

Be on Guard for Yourselves and For all the Flock

3- The Danger of the Heresy of Lawlessness

January 17, 2021

Romans 5:12-6:7

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

16 The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

20 The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

21 so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

To the Glory of God

Now let me begin this Sermon by saying this: God does *everything* He does- for one main Reason:

So, that God alone will be glorified.

... and that means that God is “white-hot” in His Passion to “see to it” that He is known; and loved; and marveled at; and enjoyed- *forever!* And that is the number one main Objective of God- in *everything* He does. And so, all of the Acts that God performs; all of the Prayers that God answers; all of the Truth that God is and that He speaks- is for that one over-arching Goal.

So, when we think about God- one of the main things we should think is that:

God is *radically* “God-centered”.

... in other words, God is radically *for* God. So, God and His Glory is the *pre-eminent* Passion of God.

But “Sin” stops God from being glorified. Sin *dishonors* God; Sin *belittles* God; and Sin brings God NO Glory. Sin lies and says that God is NOT the most Beautiful; nor the Wisest; nor the most Important; nor the most Worthy Being in the Universe. And so, those who become deceived by Sin- set their own Affections- on things that have been made and things that are falling away- which is classic Idolatry.

But that means that “Salvation” then, is God *rescuing* unworthy sinners- (by what He alone does for them in Jesus) so that we *also* will become radically “God-centered”. And that would be enough. We *should* be “God-centered” people. We

owe God that much. And God is infinitely *deserving* that we all become radically “God-centered” people.

Yet that is NOT the motivation that the Bible gives to us so that we will become radically “God-centered” people. The Promise of God found in the 66 Books of sacred Writ- is that, as we become more and more “God-centered”- we will also become more and more joyful; and happy; and contented; and satisfied- in God being glorified.

So, I would suggest to you that us- being so transformed in Salvation- that we honestly *enjoy* becoming radically “God-centered”- is what it means to be “godly”. Because when we say that somebody is “godly”- we mean that they are “like” God. NOT that they are Deity- but that their lives *mirror* or reflect the Attributes and Desires and Loves of God in Christ.

Okay, but what did Jesus desire *more* than anything else? What was Jesus’ Passion and His foremost Goal? That God would be known and honored and loved and obeyed and glorified!

So, us being “godly” is MORE than that we stop smoking, dipping, chewing, and snorting; and that we stop going with girls that do. It is MORE that the list of bad habits that we stop doing. Jesus *loved* His Father- *perfectly*! Jesus *delighted* to do God’s Will. Jesus didn’t say or do ANYTHING- except at God’s Command and Permission. And so, Jesus *honored* His Father- *perfectly*. Jesus glorified the Father *better* than anyone else. And so, as we abide more in Jesus; and as His Words abide more in us (which is simply another way of understanding what it means to become more- “godly”)- we will also honor God- *more* and *better*.

Okay, but precisely *how* is that accomplished in us? By the Power of the Grace of God at work in our lives combined with God the Holy Spirit, Who lives within us, *empowering* and *enabling* us to struggle against the lusts of our flesh- so that we may *joyfully* and *humbly* submit ourselves to the Authority of Scripture- in our daily lives- all to the Fame and the Renown of God.

In other words, that we are so changed by God’s amazing Grace- that our genuine Delight- is that God alone will be glorified by everything that we think; and say; and do.

And so, God’s Grace will *equip* us to consciously and purposefully “do” certain things; while consciously empowering us to *refrain* from doing other things. And this ongoing Struggle will occur in our lives for two reasons:

1. So that God alone will be glorified
2. So that our own Joy will be made full

... which are the very two things that God desires the *most*. And these are the two things that make Jesus look irresistible; and that make us to be “godly”.

But this also means that if we do NOT seek for God alone to be glorified in, by, and through what we consciously do and what we consciously don't do- and we are ONLY seeking to be Happy- then, in reality, we are striving to become deified; and we have become our own god; and we are guilty of High Treason. So, the only way that us- seeking to be more like God (godly)- is a Good thing- is if we are *primarily* seeking that God alone is glorified.

