THE ENEMY WITHIN

JANUARY 10, 2016

And amen, and amen. If you turn with me in your bible to the book of Galatians, Galatians Chapter Five.  We will be looking at verses sixteen through eighteen this morning. The scripture has already been read in your hearing. I want to speak from a topic this morning ***the enemy within, the enemy within.***

Every day I have to deal with this enemy that is within, you too. I take this enemy with me wherever I go. I go to work, go to the store, when I’m driving, go to the bank, walking around the house. I go to bed with this enemy, I’m not talking about my wife ***(audience laugher).*** But I go to bed with this enemy. I wake up with this enemy. Go to the bathroom with this enemy. Sometimes this enemy talks to me. Tells me to do something that I know I shouldn’t do.

This enemy is a daily, daily enemy. The Christian, the Christian he has or she has three enemies. The world, Satan and this enemy right here. The world is a system that tells you and I that we cannot make it without Christ. The world is a system that shapes how you think, how you think and how you act and how you feel. The world wants you to adopt to their philosophy of living that determines whether or not you are going to be happy.

The devil, the devil on the other hand, he is in opposition towards the things of Christ. The devil uses the system of this world to accomplish his own goals. The devil cannot make you sin. Let me say that again. The devil cannot make you sin. What the devil does, he creates the environment so that you can sin. Let me say that again. The devil cannot make you sin. But he creates the environment so that you can sin. To lead you in the path of unrighteousness. So we need to get rid of this notion that the devil made me do it. Okay. I know back in the day you know some of us know Flip Wilson and he say that the devil made me do it. But the devil cannot make a believer sin. He can lead you into sin but he cannot make you sin.

The flesh, the flesh on the other hand is always with us. The flesh is the natural inward disposition to think and act and he wants to you feel or do those things that are contrary to the will of God. The flesh is simply another way of saying the sinful nature. You can’t get rid of him, he’s always there. The flesh or sinful nature is the natural bent for you to do that which is morally wrong the flesh is only concerned about pleasing self. That’s the flesh. It’s always it’s determine by, the flesh that is. It always want you and I which is morally and evil. In other words the flesh also does not want you to understand that God has saved us by his grace, and his grace alone.

Now Paul wrote to the church at Galicia these churches at Galicia because he was deeply concerned that they decided to leave the doctrine of grace to embrace the doctrine of works or legalism. But he always was concerned that this church or the churches they also had embraced they also had embraced a doctrine of antinomianism, simply means this that although you are saved by grace, it really doesn’t matter how you live. You are saved by graced and because you are saved grace now you have a license to sin. It doesn’t matter how you live as a matter of face that is a doctrine that’s being perpetuated today. That now that you’re saved by grace, God is not concerned with your behavior. But Roman’s six says that *“how shall we who are now dead to sin live any longer in it. Shall we go on sinning that grace may abound, NO, God forbid”* so you had these false teachers who had come into the churches to say that it doesn’t matter how you live. In other words they did not understand the power of grace. The power of grace gives you and I the ability to live a life of victory of sin and the flesh this enemy that is within us. This freedom we now have because of Christ because of grace we can now walk in victory. Now why is this import? I’m glad you asked this question. Why is it important for you and for me to have victory over this enemy that’s always within us. Why does it make a difference? It’s important because if you do not understand that you have victory over the flesh then you cannot live a life that is fruitful for the kingdom of God.

You cannot have an effective prayer life. If you don’t understand that you must have victory over this enemy that is within you. You cannot worship God in spirit and in truth if you don’t understand that you must have and walk in the victory that you already have in Christ. You cannot do ministry effectively, unless you understand I must have the victory and walk in victory in Christ in the life of the spirit. You see because sometimes you can do ministry in the flesh. You can do ministry in the flesh. I can preach in the flesh if I’m not careful. You can work in the church in the flesh. In other words it’s all about you and not Christ. So that’s why we must understand we have to get a grip or allow the Holy Spirit to get a grip on this enemy that lives within us. I cannot even pray right, I cannot have a powerful and effective prayer life if I’m not praying in the spirit. Don’t you know you can pray in the flesh? In other words when it becomes about you, that’s praying in the flesh. When are not concerned about other people. That’s praying in the flesh.

When I’m not thinking about the advancement of the kingdom of God. That’s praying in the flesh. So how, how, how do you have victory over the enemy that is always there. Verse sixteen tells us you must obey God’s word to live in the spirit. You must obey his word. Verse sixteens tells us, I say then “walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” Walk in the spirit, what spirit is his talking about. Is he talking about your human spirt? No he’s talking about the Holy Spirit. Walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. He’s saying here we need to always be walking in the spirit all the time. It’s not just a onetime act. You are always living or walking around depending upon the Holy Spirit. We must always depend upon the Holy Spirit, step by step. We must be consistent by walking in the spirit.

