust to My authority? Are you going to learn that I call the shots? Are you going to learn that the only way to navigate these trials is by walking by the Spirit? I gave you the Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect example that this can be done, now are you going to follow in His footsteps or are you going to try and blaze your own trail? If you will submit to Me and grow to maturity then you will receive the reward of the inheritance and you will reign in the kingdom. If you don't and you fool around and the trials and tough times come in life and you flake out and walk by the flesh and you never learn to submit to God and you fail to grow to maturity then you will not receive the reward of the inheritance and you will not reign in the kingdom. You will be in the kingdom but I don't know what your job will be, maybe picking up the mortals trash or something, but the point is that you will not reign; you will not inherit the kingdom.

Now to see that the Bible clearly teaches there are people who are genuinely saved but won't receive any rewards turn to 1 Cor 3. Verse 11 Paul is expounding the judgment seat of Christ. There will be a day when every believer has to stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and give a personal account of himself before his Savior. It's not a judgment of sin, it's not a judgment of salvation, that's already past at this point, this is a judgment of works. Look at verse 11, "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Now Paul is building an analogy with a building. A building has two parts, the foundation and the superstructure that rests on the foundation. Christ is the foundation, without that you can't build a superstructure. Christ is our salvation. He's the foundation. Then the question is what kind of superstructure do we build on the sure foundation of Christ? What are the building materials we use? Verse 12, "Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it," that's the day of the believer's judgment, "for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work." That's the superstructure. Obviously, if you put a torch to the thing the foundation will remain. Christ has laid a perfect foundation so all that's at issue here is the quality of the superstructure, our works. He says in verse 14, "If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward," so there are rewarded believers, they quality of the building materials withstood fire, it was gold, silver and precious stones. But then you also have verse 15, "If any man's work is burned up he will suffer loss;" loss of what? Loss of rewards, the foundation which is that Christ can't be destroyed by fire so loss of rewards, not salvation, if wood, hay and straw are the quality of the believers' work, then it burns up, loss of rewards. Then he says, "but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." So is there the potential for a genuine believer to have no rewards in the kingdom? Absolutely, he can enter the kingdom but not inherit the kingdom. This is very evident in the NT for anyone who reads without the blinders of their theology.

Entrance and inheritance are two different things. It's not that difficult. If you enter a house that is very different from inheriting a house. If you just enter it you don't possess it, if you inherit it you do possess it. And so it's the same thing, if you enter the kingdom that is not the same as inheriting the kingdom. If you enter the kingdom you are born again, you are saved and all

who are saved will be in the kingdom because the sole condition for entering the kingdom is being born of the Spirit. Salvation is a free gift and kingdom entrance is a free gift. But inheriting the kingdom is conditioned on learning loyalty to God, learning obedience to God through the things we suffer and if we do that then we will be rewarded with the responsibility to reign in the kingdom as co-heir's with Christ. We will be given part ownership in the kingdom; and that part ownership is the rights and responsibility of reigning with Him. And that's what Paul is warning about in Gal 5, 1 Cor 6 and Eph 5. If your life is characterized by fleshly living you will not inherit the kingdom. You will enter the kingdom, yes, but you will not reign in the kingdom. Why not? Because reigning is a reward for faithful service in this life. Salvation is a free gift but service in the kingdom is a reward.

Now the Lord Jesus also received the reward of the inheritance. His right to rule was conditioned on His perfect obedience to the Father. If He did not perfectly obey the Father then He would not be the King of kings in the kingdom. If you look quickly at Heb 1:4 you see that the Lord Jesus inherited things. Starting middle of verse 3. "When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they." So Jesus obtained a new title, a new name after He overcame and completed His mission in perfect obedience to the Father. He didn't get that till the mission was accomplished. He had to go through the cross to get to the reward related to the Kingdom and we have to go through the cross to get to the Kingdom. Now if I no longer live but Christ lives in me and the live I live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me, then I'm on my way to reigning with Christ in the kingdom.

Turn to Rev 2:26. Remember, these seven letters are inspection reports. The Lord Jesus is like a IG here giving inspection reports to these churches, pointing out where they are getting it right and where they are getting it wrong and at the end of each letter He challenges these believers to overcome the adversity. In Rev 2:26 he challenges the believers at Thyatira, "He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end," that's perseverance, that's obedience. If a believer does that what is his reward? Answer, "to him I will give authority over the nations; ²⁷and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, *as I also have received authority from My Father;*" See, even the Lord Jesus received this reward for

overcoming. The believer that overcomes and learns obedience through the things that he suffers will also be given authority in the kingdom to rule over the nations as co-rulers with Christ. This isn't taught in one place, this is taught all over the NT. It's also taught in the OT with respect to the OT Jewish believer with respect to Jewish issues.

