



*Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30.*

*News:*

Wednesday classes 6:30-8:00

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**GALATIANS 5:24-26** ~ <sup>24</sup>Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup>If we live by the Spirit, let's follow the Spirit as well. <sup>26</sup>Let's not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

“Now,” for δέ (dě)... Pay attention!

“Those,” are all of those who actually belong to Christ Jesus.

And they have all, without exception “crucified their flesh along with its passions and desires.”

You have already died, so nail your hide to the cross!  
(Philippians 3:7-11).

God's love, which sent Jesus for you, was ἀγάπη (ä-gä-pā).

Obviously, since this is God's love for us, and since He has poured His love into us, then we are to love Him in the same way.

Yet, we take God's unconditional love for us and respond with an ἔρωσ (ě-řōs).

We think about salvation and the Christian life from a human point of view.

Christ's command is to Agapê, which is only possible when the Agapê of God completely overfills the Christian...

Psalm 23:4–6, אֶחָד טוֹב וְיָחַד (äx tōv vä-hě-sěd), only Godly good loyal love. Believe what the Holy Spirit within you proclaims about you and join in His chorus. (Romans 8:28).

Salvation is fully embracing Jesus as the One and Only Savior as well as the One and Only Lord. He provides 100% of our salvation and we surrender 100% of our life to Him.

Every Christian chose to die with Christ in order to be reborn into a life of Christ, which is a life of self-sacrificing service to others (Galatians 2:20).

If you are eternally alive by the Spirit, then be animated by Him.

Sibling Rivalry... The word “boastful” is κενόδοξος (kě-nō-dō-xōs), meaning vain glory.

When we think too highly of ourselves, we react to others...

- 1) Arrogantly...
- 2) Competitively...
- 3) Enviously...

Worry about your own walk by loving others (Philippians 2:12b&13a).

“Never \_\_\_\_\_ yourself to others.”

“It is not about \_\_\_\_\_; it's about \_\_\_\_\_.”

“You will be judged on how much of God's love you can \_\_\_\_\_, not on how well you kept the rules and policed others.”

“You will face Jesus \_\_\_\_\_.”

Galatians 5:24-26, 24Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25If we live by the Spirit, let's follow the Spirit as well. 26Let's not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

Paul starts us off in verse 24 with the innocuous word "Now," as the translation of the word Greek word δέ (dě). It is a word that is usually translated as the conjunction "but" or, once in a while, as the conjunction "and." There are even a very few instances where it can be reasonably ignored and left out of the English translation as some translations do here.

Here, the context tells us that in this case the word was intended as a hinge tying what came before to this statement in verse 24 as well as launching into what will come next.

Additionally, Paul was emphasizing the connection, essentially saying, look, after all that we've discussed and especially after describing the difference between living selfishly from the flesh and living selflessly from the Spirit, now then, get this...

Pay attention, there might be a test, this is foot-stomper important... “Now,” my friends, “Now.”

“Those,” and who are “Those”? “Those,” are all of those, without any exception... They are all of those people who actually belong to Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus the Lamb Who takes away the sins of the world, the Word of Almighty God Who was, and is, and is to come, Whose eyes burn like flames of fire, Whose feet are like burnished bronze glowing intensely in a furnace, Whose voice thunders like the roar of raging waters, and Whose face shines brilliantly like the sun in all its radiance. The One and Only mediator between God and mankind, the One and Only Lord and Savior of all whom God calls His Own...

“Those,” are the “Those,” who belong to Him, and they have all “crucified their flesh along with its passions and desires.”

If you are His, if you belong to Him, your death to self is already a done deal. Your flesh was crucified as a past tense fact. If you are a son and heir, it is finished for you, as much as for Jesus. Your life is over, willingly forfeited, abandoned, handed over,

crucified, dead and buried, annihilated, gone forever.

Six different times the Gospels record Jesus explaining that “If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it this way, “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die” (“The Cost of Discipleship”). I said that we are to take our freedom in Christ and use it to enslave ourselves to love. This is the same concept using a different illustration. You have already died, so nail your hide to the cross!