Whatever I go. Whether I’m at home, school, work, church. Because we bring the flesh even to church. Oh you brought him with you this morning, this enemy within, he’s always with us. I must be aware that the Holy Spirit must govern every aspect of my life. In other words the Spirit of Christ the Spirit of God the Holy Spirit he does not want us to compartmentalize our life and some of us we’re good at that, right. We come to church and we one way, and then we go home then we’re another way and on our job then we’re cussing folk out and cussing folk out even in the home and sometimes God forbid even in the church. But the Holy Spirit he does not want us to compartmentalize our lives. So he says walk in the Spirit, Saints, believers and you will not, I love this here. You will not fulfill the impulses of the flesh. Now the flesh is not always something that is negative but it also denotes our human bodies, amen. Because we are made by the flesh. But Paul here is using the flesh in a negative way. He’s says walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. So the power of the spirit my point, point number two. The power of the spirit is greater than the impulses of the flesh.

See once you and I are saved the flesh is not eradicated, in other words the flesh is not done away with. I know that and you know that and this is why you get upset with your husband and your wife. That is why you get upset with people. Right because the flesh is still there is the enemy that is within you. So but he says here if you walk in the spirit you will not fulfill the lust or the impulses of the flesh. In other words you can have victory over any addiction. Let me say that again, if you decide, got to deicide it’s a choice. If you decide to surrender to the spirit the spirit of Christ, it is impossible, this is what he said and this is what it means in the Greek. For you to fulfill the lust of the flesh. You can have victory. No matter what you are addicted too. Whether it alcoholism you can have the victory or alcoholism. No matter what the addiction is. Drug addiction you can the victory over it. All kinds of addictions. Eating disorders, come on now some of yall addicted to eating. Gambling, that’s an addition for some people. Pornography, have victory or pornography. You can have victory over tobacco. You can have the victory over shopping, some of yall addicted to shopping. Just, just got to go out. Can’t hold on to no money. I’m addicted to it. But if you yield to the spirit you can have victory over the impulses of the flesh that tells you I just go to have it, I can’t do without it. So he says, if you walk in the Spirit you will not satisfy the impulses of the flesh. To gratify the flesh when you submit to the spirit it is impossible for you to gratify the flesh because why, why I’m glad you ask that question. When Christ rose from the dead Romans Chapter eight, tells us because Christ conquered death the same spirit that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead for those us who are saved he lives in you.

Because of his resurrection his power lives in you, you can say no to the flesh. Because he conquered the flesh at Calvary. Amen. So now you have his spirit operating though you, his grace, and his grace gives you the power to live a life of victory. That is why in the book of Titus it says, Titus Chapter Two verse eleven. Now the grace of God Jesus Christ has appeared unto all men. Grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lust that you might live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world. So I can have victory so grace now the power of grace now gives you and I the victory to life a life of righteous Amen for his glory and for his honor.

So he says here now, now, the grace, grace, I love this. Grace gives us the victory over the flesh. Look at it with me in verse fifteen it says. That’s why it’s important also as well to walk in the spirit. He’s says in verse fifteen but if you bite, Paul says if you bite and devour one another beware less you be consumed by one another. That’s why it’s important for us to walk in the spirit so that we won’t’ fight with one another. Church folk fighting with one another. So he says here if you walk in the spirit you won’t be fighting with one another to the point where you are being consumed you eat one another up. And that’s why we must depend upon the Holy Spirit. Verse seventeen. To have victory over the enemy within you we must not ignore that there is conflict between the spirit and the flesh. Verse seventeen it says here “for the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh and these are contrary to one another so you do not do the things you wish.” So the flesh and the spirit they are contrary they are opposite of one another. Again the word flesh has two meanings. It means the human body but it also means those negative impulses that lies within our heart. Paul says in Galatians 2:20 “for I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live. Yet not I but Christ who lives within me and the life that I now live in this flesh”, he’s talking about here now this body, “I now live in this flesh I live by the faith by of the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.” But the flesh is always self-centered and never Christ-centered. Say that again, the flesh is always self-centered. We live in a narcissistic society, am I right about it. It’s narcissistic. Only concerned about me, myself, and I. I got this gift from my grandson, it’s called a selfie.

I don’t why he gave this to me, grandson. And my wife and I was at the bus stop riding and we saw this young girl and she was just (pastor motioning) it’s the culture we are in today that people are only concerned about primarily themselves. Selfies, iPhones, iPad, I this and I that. It’s about I. But, but when we understand that Christ, wants us or the life of the Spirit wants us to focus on something more importantly someone bigger than us, it’s not about you it’s not about me, it’s not about my agenda but about the agenda of the kingdom of God. The flesh and the spirit are contrary to one another.

