

Homily 5 on Galatians

by St. John Chrysostom

St. John Chrysostom's homily emphasizes the importance of remaining steadfast in the freedom offered by Christ and fulfilling the Law through love rather than legalism.

Topics: "Christian Freedom", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the freedom Christ has given believers, warning against returning to the bondage of the Law. He emphasizes the folly of desiring slavery over freedom, ingratitude towards the Benefactor, and the impossibility of being justified by the Law after Christ's redemption. Chrysostom urges believers to stand firm in faith, not being entangled in legalistic practices like circumcision, which can nullify the grace of Christ. He highlights the importance of walking in the Spirit, producing the fruits of love, joy, and peace, while crucifying the fleshly desires. The sermon concludes with a call to humility, warning against vainglory that leads to envy, contentions, and strife.

Transcript

With freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast therefore .

Have you wrought your own deliverance, that you run back again to the dominion you were under before? It is Another who has redeemed you, it is Another who has paid the ransom for you. Observe in how many ways he leads them away from the error of Judaism; by showing, first, that it was the extreme of folly for those, who had become free instead of slaves, to desire to become slaves instead of free; secondly, that they would be convicted of neglect and ingratitude to their Benefactor, in despising Him who had delivered, and loving him who had enslaved them; thirdly, that it was impossible. For Another having once for all redeemed all of us from it, the Law ceases to have any sway. By the word, stand fast, he indicates their vacillation.

Ver. 1. And be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage.

By the word yoke he signifies to them the burdensomeness of such a course, and by the word again he points out their utter senselessness. Had you never experienced this burden, you would not have deserved so severe a censure, but for you who by trial have learned how irksome this yoke is, again to subject yourself to it, is justly unpardonable.

Ver. 2. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if you receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing.

Lo, what a threat! reasonably then did he anathematize even angels. How then shall Christ profit them nothing? For he has not supported this by argument, but only declared it, the credence due to his authority, compensating, as it were, for all subsequent proof. Wherefore he sets out by saying, Behold, I Paul say unto you, which is the expression of one who has confidence in what he asserts. We will subjoin what we can ourselves as to how Christ shall profit nothing them who are circumcised.

He that is circumcised is circumcised for fear of the Law, and he who fears the Law, distrusts the power of grace, and he who distrusts can receive no benefit from that which is distrusted. Or again thus, he that is circumcised makes the Law of force; but thus considering it to be of force and yet transgressing it in the greater part while keeping it in the lesser, he puts himself again under the curse. But how can he be saved who submits himself to the curse, and repels the liberty which is of Faith? If one may say what seems a paradox, such an one believes neither Christ nor the Law, but stands between them, desiring to benefit both by one and the other, whereas he will reap fruit from neither. Having said that Christ shall profit them nothing, he lays down the proof of it shortly and sententiously, thus:

Ver. 3. Yea, I testify again to every man that receives circumcision that he is a debtor to do the whole Law.

That you may not suppose that this is spoken from ill-will, I say not to you alone, he says, but to every one who receives circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law. The parts of the Law are linked one to the other. As he who from being free has enrolled himself as a slave, no longer does what he pleases, but is bound by all the laws of slavery, so in the case of the Law, if you take upon you a small portion of it, and submit to the yoke, you draw down upon yourself its whole domination. And so it is in a worldly inheritance: he who touches no part of it, is free from all matters which are consequent on the heirship to the deceased, but if he takes a small portion, though not the whole, yet by that part he has rendered himself liable for every thing. And this occurs in the Law, not only in the way I have mentioned, but in another also, for Legal observances are linked together. For example; Circumcision has sacrifice connected with it, and the observance of days; sacrifice again has the observance both of day and of place; place has the details of endless purifications; purifications involve a perfect swarm of manifold observances. For it is unlawful for the unclean to sacrifice, to enter the holy shrines, to do any other such act. Thus the Law introduces many things even by the one commandment. If then you are circumcised, but not on the eighth day, or on the eighth day, but no sacrifice is offered, or a sacrifice is offered, but not in the prescribed place, or in the prescribed place, but not the accustomed objects, or if the accustomed objects, but thou be unclean, or if clean yet not purified by proper rules, every thing is frustrated. Wherefore he says, that he is a debtor to the whole Law. Fulfil not a part, but the whole, if the Law is of force; but if it be not of force, not even a part.