Christians talk about their plans... school, sports, marriage, kids, career, hobbies, retirement, their hopes and their dreams, their “passions and desires,” but that’s all over – it has been voluntarily sacrificed to gain Christ.

The Apostle Paul considered his old life nothing more than sewage compared to his new life in Christ and happily rejected it in order to gain Christ and attain to His Resurrection (Philippians 3:7-11).

Well, for a lot of people that's a tough pill to swallow and one that they didn't necessarily know that they were going to have to swallow.

I have said it many times, we need a disclaimer on Christianity. It's insane that we promote the Gospel like we're shady used car salesmen.

We only tell people what we think they want to hear in order to close the deal. We present to them a sugar-coated Christianity that is entirely about them – entirely about how accepting Jesus will personally benefit them.

It is self-centered and selfish and misleading. Last week I described the Greek philosophical concept of love by defining three types of love. Remember that God's love, which sent Jesus to His brutally savage death on a Cross for you, was ἀγάπη (ä-gä-pā).

ἀγάπη, that choice to bestow love upon another without qualification or condition; that altruistic divine love of God, which selflessly sacrifices for the other. ἀγάπη, that one hundred percent dedicated devotion directed for the benefit of the other and

zero percent sought as benefit to self... That ἀγάπη...

I used adoption in an idealistic sense to illustrate. Ideally, the choice to adopt is the choice to love, accept, nurture, and devote yourself to the betterment of a stranger. Ideally, that comes from the character to give to someone who cannot possibly give back, to love someone who cannot possibly love in return... not initially.

You adopt a child who doesn't even know you, let alone like you, let alone love you... And yet, you have already chosen to love them with everything that you've got, committing to loving them no matter what. Idealistically speaking, that is ἀγάπη.

Obviously, since this is God's love for us, and since He has poured His love into us, then we are to love Him in the same way. Can you see the Truth of that?

Yet, what we do is take God's unconditional love for us and respond with an ἔρωσ (ě-řōs) kind of love. Remember ἔρωσ, the 100% self-centered love of self that always seeks its own gratification and benefit while giving nothing back to the other?

What I'm driving at here, is that we generally think of Salvation in light of its benefits to us. We typically consider becoming a Christian as a way to avoid going to "H, E, double toothpicks." It's a means of evading the "outer darkness" where there is nothing but eternal "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

When we get pressed to think beyond that, we usually settle on how much better it is to go through this life with a little bit of Jesus in our back pocket. We get to pray for good stuff to happen and for bad stuff to stay away, plus we have reason to hope, where non-Christians don't. We go to church so that life will be better here and now but mostly because we get to go to Heaven, where we will each get our own McMansion replete with a butler, footmen, gardeners, drivers, cooks and a fleet of maids.

Bottom line, Christians, and non-Christians alike, which is to say, all humans, because that covers everyone, very predictably think about salvation and the Christian life from a human point of view – from a self-serving how does it benefit to me perspective. A what's in it for me kind of attitude, which is why



many non-Christians aren't interested in salvation or the Christian life.

They don't see the benefit to themselves as outweighing the perceived detriment to their autonomy, self-government, and free will to do their own thing. When you make it about the person, the decision for them becomes, is this a good deal for me?

For Christians it's even worse because that self-centered attitude of focusing on our personal benefit is the very thing that limits intimacy with the Lord and ruins relationship with others, which damages the church. We fail to obey the one command given by the Lord because we are too busy looking out for ourselves.

Again, this command is to Agapê, which is only possible when the Agapê of God completely overfills the Christian... When His love for you so overfills you that it then splashes out of you onto those around you proportionally to their proximity to you. If anyone gets too close to you, they're going to get soaked in God's love through you.

If this describes you the closest one to you in that event is God Himself. You reflect His Agapê love back to Him. Next, those closest to you will get the greatest benefit of God's love spilling out from you.

God's Agapê love pouring out of you will affect those people nearest to you most - your immediate family and friends, then your fellow Christians, starting in your own local church family, and then extending out to other Believers, and finally to those unbelievers whom God places in your path.

What should be obvious is since others experience God's Agapê love through you as it overflows out of you, you must first be completely filled. The degree that others receive Agapê from you is the exact same degree to which you have excess and excess only comes from being overfilled. Therefore, the limiting factor is your ability to be overfilled. The limiting factor is never God – it's us.

