

**28.05.06 Coromandel Baptist 10:00 a.m.**

***The Spirit's Harvest***

Bible Readings = Romans 12:9-21; Galatians 5:22-26

**Introduction:**

- (1) Last week we saw that we have been set free by the grace of God, through the work of Christ on the Cross, and that this freedom was for us to be free! "It was for freedom..." i.e. freedom is the goal of redemption.
- (2) This freedom has two elements: one is the negative aspect 'Do not be subject again'; and the other is positive aspect, 'Through love serve one another'.
- (3) We have been created in love by Love, to live in love. To do so (and thus to give and to serve) is freedom, to desist from love is bondage. The deeds of the Flesh are deeds devoid of love, as their basis is selfishness.
- (4) We note that they are deeds of the Flesh, rather even than deeds of our own bodies...i.e. the emphasis is on two opposing powers. The Spirit and the Flesh as spiritual entities are engaged in warfare, and by grace we have been redeemed from the one to be made members of the other (cf. Rom. 8:9).
- (5) We have been really brought into the realm of the Spirit, but if we give ear to a 'gospel' based on works of the Law, we will begin to walk 'according to the Flesh' i.e. according to that principle of selfish and self serving action, of which self justification is but the spiritual outcrop

***This week we see that as we walk by the Spirit, the harvest of the Spirit is manifest among us, but that this manner of walking by the Spirit is impossible but for the fact that we have been crucified with Christ.***

**1. The Way of a Man is Not in Himself**

(1) The first observation related to this passage is that human beings were never created to be self-directing entities. We were created to be contingent upon God, filled with the Spirit of God, hearing the Word of God.

- We do not have any independent existence, even on a physical level. We cannot sustain ourselves in any way.
- Jer. 10:23 is principal: no man can know or determine his own path. Every person must be hearing, or doing, according the direction that he is given, but this does not arise within himself.
  - This is in contrast with the modern notion of Man as a self-directing, self-defining, and self-determining creature.
- In other words, we must all 'walk' according to someone/something outside of ourselves. We are created in order to be mastered!

(2) Here, Paul indicates that there are two contrasting powers by which we may walk: Flesh and Spirit (Gal. 5:17)

- Remind ourselves of what these stand for in other Pauline contrasts such as darkness and light; condemnation and justification; law and grace; sin and Spirit; old Adam and last Adam; death and life; etc.
- Ultimately: according to the prince of power of the air, or according to the will and word of the Father (see Eph. 2:1 ff.) God has works that *he* has planned for us to do.

(3) We see the action of this very clearly in the life of our Lord, who walked according to the Spirit, to do things that his Father desired.

- Note the contrast in John 8:31-44
  - Compare with John 5:19, 30
  - Contrast with the desire of the evil one to get Jesus to worship him in Matt. 4:8ff.
- Jesus is the freest man who has ever lived because he walked fully by the Spirit, in utter dependence on God for his life, direction, ministry, teaching, power, word and works.
- His humanity is true humanity, as he is the only one who has walked fully according to the Spirit, and never according to the Flesh.

(4) So we see in the Son, the full fruit of the Spirit, i.e. the full character of the Father!

- We are not going to define and discuss all the elements of love, joy, peace, patience etc. Suffice to say that we can take love as the head and source of them all.
  - Compare with 1 Cor. 13. Love is patient, love is kind...etc.
- Simplest way to understand the fruit is to look at Christ. So he is patient, kind, good, faithful etc. All we have, we have from union with him.
  - My peace I leave with you. My joy I give to you. Etc.
  - John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing

## 2. Participation, not Simply Imitation

(1) In speaking in this way we are saying that the fruit of the Spirit comes from our participation in Christ, not primarily from our imitation of him. God's love is not detachable from God himself. We cannot live in love without being united to him in love.

- And here we come to a crucial point (literally!). In order to have the fruit of the Spirit, we have to be united to the Spirit on the one hand and severed from the Flesh on the other.
- This is why the fruit of the Spirit (and do not miss the simple point that this is the fruit *of the Spirit*, not our own fruit! It is the *Spirit's* harvest in our lives, not ours!) cannot be discussed as independent 'virtues' without talking about our relation to Christ and his cross.
  - See Gal. 5:24 cf. 6:14; 2:19ff.
- Now we can only see that this is so *by the Spirit*: compare Gal. 5:25a 'since, seeing that...we live by the Spirit...let us also...'
  - What does it mean to 'live by the Spirit'? It means to be brought to life through the Spirit. Why? Because we were 'dead' (in transgression and sin) and needed to be 'raised'! How? By hearing the word of the gospel that our sins have been judged.
  - Peter speaks of the Spirit preaching the gospel to us (1 Peter 1:12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things compare with John 16:7-15; Acts 2:33; 4:31; etc.

(2) So the Spirit brings to us the realisation of who Christ is and what has happened in his death: that we have been crucified with him, judged in him, buried and raised with him.

- So we hear with faith, and by one Spirit we are baptised into Christ. We have ‘put on Christ’ Gal. 5:26-27 in that act of believing (and this not of ourselves, but from the grace of God!).
- And so we have been united to the Vine by faith, and fruit of the Spirit begins to flow.
  - Very first evidence of it: you love God, when you hated him. You want to be with him, in the fellowship of his word, singing his praise, being with his people! This is not of your own flesh and certainly not of *the* Flesh.
  - Compare with John 3:6f. and then John 8:42

(3) Thus, walking by the Spirit is now our home. Walking according the Flesh is now foreign to us. Indeed, we do not want it, and do not desire it, however much we may stumble and fall into patterns which are more informed by the Flesh than the Spirit. We recognise that ‘it is not me, but sin within me’ (Rom. 7:20).

- Walking according to the Spirit means, then:
  - We walk according to the word of the gospel of Christ, by faith and not by sight.
  - Recognising that we have no power within ourselves either to desist from doing wrong or to do what is right...**But** we are *never asked to do anything of ourselves*.
    - The converse of this, by the way, is embedded in Gal. 5:26! Boasting and challenging one another. ‘Challenging’ is used only here and is also translated ‘competing’ or ‘provoking’. In Greek culture it was used as a law term: summoning one another to court, tribunal to explain one’s actions; putting slaves to torture...i.e. to either punish them or interrogate them; or to challenge someone to combat.
    - Both boasting and challenging are throwing a person back on themselves, comparing and contrasting one with another, thereby emphasising either one’s own glories or another’s deficiencies. God does not treat us this way in Christ!
  - And doing those deeds of love that the Spirit commands. Personal (e.g. Barnabas and others in Acts 4:36ff. cf. 5:4) and corporate (e.g. 2 Cor. 8 cf. Gal. 2:9-10)
- In all this, we give preference to one another in honour, as Christ has with us.