Ver. 4. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the Law; you are fallen away from grace.

Having established his point, he at length declares their danger of the severest punishment. When a man recurs to the Law, which cannot save him, and falls from grace, what remains but an inexorable retribution, the Law being powerless, and grace rejecting him?

Thus having aggravated their alarm, and disquieted their mind, and shown them all the shipwreck they were about to suffer, he opens to them the haven of grace which was near at hand. This is ever his wont, and he shows that in this quarter salvation is easy and secure, subjoining the words,

Ver. 5. For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness.

We need none of those legal observances, he says; faith suffices to obtain for us the Spirit, and by Him righteousness, and many and great benefits.

Ver. 6. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love.

Observe the great boldness with which he now encounters them; Let him that has put on Christ, he says, no longer be careful about such matters. Having before said that Circumcision was hurtful, how is it that he now considers it indifferent? It is indifferent as to those who had it previously to the Faith, but not as to those who are circumcised after the Faith was given. Observe too the view in which he places it, by setting it by the side of Uncircumcision; it is Faith that makes the difference. As in the selection of wrestlers, whether they be hook-nosed or flat-nosed, black or white, is of no importance in their trial, it is only necessary to seek that they be strong and skilful; so all these bodily accidents do not injure one who is to be enrolled under the New Covenant, nor does their presence assist him.

What is the meaning of working through love? Here he gives them a hard blow, by showing that this error had crept in because the love of Christ had not been rooted within them. For to believe is not all that is required, but also to abide in love. It is as if he had said, Had you loved Christ as you ought, you would not have deserted to bondage, nor abandoned Him who redeemed you, nor treated with contumely Him who gave you freedom. Here he also hints at those who have plotted against them, implying that they would not have dared to do so, had they felt affection towards them. He wishes too by these words to correct their course of life.

Ver. 7. You were running well; who did hinder you?

This is not an interrogation, but an expression of doubt and sorrow. How has such a course been cut short? Who has been able to do this? You who were superior to all and in the rank of teachers, have not even continued in the position of disciples. What has happened? Who could do this? These are rather the words of one who is exclaiming and lamenting, as he said before, Who did bewitch you? Galatians 3:1

Ver. 8. This persuasion came not of him that calls you.

He who called you, called you not to such fluctuations, he did not lay down a Law, that you should judaize. Then, that no one might object, Why do you thus magnify and aggravate the matter by your words; one commandment only of the Law have we kept, and yet you make this great outcry? hear how he terrifies them, not by things present but future in these words:

Ver. 9. A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

And thus this slight error, he says, if not corrected, will have power (as the leaven has with the lump) to lead you into complete Judaism.

Ver. 10. I have confidence to you-ward in the Lord, that you will be none otherwise minded.

He does not say, you are not minded, but, you will not be minded; that is, you will be set right. And how does he know this? He says not I know, but I trust in God, and invoking His aid in order to your correction, I am in hopes; and he says, not merely, I have confidence in the Lord, but, I have confidence towards you in the Lord. Every where he connects complaint with his praises; here it is as if he had said, I know my disciples, I know your readiness to be set right. I have good hopes, partly because of the Lord who suffers

nothing, however trivial, to perish, partly because of you who are quickly to recover yourselves. At the same time he exhorts them to use diligence on their own parts, it not being possible to obtain aid from God, if our own efforts are not contributed.