Now, finally come back to Gal 5:17-21. We are Christians and there is a battle going on inside of us between the desire of the flesh and the desire of the Spirit. Both of these hunger to have all of us. Now we can choose to go either direction? We can choose to walk by the Spirit in dependence upon Him or to fulfill the lust of the flesh. Now, what happens is if we choose to walk by the flesh and fulfill that craving then that craving gets stronger and if we don't genuinely confess our sin, 1 John 1:9, and get restored to fellowship but instead we remain out of fellowship then the craving of the flesh gets stronger and we do it again. That increases the craving and if don't confess it, we don't utilize 1 John 1:9 the craving just get's stronger and stronger and we do it again and again and again and what we're doing is we're building up a habitual sin pattern in our soul. We're training ourselves in this sinful response pattern. After awhile all that happens is this little stimuli comes into our life and we act on it and we do that over and over and over and somewhere in that list of the deeds of the flesh in vv 19-21 is your habitual sin pattern, maybe it's sexual immorality, fornication, maybe it's drug use, verse 20, sorcery, that's drug use, drug abuse, it could be prescription or non-prescription drug abuse, doesn't matter, could be over the counter drug use, it's just that's your flavor of sin and you are habitually attracted to that. Could be anger problems - you just blow up at people and you can't control your anger, that's a serious problem; could be you partying, that word carousing in verse 21 is the late night partying where everyone is drunk and the night ends in a big orgy (that's the word, they had it in the 1st century and they have it in the 21st century). That may be your sin pattern; it may just be plain jealousy, and you can't stand to see other people get successful in life, it burns you up, why do they always get success and I don't. Now we could go through this whole list; this is not meant to be a total list, this is just a representative list. As he says in verse 21, "and things like these," so this is by no means exhaustive. You know what your habitual sin patterns are. If it's not listed here you still know what it is and Paul is warning if you have developed these into a practice, a habitual practice, notice verse 21, near the end there, he says "I forewarn you, just as I have

forewarned you, that those who practice such things,” that’s habitual practice, (*prasso* is the word), if these sin patterns get rooted down in your soul to the point they are habitual practices he says, then you “will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

And the other passages with very similar lists like 1 Cor 6:9-10 and Eph 5:1-5 are warning of the same exact thing. We don’t want to live our lives that way as Christians because we forfeit rewards, we forfeit the right to rule in the kingdom. We are in training for reigning.

Now the last thing is the kingdom itself, the kingdom of God. What is that? It’s not a cloud in heaven somewhere where you sit with a crown on your head. It’s the Davidic Kingdom, the Messianic Kingdom, the Millennial Kingdom on the earth. When Jesus comes back to sit on the throne of David, which is an earthly throne, He will reign on the earth for 1,000 years. That’s when those who inherit the kingdom will reign with the Lord Jesus Christ. That’s something Paul says you should want. That’s something Paul says the Galatians were well on their way to attaining in verse 7. They were running well but now they’ve been knocked off the course and they’re not running the race well and they are not on their way to inheriting the kingdom. They are on their way to forfeiting their right to inherit the kingdom. So obviously we don’t want to walk that way.

Now I’ve taken you through the passages, I’ve shown you there are two kinds of inheritance. There’s inheriting God or salvation, every believer has this inheritance or possession. But then there’s a second inheritance, inheriting as a reward or co-heirship with Christ in the kingdom and it’s this second inheritance that Paul is interested in believers acquiring. He wants us to walk by the Spirit, in complete dependence upon God and fulfilling His will for our life so we can attain to this great reward of being co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom. It’s a remarkable thing if you think about it. We have this opportunity to enter into the theocratic kingdom of God, and not just walk in, but be co-rulers with Christ in His future geopolitical kingdom, the fifth kingdom of Daniel 2. So, if you’re upset about the geopolitical stage this side of the millennial kingdom and what’s happening in our country, remember, you have dual citizenship, you have citizenship in Christ’s kingdom, that’s Col 1, and if we live by the Spirit, if that’s the characterization of our lives at the Judgment Seat of Christ then we become qualified to serve in the

greatest geopolitical kingdom ever to grace planet earth, right in the administration of the King of kings Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ. That's Paul's point.

“Paul is teaching by the use of contrasts. He has just recited the production of the sin nature, and in the next verse he will list the fruit of the Spirit. Paul is addressing believers and teaching conceptually how believers fall into sin. He says the soul of the believer is a battleground between the filling of God the Holy Spirit, “walking by means of the Spirit,” and the sin nature, “the lust of the flesh.” If the believer gives into the lust of the sin nature, he will sin. If the believer remains in carnality, he will develop a pattern, life-style, practice, (*pra,ssw, prasso*) of sin. Paul gives examples of the type of sins the believer can commit and then warns the Galatians that these patterns of sin destroy the believer's inheritance in God's eternal kingdom. The context of these verses refers to believers and does not support an inference to unbelievers or telling believers that they would lose their salvation if they committed these sins. The implication would then be that salvation is the result of avoiding such sins, and this is not a position that Paul or any other writer of Scripture supports.” (Dan Inghram)

“While inheritance can refer to salvation, this is never the case where the actions of man are used as a condition for that inheritance. When the noun *klhronomi*,a refers to salvation, the context addresses the *actions of God* (Gal 3:18; Eph 1:14, 18); when it refers to the possessions of the believer in the kingdom, the context addresses the *actions or conduct of the believer* (Eph 5:5; Col 3:23–24).”

¹ Daniel Curtis Inghram, *Does The Commission Of Certain Sins Invalidate The Grace Of God? 1 Corinthians 6:9–11*, (Chafer Theological Seminary Bible Conference, March 12, 2008, Houston, Texas).

[Back To The Top](#)

Copyright (c) Fredericksburg Bible Church 2010