If your cup is not full, it cannot be overfull, and so Agapê love in you cannot reach even God, let alone others around you. Oh, Christians get good at faking it. Of pretending that they love, perhaps even

convincing themselves that they love, but it's an act. You cannot share what won't even fill your own cup.

The command of Jesus to Agapê love cannot be obeyed unless your cup runneth over. Psalm 23:4–6, 4Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. 5Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 6Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. My cup runneth over because I know that God has got me – That's why “I fear no evil.” I have accepted that He has accepted me, and that He loves me, and that nothing is going to change that. I have embraced His love for me and so my cup runneth over culminating in...

Verse 6, אֶחָד טוֹב וְיָחַד (äχ tōv vä-hě-sěd). Only Godly good loyal love; only Godly good, faithful mercy; only Godly good, unconditional acceptance; only Godly good, assured grace; only Godly good, divine Agapê, will continue to pursue me to overflowing “all of the days of my” existence. Again, because I know that “I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever.”

Can you see that the prerequisite for loving others is accepting God's love for you to the point that your "cup runneth over"? Can you further see that the prerequisite for that is believing God more?

Believe what the Holy Spirit within you proclaims about you and join in His chorus. Declare with the Breath of God that you are God's own son and heir in Christ Jesus. That God loves you, that He's got you, that everything is going in accordance with His perfect plan for His good purposes. Romans 8:28 is not, "we know that God causes all things to work together for good." It is, "we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

All good to those who love God are those who accept that He is God and trust Him as God. You see it is counterintuitive to be sure. It's all about Him, nothing about me. When I get that straight I can focus on Him and know that He is God, that He is good, that He is love and then I believe Him even when what He has to say concerns me – I believe Him.

You believe Him. It means that you believe God enough to obey Him by accepting His love for you. You choose to believe Him about you and regardless of what you think about yourself or what others think about you, you trust what God thinks about you. You trust God enough to allow Him to pour His love into you to overflowing so that you can have an overabundance of it to share with God and others. Now... Does that describe you?

In order to do that it must start with embracing and operating in the Agapê of God and, my dear friends, that foundation is not possible without understanding who God is and what God has done. We've talked a lot about that, but we must also understand what we have done in response to the Gospel and who we now are in Christ. That second part is the typically glossed over bit that the Bible addresses here.

As mentioned earlier, we don't typically tell people the whole Truth about what Salvation means for them before we sweet-talk them into accepting Christ, and we don't usually explain it after their salvation either. No wonder most Christians haven't

got a clue as to what it actually means to be a Christian. Specifically, what it is that they have done that results in who they are in Christ.

The only thing that is required in order to become a saved and Holy Spirit filled Christian is believing in Jesus. When we say it that way, as Jesus Himself said it, we mean it as a summation. In the same way that we can classify Christian maturity as self-control we can describe salvation as faith in Jesus.

In both cases, there is a whole lot more going on that is implied with the summary statement. To believe in the name of Jesus implies that we believe in the God of the Bible and that we accept His plan of salvation, which is the Gospel.

The plan of salvation is fully embracing Jesus as the One and Only Savior as well as the One and Only Lord. That means that He provides 100% of our salvation and that we kneel before Him as our Master. That implies obedience to Him and acceptance of the terms of the peace treaty, approval by you of the covenant of relational salvation that He has offered to you.

What that agreement entails is of course God's part, but here, it is our part required by the agreement itself in order for us to enter into it... What is that we have done? Every one of us who is bound for Heaven has agreed to terminate our own life in favor of a new life enabled by Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We chose to die with Christ in His death in order to be reborn into a completely different life – a life of Christ which is a life of self-sacrificing service to others even to those who viciously oppose you and murder you.

You had your life and chose to cast it off to be a Christian. Your life is over – you are dead. You gave up all of your personal hopes and dreams because you decided to die to self.

You decided to crucify your flesh, offering up your life for destruction and elimination. It's no longer you who lives, but Christ who lives through you just as Paul wrote back in chapter 2, verse 20a, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."