Ver. 10. But he that troubles you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

Not only by words of encouragement, but by uttering a curse or a prophecy against their teachers, he applies to them an incentive. And observe that he never mentions the name of these plotters, that they might not become more shameless. His meaning is as follows. Not because you will be none otherwise minded, are the authors of your seduction relieved from punishment. They shall be punished; for it is not proper that the good conduct of the one should become an encouragement to the evil disposition of the other. This is said that they might not make a second attempt upon others. And he says not merely, he that troubles, but, whosoever he be, in the way of aggravation.

Ver. 11. But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?

Observe how clearly he exonerates himself from the charge, that in every place he judaized and played the hypocrite in his preaching. Of this he calls them as witnesses; for you know, he says, that my command to abandon the Law was made the pretext for persecuting me. If I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? For this is the only charge which they of the Jewish descent have to bring against me. Had I permitted them to receive the Faith, still retaining the customs of their fathers, neither believers nor unbelievers would have laid snares for me, seeing that none of their own usages were disturbed. What then! Did he not preach circumcision? Did he not circumcise Timothy? Truly he did. How then can he say, I preach it not? Here observe his accuracy; he says not, I do not perform circumcision, but, I preach it not, that is, I do not bid men so to believe. Do not therefore consider it any confirmation of your doctrine, for though I circumcised, I did not preach circumcision.

Ver. 11. Then has the stumbling block of the cross been done away.

That is, if this which you assert be true, the obstacle, the hindrance, is removed; for not even the Cross was so great an offense to the Jews, as the doctrine that their father's customs ought not to be obeyed. When they brought Stephen before the council, they said not that this man adores the Crucified, but that he speaks against this holy place and the Law. Acts 6:13 And it was of this they accused Jesus, that He broke the Law. Wherefore Paul says, If Circumcision be conceded, the strife you are involved in is appeased; hereafter no enmity to the Cross and our preaching remains. But why do they bring this charge against us, while waiting day after day to murder us? It is because I brought an uncircumcised man into the Temple Acts 21:29 that they fell upon me. Am I then, he says, so senseless, after giving up the point of Circumcision, vainly and idly to expose myself to such injuries, and to place such a stumbling-block before the Cross? For you observe, that they attack us for nothing with such vehemence as about Circumcision. Am I then so senseless as to suffer affliction for nothing at all, and to give offense to others? He calls it the offense of the Cross, because it was enjoined by the doctrine of the Cross; and it was this which principally offended the Jews, and hindered their reception of the Cross, namely, the command to abandon the usages of their fathers.

Ver. 12. I would that they which unsettle you, would even cut themselves off.

Observe how bitterly he speaks here against their deceivers. At the outset he directed his charge against those who were deceived, and called them foolish, once and again. Now, having sufficiently corrected and

instructed them, he turns to their deceivers. And you should remark his wisdom in the manner in which he admonishes and chastens the former as his own children, and as capable of receiving correction, but their deceivers he cuts off, as aliens and incurably depraved. And this he does, partly, when he says, he shall bear his judgment whosoever he be; partly when he utters the imprecation against them, I would that they which unsettle you would even cut themselves off.

And he says well that unsettle you. For they had compelled them to abandon their own fatherland, their liberty, and their heavenly kindred, and to seek an alien and foreign one; they had cast them out of Jerusalem which is above and free, and compelled them to wander forth as captives and emigrants. On this account he curses them; and his meaning is as follows, For them I have no concern, A man that is heretical after the first and second admonition refuse. Titus 3:10 If they will, let them not only be circumcised, but mutilated.

Where then are those who dare to mutilate themselves ; seeing that they draw down the Apostolic curse, and accuse the workmanship of God, and take part with the Manichees? For the latter call the body a treacherous thing, and from the evil principle; and the former by their acts give countenance to these wretched doctrines, cutting off the member as being hostile and treacherous. Ought they not much rather to put out the eyes, for it is through the eyes that desire enters the soul?