When I study this it’s very interesting to me because they are contrary to one another which means that the flesh and the spirit they are deeply entrenched in their positons. Here me now. Both are determined that they will not move. They’re not moving. They have decided particularly the flesh and definitely the spirit that they are not moving. And the flesh says, well look I been here first. Why do you think it’s’ so difficult for us to yield to the spirit. Because the flesh says well look spirit, Holy Spirit, I know what Quintin likes, I know where he’s been, I know what arouses him, talking about you too. So, so, so, but, but God tells us in his word however, that when you submit to the Holy Spirit, although the flesh decided that I’m not going nowhere the flesh must submit to the will of the Holy Spirit. That what he says, that’s what the text says. Although they are contrary to one another. Although they have taken up their positions because the Holy Spirit, praise God is greater than the flesh. Am I right about it? So that’s why it’s important for us to stay focused on the spirit. You must live in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Stay focused. Verse eighteen stay focused on being led by the Spirit and not rules. What he says here in verse eighteen. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. What was Paul saying here, what’s going on with this. I’m glad you asked that question. See because what the law does, the law arouses the flesh. When you are focusing on rules, you see that’s why some of us are still in bondage even as Christians because we are focusing more so on the rules and not on the relationship. So, so, so he says here if you are led by the spirit you are not under the law. Why are you still trying to keep the law because the only thing the law can produce is death! Turn with me turn with me quickly to Romans chapter seven. Romans chapter seven. He says, he says here in verse four. *“Therefore, my brethren”*, and again he’s talking about being free from the law from verse one through four, he’s talking about being free from the law, he says *“therefore my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another”,* he’s talking about being married to grace, married to the spirit to *“him who was raised from the dead that we should bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh”* Now he’s talking about the flesh he’s talking about our human bodies. *“when we were in the in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear the fruit to death.”* This what he’s saying here. When I was trying to keep the law, because Paul was an expert at trying to keep the law. But he said I failed miserable why, because when I tried to keep the rules, it simply reminded me how much I fell short. But now that I am saved or living by the life of the spirit, I am free from the power of the law. And now I can live a life of victory in the spirit. That’s why when you come to Christ all you need to do now is submit yourself in the Spirit and you can live of life of victory and freedom in Christ.

So that’s why Paul said *“stand fast in the liberty that Christ has set you free and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage which is the law”.* Some of us are living in bondage and Christ has set you free from bondage and if you don’t realize it that you have this enemy within you as matter a fact yesterday. Give you an example, yesterday, last night I was watching the game. Pittsburg and Cincinnati and I was sitting there watching it and the enemy within me said look you need to watch the whole game. And I said, well maybe I should watch. But the Spirit says you need to get yourself up go back in your room pray and read and prepare for today. I’m keeping it real now, I’m keeping it real, and because the flesh says I need…to. This game was getting good. As a matter of fact, I don’t even know who won, who won…Pittsburg won. I asked my wife. Honey who won, she said how should I know? I don’t even know. But that’s the flesh and the spirit. Sometimes it goes with you too. You’re sitting there and the flesh says well, well, well, go on and watch TV and the spirit says get up and read your bible. They are contrary to one another. So the greatest enemy we have is the enemy within. Often times the devil is not even concerned about us because he flesh is always at work.

Unless you do what, you submit yourself to the Holy Spirit. So he says if you are led by the spirit you will not fulfill the law or the lust of the flesh. You are no longer under the law. Next week we’re going to talk about the works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit. But if you are going to have victor today you must submit your life to the spirit. Walk in the spirit, life in the spirit and you will not fulfill the desire of the flesh. Christ came to give you victory. But it doesn’t happen overnight. Some of you say it’s hard, it’s hard Pastor it’s hard, it’s hard you know. I’ve been on this for so long, I’ve been drinking for so long, I’ve been smoking for so long, doing this for so long. But Christ has promised us that if you submit to the Holy Spirit, he’ll give you victory. He’ll give you victory. Now anything let me say this again, anything you kill hurts, because the flesh inside is screaming “aww, no, aww no” that joker screams ***(audience laugher)*** come on now that joker screams because he flesh has become accustomed to fulfilling its lust. That’s what it does.

So when you kill him by the power of the spirit there is a freedom and there is a joy. The byproduct of killing the flesh is joy. Because you can neve satisfy the flesh. The tell you just one more time, one more hit one more smoke one more freak on just one more and you will find yourself doing it over, and over again, thinking that is was satisfying, it never satisfies. As a matter of fact, what is does is taking you deeper and deeper into bondage and you find yourself in a spider web and you can’t get out and you wonder how in the world did I get here. That’s the flesh, that’s the enemy within. So when you walking, wherever you go, don’t be fooled or don’t ignore the enemy within. Don’t always blame everything on the devil. Look at yourself. Look at the enemy within why I do the things that I do why I cop the attitude that I cop. That’s the devil, no that you, that’s you, don’t blame the devil.

As we stand on our feet.

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