In other words, "Yes!" God desires that those who are saved- obey Him. Yet if we ONLY obey God out of some sense of Duty or Obligation; or because, "*It's the Right thing to do!*"; or because we are terrified of Hell; or because we feel *forced* to obey- then I suggest to you that we are NOT actually being obedient to God; or to the Holy Scriptures- at all! Because the Scriptures do NOT teach that. No, the Scriptures teach that our Obedience is to be with Delight; that we come to *enjoy* walking on the straight and narrow Path; and that our struggle to obey God's Commandments- and seeing Him alone be glorified- brings to us- the *fullness* of Joy! Here is how Jesus Himself put this from **John 14:15**

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Now most of the time people read this Verse- they concentrate on the phrase, "**... you will keep my Commandments**". But that isn't what Jesus said. Notice what *precedes* the Obedience: *Love for Jesus*. And that means that *all* of our Obedience (Righteousness) must be *predicated* on our love for Jesus. And words like "Joy"; and "Delight"; and "Happiness" are simply different ways of understanding that Love. So, our striving to obey- should NEVER flow out from some sense of "Christian Duty" or "Moral Obligation" or "Human Will Power" or humanly engineered Works". Because that doesn't honor God at all. In fact, trying to obey God based on those things- is actually nothing more than a fallen desire to *rob* God of His Glory and take it for ourselves. Here is what the Bible teaches:

Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

So, the Works that God created us in Christ Jesus "for (which is another way of saying why God saved us)- to carry out in this life- are those Works which "**God prepared beforehand**". And we are to "**walk in**" those "God- created Works".

So, the main thing in **John 14:15** is NOT the Obedience- but the Love for Jesus. And that Love for Jesus is a Gift from God. Humans do NOT normally or

naturally possess a Love for God like that. That Love is what Salvation gives to everyone, who has truly experienced the Miracle of the New Birth.

So, the Miracle; the great, powerful Work of God in our lives- is NOT that He empowers us to do Works in the earth. Our Works; our Obedience; our striving to be Righteous- those things are *automatic* to genuine believers. Jesus said we WILL keep God's Commandments- IF we truly love Jesus. No, the Miracle here is that earthly rebels are gifted with an indestructible Love for Jesus!

Now I agree that we have to struggle to get to this place in our minds and hearts. And that is *why* every saved person needs to be sanctified. But we must agree that "Joyful Obedience" is the *ultimate* Goal of every believer. So, while we may periodically sink down into either "Fearful Obedience" or even "Forced Obedience"- we must never take our eyes off the Prize: that God's Grace will NEVER stop working *in* us; and *with* us; and *through* us- until we actually Delight ourselves in God!

So, *ultimately*, the Love of God in Salvation is NOT seen the BEST- in God giving us more of this world's Goods; or in healing our sick bodies; or in God allowing us to become great in the earth. No, the Love of God in Salvation is seen the BEST- by God *causing* creatures of the dust to find the *highest* degree of our own Happiness- in God being glorified! And that brings God MORE Glory- than Creation itself or anything else God has ever done- or that He will ever do. And all of this is an ongoing Work of God's Grace in our lives.

Now another way of understanding all of this- is to say that the Glory of God is displayed or shown or manifested the BEST- when God showers His Grace on unworthy rebels in Salvation. And that is what the Apostle Paul meant in **Ephesians 1:5&6a** when he said,

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace ...

So, God has decreed that the Glory of His Grace will be praised. But the only way that the Glory of God's Grace will be praised- is if it is seen or revealed or shown. And the only way God's Grace will be seen- is if it is given. And the only reason God's Grace is given- is if there is a NEED for it to be given. And the only reason God's Grace is NEEDED- is if there are sinners, who have been *predestined* for Adoption. And this illustrates for us the importance of Grace. And it also shows us just how Evil False Teaching about Grace- really is.

Now as I told you last time, God has burdened my heart to take a short "vacation" from our "journey" through the **Epistle of James** to begin this new year

by preaching through a series of Sermons on the Danger of Heresies. And we see the great Danger of Heresies because of what Jude wrote:

Jude 3-4

3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now as we discovered, Heresy attacks the “Essential Truth” of the Bible. And so, the Danger of Heresy is that, if a person *understands* the Heresy and *believes* it- that person is NOT saved. Because every individual, who is genuinely saved, MUST understand and agree with- Essential Truth. And this is what Jude was talking about when he wrote about the “Common Salvation” in verse 3. All, who are genuinely saved- MUST be in “one mind and one accord” with Essential Truth.

And then, we also discovered that Heresy can’t be killed. It is a Belief; a Teaching- and so, even though the Christian Church SHOULD confront it; defeat it; and cast it out- sadly, Heresy will simply go somewhere else; and deceive somebody else. And so, we must be ever vigilant in equipping the saints of each succeeding generation- about the Dangers of Heresy.