Your human passions and desires are no more because you voluntarily gave away your old life to be a member of the Body of Christ for all eternity. For today, here on earth, it means participating as a loving member of the church, thinking, speaking, and behaving, in accordance with family of God to which you belong.

When we try to live as our old self instead of as the new creation God has made us to be we cannot help but be driven by our passions and desires to the detriment of God, the church, the lost, and to ourselves.

Verse 25, “If we live by the Spirit, let’s follow the Spirit as well.” You are no longer cats – stop acting like cats – you’re better than that. How could it be any simpler?

If, not since, if we have been reborn from above as Christians and indwelt by the Holy Spirit as proof of that Truth... If. Paul wanted the Galatians to actually think about that and God wants us to think about it now. If we are His... Are you His? Do you fully belong to the Lord?



If you do, it is only because you have been born again by the Holy Spirit. If that is true, then live your life from that same Source. If we were made alive by the Holy Spirit, then let us act like it by conducting ourselves in accordance with the Holy Spirit's direction. It means march to the cadence that Holy Spirit calls.

Verse 26, "Let's not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another." Sibling Rivalry... Evidently, it isn't just for kids.

To follow the Spirit of God is to follow love and there is no love in sibling rivalry other than love of self at the expense of the other. Kids do this because they have the notion that there is only so much love that their parents have to give, and they want to make sure that they get their fair share and perhaps a smidgen more.

Christians don't have that excuse. There is no limit on God's love, no end to it, He will never run out of love. He has more than enough love for everyone and still has more love for you than you could ever possibly use. Far more, and the more you spend it lavishly by sharing with others, the more He pours in

constantly keeping you cup running over. It is impossible to even make a dent in the love account than God has set up in your name. The question is, do you believe that?

The word “boastful” is κενόδοξος (kě-nŏ-dŏ-xŏs), a hapax legomena made of the word κενός (kě-nŏs) meaning empty, lacking substance, and without content. Combined with the word δόξα meaning, splendor, majesty, and glory. Together it means empty praise, or vain glory. It means to be boastful when there is absolutely no basis for it – to be arrogant when the evidence declares only humbleness would be in order. It is a “ne'er-do-well,” “also-ran,” who has an overinflated sense of self-worth.

When we think too highly of ourselves, we react to others in one of three ways. First, with those we deem beneath us, we are boastful. In an inappropriately prideful manner, we act superior to them and treat them dismissively.

Second, with those whom we judge to be our peers, we act competitively towards them, challenging

them in a variety of ways in an effort to beat them at something and claim a petty victory.

Third, with those we consider superior, we diminish. We resentfully envy them until our viper-like jealousy finds a way to minimize their successes and amplify their mistakes. Bottom line we act like overindulged children making a mockery out of love. We sow chaos in the family of God.

Let me say this clearly and succinctly... Never ever under any circumstances compare yourself to others, never. The very first step in comparison is to judge others. We are not our brother and sister's judge because we can never have all the facts, and even if we did, we are incapable of judging the heart which is God's method.

Examine your own work as Paul will say in the next chapter, but not in comparison to anyone else's. Examine your work only in comparison to time. Are you exhibiting more of God's love today than you were a year ago. If not, you need to seek God more intentionally to increase your faith. If you are doing better than a year ago, thank God for His work in you, and keep moving forward.

It's that simple. Worry about your own walk, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you” (Philippians 2:12b&13a).

As I said, “Never compare yourself to others.” Since we're on pithy sayings, let me give you three more. Plainly speaking, my friends, they are: “It is not about you; it's about Him.” “You will be judged on how much of God's love you can redistribute, not on how well you kept the rules and policed others” “You will face Jesus alone.”

Taking those statements to heart encapsulate what Paul wrote in chapter 6 verses 1-5. I'll read them and I think you'll see that... I think that you'll also see how much of what we talked about today is reiterated there.

Galatians 6:1–5, 1Brothers and sisters, even if a person is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual are to restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you are not tempted as well. 2Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. 3For if anyone thinks that he is something when he is

nothing, he deceives himself. 4But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting, but to himself alone, and not to another. 5For each one will bear his own load.