Now by what Jude wrote in verse 4- we see that there always have been and there always will be, “certain persons”, who will creep into the Church “unnoticed”; who have been “long beforehand marked out for this Condemnation”. And these certain persons will be “ungodly persons”, who attack the Orthodoxy of biblical Christianity along two main lines:

1. The Grace of God
2. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

Now even though there are literally *hundreds* of Heresies on the earth today- there are really only seven major “roots” or “origins” of all the False Teachings that exist today. And those seven major roots are:

1. Legalism
2. Lawlessness (Antinomianism)
3. Gnosticism

4. Modalism
5. Arianism
6. Pelagianism
7. Socinianism

... and interestingly enough- all seven of these major Roots- attack either the Grace of God or the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the first three heretical Roots (Legalism; Lawlessness; and Gnosticism) first occurred while the Books of the New Testament were still in production. And so, the Apostles themselves defended the Faith against these “Doctrines of Demons”. And there are specific verses and passages and even entire Chapters that discuss the early battles against these three false Teachings. But while Gnosticism attacked both the Person and the finished Work of Jesus Christ- the first two Heresies attacked the Grace of God.

Now last week, we looked at the very *first* attack against the Grace of God called, the “Heresy of the Judaizers” or “Legalism”. And today, I want to look at the *second* Heresy to attack the precious Grace of God- which is- the Heresy of “Antinomianism” or “Lawlessness”.

Last week we saw that the Heresy of Legalism *ignores* God’s Grace by teaching that humanly initiated Works must be added to Grace- to make Grace effective. “Lawlessness”, on the other hand- *abuses* the Grace of God- by teaching that, since we are saved “by” Grace alone – absent any human Works- therefore, it doesn’t matter how we live our lives- after we are saved.

So, “Lawlessness” *belittles; insults; and attacks* God’s Grace by *rejecting* the Command of God- that those, who have *already* been saved (by Grace alone)- must *earnestly* strive for Obedience. So, “Lawlessness” attacks God’s Grace along several different lines like:

- Righteousness (Obedience)
- Repentance
- Holiness

... and because this Heresy is so Evil and so destructive- God used several New Testament writers to specifically address this Heresy. So, let’s look at what God the Holy Spirit moved on them to write.

Romans 10:9

that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

Now this seems very simple and straight-forward. Paul teaches here that “confessing” Jesus as “Lord” and “believing” in our hearts, that God raised Jesus from the dead- *results* in our Salvation.

But just how does that save us? *Anyone* can say, “*Jesus is Lord!*” right? Well, not exactly. Look what Paul also taught about this Confession from **1 Corinthians 12:3:**

Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

So, while ANYONE can repeat a phrase- no one can actually *mean/believe/trust* in what they are confessing- except God the Holy Spirit has *already* done a supernatural and miraculous Work in them to *empower* them to make this Confession and empower them to believe.

“Okay, Brother Blair, but believing in something; trusting in something; hoping in something; and meaning something- is invisible. We can’t see what someone is believing- unless they tell us. And even then- we don’t know their heart or their sincerity or the genuineness of their Confession. So, how do we know if these people actually mean what they are confessing? How do we know if they have truly believed?” Look what Paul said in **Romans 10:10:**

for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

So, here, the Bible says that if a person believes CORRECTLY- the result is: “Righteousness”. And Righteousness CAN be seen. Now “Righteousness” is simply another way to understand “Obedience”. So, being Obedient IS being Righteous. Jesus was Righteous- because He *obeyed* His Father. And we are Righteous when we obey God’s Commandments.

Now the great difference is that Jesus’ Righteousness was perfect; while our Obedience; our Righteousness is full of flaw and failure and even sin. So, it is better said that we STRIVE to obey; we STRUGGLE to obey; and we DESIRE to obey. Yet even at that- we DO obey- at least to *some* extent. And as we “grow in Grace”- the *extent* of our Obedience also grows.

So, a genuine belief in God’s Power (and Glory) to raise Jesus from the dead- *results* in the believer having both the power and the desire to obey God- which is what Righteousness looks like.

Now please understand that I’m NOT talking here about how we are made “fit for Heaven”. At the very moment that we put our Faith and Hope and Trust in

Jesus and in His finished Work (Justification)- God the Father takes the spotless Righteousness of God the Son and “imputes” or “credits” that perfect Righteousness to us. And at that moment- we are “declared to be Righteous” and we are able then to enter into Heaven with God. So, the imputation of Christ’s perfect Righteousness to us (by the agency of Faith alone) is what makes us to be “fit for Heaven”. So, it is Jesus’ Righteousness that allows us entrance into Heaven and NOT our own righteousness. This is the great Doctrine of “Justification (made Righteous) by Faith alone” that is the very heart of the biblical Gospel.

But the problem is that we are still- *personally*- sinful. Our own intrinsic righteousness is stained with Sin. So, we qualify for Heaven- based solely on the Merits of Christ’s Righteousness- even though we continue to dishonor God with our Sin. And the Latin phrase that the 16th Century Reformers used to discuss this was:

Simul Iustus et Peccator

... which says: Saved people are “Simultaneously Just (Righteous) and Sinful.”

So, we have an *external* Righteousness; a *foreign* Righteousness; an *alien* Righteousness that does NOT naturally belong to us that allows us to go to Heaven. This Righteousness belongs to Jesus. It NEVER belongs to us. It is NEVER *our* Righteousness. God drapes the sinless Righteousness of Jesus over us- and that is the only reason we can go to Heaven. How does God do that? By Faith alone.

Yet when we receive Jesus’ Righteousness- God leaves us here on the earth. Most of the time- God does NOT take us to Heaven immediately after we have been justified. Why? Why subject us to Temptation; and the opportunity to fail God; and the real possibility that we will not bring Glory to God? And the Answer is the Issue that MOST people in the modern Church just skip over today:

Ephesians 1:6a

To the praise of the glory of His grace

... which is simply another way of saying that we obey God’s Commandments out of our Love for Jesus; which is another way of saying that we obey God by *delighting* in God. And that is what brings forth the praise of the Glory of God’s Grace in the earth! Jesus said it like this in **Matthew 5:16**:

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

We must understand that the imputation of Christ's Righteousness to us- is invisible. It isn't seen. But what IS seen is our transformed life that now *delights* to do God's Will! And as we bear that kind of fruit- people see it- and the Glory of God's Grace is praised!

You see, we DO have our own personal Righteousness that is *intrinsic* to human beings. So, there are at least two different kinds of Righteousness that the Bible speaks about:

1. The perfect Righteousness of Jesus
2. Our own personal Righteousness

... and the Bible says in **Romans 10:10** that the outward Fruit; the visible Proof of correct believing is- Righteousness or Obedience. And that means- without this Fruit of Righteousness or absent this Proof- then the individual has NOT believed correctly and is yet in his sins.

Now yes, Paul was a huge proponent of the Righteousness of Jesus. But here, Paul was talking about our *own* Righteousness. And I can prove that by showing you two more aspects to this Truth.

One is that the "Righteousness" of **Romans 10:10** is NOT a one- time Event. No, the way the Greek is constructed here shows us that the Righteousness that results from truly believing- is an *ongoing* Reality. And that tells us that Paul was NOT teaching about the sinless Righteousness of Jesus here- which proves that Paul was speaking here of our own personal Righteousness. So, after we are saved- as our *believing* gets stronger and more biblical - the response is that we *ongoingly pursue* Obedience; and we constantly *strive* to obey God.

Now, secondly, we may periodically sense that our Obedience is stemming from a sense of Duty or a sense of Obligation. Or maybe we sense that our Obedience is being driven from Fear or even Force. And when we sense that- we quickly repent; and then we then rehearse the Gospel all over again in our minds and hearts- so we may engage in Joyful Obedience.

Now this verse also says that our Confession, "Jesus is Lord!" results in Salvation. And what Paul was meaning with that phrase was that our Confession is also NOT something that we make one time and we're done. No, this Confession is also an *ongoing* Reality in our lives. Now we also must understand that the phrase, "*Jesus is Lord*" has to do with us *publicly* and *repeatedly* confessing that Jesus is God Almighty in human flesh. So, there must never be any doubt that we believe and teach and trust that Jesus was NOT a Prophet; or a Teacher; or an

Example; or a “Good Man”; or a “Humanitarian”; or a Counter-Culture Rebel”; or an “Anti-Government Protester”. No, Jesus is God. Jesus is Deity. Jesus is the second Person of the Trinity- and is to be worshipped and adored. So, Jesus infinitely *better* and *higher* and *more important* than angels; or Prophets; or Patriarchs; or Moses; or Paul; or me; or you.

Now the way this is written in the Greek tells us that the result of our Confession is *ongoing*- in the sense that we NEVER stop. And that means that there is NO such thing as somebody truly confessing that Jesus is Lord and then, at some point later on- NOT confessing that. Now there are plenty of people, who say the words and then later on, retract them. But no one- who genuinely confesses that Jesus is God (by the Holy Spirit) later recants and is then lost.

And that tells you that the ongoing and public pursuit of both Salvation and Righteousness- AFTER a person has been justified- proves that the Belief and Confession were genuine. And the pursuit of both of these two aspects- *defeats* the Heresy of Lawlessness.

Now let’s look again where the Apostle Paul was used by God to attack and defeat the Heresy of Lawlessness from **Romans 5:17-21**:

17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

20 The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

21 so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now those deceived by the Heresy of Lawlessness will use this Passage to *correctly* teach that it was Jesus’ Obedience (Righteousness) that brought about Salvation for us. And their supposed “proof text” to justify their Heresy comes from **Romans 5:20** that says:

The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

Here the Apostle was teaching about the invincible Power of Grace that exceeds all of our Sins. So, the Heretics teach correctly about what Paul was teaching. But where they veer off course- is in the Conclusion they reach. Since Grace is invincible; and since it is ALWAYS stronger than our Sins (in the sense that we may be forgiven for any and all Sin)- THEREFORE, the Heretics teach- it doesn't matter if we continue to sin after we are saved. In fact, when Lawlessness runs its course- those deceived by it- begin to believe that the MORE they sin- they are actually *proving* Grace's Invincibility! So, those deceived by Lawlessness ALWAYS speak about how much they can sin and still be saved- rather than how much they can love and obey Christ because they are saved.

But the Apostle was crystal clear about how we are to understand this Truth about the Invincibility of Grace. Look what he said,

Romans 5:21

so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now the phrase, “so that” also means: “Therefore”. So, the Conclusion that we should reach because Grace is invincible- is:

... grace would reign through righteousness ...

So, Grace does NOT reign alone. That is NOT what the Bible teaches. No, Grace reigns (is invincible) “through” or “by” Righteousness- which is another way of understanding Obedience. So, Grace is *invincible*- Not by itself- but as it reigns through Righteousness- or as Obedience is manifested by Grace.

Now we still haven't fully defeated this Heresy yet, because the Obedience or the Righteousness that Paul was talking about here is NOT *our* Obedience- but rather, the Righteousness of Jesus. Okay, so how should we apply this Truth to *ourselves*? And how do we bring in OUR Obedience into the Truth about Grace? By the next Passage:

Romans 6:1

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

Now this is the crucial Question about *how* we are supposed to *apply* the “Reigning” or the Invincibility of God's Grace to our *own* lives- after we are justified. And this is the very Issue that the Heresy of Lawlessness deals with. Since we are saved “by” Grace alone; and since Grace is Invincible (It reigns supreme)- does it really matter how we live our lives after we have been

justified? And since we are “made Righteous” or “declared Righteous” because we trust in the Righteousness (perfect Obedience) of Jesus- then any effort we put forth to obey- actually *diminishes* the perfect Work of Christ and, in effect, make us to be legalists.

So, how does the Apostle answer this all-important Question?

Romans 6:2a

May it never be!

Now this is the strongest rebuke found in the Greek language. You simply cannot rebuke something any stronger than to use this Greek phrase, that was translated here as, “**May it never be!**”; but which is translated in other versions, as “**God forbid!**”.

So, “No!” those deceived by the Heresy of Lawlessness are wrong about their Conclusion to the Invincibility of God’s Grace. The Apostle Paul was moved by God the Holy Spirit to say, “**God forbid!**” or “**May it never be!**” And then the Apostle wrote 23-1/2 more infallible verses to explain why those deceived by the Heresy of lawlessness are wrong about their Conclusion:

Romans 6:2b- 23

2 ... How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!

16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,

18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.

22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

... and the “bottom line” to Paul defeating the Heresy of Lawlessness here is the connection between saved people dying to sin; walking in the “newness of Life”; and becoming a slave of Jesus; and Righteousness (Obedience). And you simply cannot read this Passage with any degree of honesty and continue to believe in the Heresy of Lawlessness.

Now another part of biblical Truth that is very neglected in our day- is the place that Repentance plays in the day-today walk of a genuine believer. Far too many in the modern church look at Repentance as being something we do one time- and then we’re done with it. But that is not at all what the Bible teaches. The Reality is that as we “grow in Grace” we see more Sin in our lives than when we were first justified. Now we were always guilty of these sins and, thanks be to God, we have been forgiven from them. But this where the true meaning of Repentance is so important.

Repentance has to do with a change of behavior based in a change of mind. So, Repentance is much larger than simply saying, “*I’m sorry*” about something. Now “godly sorrow” is a component of real Repentance- but unless there is a change of behavior based on a change of mind- then there really hasn’t been any real Repentance.

So, as we have been justified and begin to walk with God and read and study the Bible; and as we engage in godly Fellowship; and the Sacraments; and Fasting; and as we sit under real Preaching and Teaching- God the Holy Spirit takes the Truth of God’s Word and He “binds our Conscience”. In other words, God the Spirit brings us under Conviction. And at that point- we understand that something we are thinking or believing or doing or saying is *dishonoring* to Jesus and is a Sin.

Now, there are times, we can easily make changes; and stop the Sin; and replace it with an area of humble and joyful Submission to the Authority of Scripture. But other times- we have to make plans and change *other* things- so that we may be found in Obedience to the Word of God about whatever God convicted us about. And, sometimes, that takes time. So, even though we may not always be able to immediately change- we DO immediately begin the PROCESS of changing. And that effort- is also Repentance. So, Repentance is NOT only being successful at changing our behavior. It also includes the efforts we make that will *lead* to that change. And that glorifies God.

But this means that Repentance is and should always be- an *ongoing* Reality in our lives. To go for any length of time at all- without changing (Repentance) is NOT a Sign that we have already repented of everything. It simply means that we are consumed with Pride; and our own Self-righteousness; and we have become blind to the Reality of our lives; and God the Spirit is no longer bringing Conviction to us. And that is probably the single WORST place that any individual could ever be in.

Now another aspect of true Repentance is that it is, many times, visible. The act of changing our behavior is both visible and measurable. We can see it and others can too. And that is a great Blessing in the Church among the faithful that brings great Glory to God. When I see others changing- it gives me great Hope that I can change too. Likewise, when there are no outward and visible and measurable transformations off behavior being carried out- then Repentance all but dries up and withers away.

We should all beg God that “crying out for Forgiveness”; and “ongoingly being transformed into more and more of Christ’s Image” becomes *common* among us. Do we really think we have all “arrived” at full spiritual maturity and we have no more room to grow? Do we really believe that we no longer sin? Do we really believe that “having church” consists in all of us acting like we are not

burdened with the weight of our Sin; and that we don't struggle against it- sometimes unsuccessfully? I pray that God will visit the Covenant of Peace Church with a radical Honesty- so we can confess Sin openly and easily; and so, we can pray about it- unashamedly; and so, we can all rejoice when there is a deep and pervasive "Culture of Repentance" in our Church.

If genuine Christians can't confess Sin and turn from it- who will? And if the Confession of Sin is not active and strong and vocal and ongoing in the Church of Jesus- where will it be? And we should understand that it is impossible to engage in an ongoing activity of genuinely looking for things in our lives that offend God and then, by God's Grace, turning away from it- and be deceived by the Heresy of Lawlessness. Only by rebelling against the Word of God and neglecting to do what James tells us in **James 5:16**- may Lawlessness have a seat in our Church:

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

Now at some point just before he died- God moved on the Apostle John to write a Gospel Account; a Prophecy of the End time; and three small Epistles. Now, several years ago, God led me to go verse-by-verse through **1John**. And I found out that **1John** is actually a Book of what being saved looks like. There are at least ten different Tests that the Apostle John puts forth- so that everyone, who thinks he is saved- may compare what he believes and how he lives his life- with John's inspired Tests.

So, every verse in **1John** is written to people, who are already saved. So, let's take a sampling of what the Apostle John taught about the Heresy of Lawlessness:

1John 1:5-10

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

1John 2:3-6

3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

1John 2:9-11

9 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

10 The one who loves his brother abides in Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

1John 2:15-17

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

1John 3:2-10

2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

5 You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

1John 4:20&21

20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

1John 5:2&3

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

Again, you simply can't read these verses with any honesty and not see that the Teaching of Antinomianism is a terrible Heresy that dishonors the Grace of God.

But as we struggle with this- we must always remember that all of our Obedience is a Work of God's Grace and God's Spirit in our lives. And that means that, even as we struggle hard to obey- we must always realize:

Philippians 2:13

... it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.