But in truth neither the eye nor any other part of us is to blame, but the depraved will only. But if you will not allow this, why do you not mutilate the tongue for blasphemy, the hands for rapine, the feet for their evil courses, in short, the whole body? For the ear enchanted by the sound of a flute has often enervated the soul; and the perception of a sweet perfume by the nostrils has bewitched the mind, and made it frantic for pleasure. Yet this would be extreme wickedness and satanic madness.

The evil spirit, ever delighting in slaughter, has seduced them to crush the instrument, as if its Maker had erred, whereas it was only necessary to correct the unruly passion of the soul. How then does it happen, one may say, that when the body is pampered, lust is inflamed? Observe here too that it is the sin of the soul, for to pamper the flesh is not an act of the flesh but of the soul, for if the soul choose to mortify it, it would possess absolute power over it. But what you do is just the same as if one seeing a man lighting a fire, and heaping on fuel, and setting fire to a house, were to blame the fire, instead of him who kindled it, because it had caught this heap of fuel, and risen to a great height.

Yet the blame would attach not to the fire but to the one who kindled it; for it was given for the purpose of dressing food, affording light, and other like ministries, not for burning houses. In like manner desire is implanted for the rearing of families and the ensuring of life, not for adultery, or fornication, or lasciviousness; that a man may become a father, not an adulterer; a lawful husband, not a seducer; leaving heirs after him, not doing damage to another man's. For adultery arises not from nature, but from wantonness against nature, which prescribes the use not the misuse.

These remarks I have not made at random, but as a prelude to a dispute, as skirmishing against those who assert that the workmanship of God is evil, and who neglecting the sloth of the soul, madly inveigh against the body, and traduce our flesh, whereof Paul afterwards discourses, accusing not the flesh, but devilish thoughts.

Ver. 13. For you, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh.

Henceforward he appears to digress into a moral discourse, but in a new manner, which does not occur in any other of his Epistles. For all of them are divided into two parts, and in the first he discusses doctrine, in the last the rule of life, but here, after having entered upon the moral discourse, he again unites with it the doctrinal part. For this passage has reference to doctrine in the controversy with the Manichees. What is the meaning of, Use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh? Christ has delivered us, he says, from the yoke of bondage, He has left us free to act as we will, not that we may use our liberty for evil, but that we may have ground for receiving a higher reward, advancing to a higher philosophy. Lest any one should suspect, from his calling the Law over and over again a yoke of bondage, and a bringing on of the curse, that his object in enjoining an abandonment of the Law, was that one might live lawlessly, he corrects this notion, and states his object to be, not that our course of life might be lawless, but that our philosophy might surpass the Law. For the bonds of the Law are broken, and I say this not that our standard may be lowered, but that it may be exalted. For both he who commits fornication, and he who leads a virgin life, pass the bounds of the Law, but not in the same direction; the one is led away to the worse, the other is elevated to the better; the one transgresses the Law, the other transcends it. Thus Paul says that Christ has removed the yoke from you, not that you may prance and kick, but that though without the yoke you may proceed at a well-measured pace. And next he shows the mode whereby this may be readily effected; and what is this mode? He says,

Ver. 13. But through love be servants one to another.

Here again he hints that strife and party-spirit, love of rule and presumptuousness, had been the causes of their error, for the desire of rule is the mother of heresies. By saying, Be servants one to another, he shows that the evil had arisen from this presumptuous and arrogant spirit, and therefore he applies a corresponding remedy. As your divisions arose from your desire to domineer over each other, serve one another; thus will you be reconciled again. However, he does not openly express their fault, but he openly tells them its corrective, that through this they may become aware of that; as if one were not to tell an immodest person of his immodesty, but were continually to exhort him to chastity. He that loves his neighbor as he ought, declines not to be servant to him more humbly than any servant. As fire, brought into contact with wax, easily softens it, so does the warmth of love dissolve all arrogance and presumption more powerfully than fire. Wherefore he says not, love one another, merely, but, be servants one to another, thus signifying the intensity of the affection. When the yoke of the Law was taken off them that they might not caper off and away another was laid on, that of love, stronger than the former, yet far lighter and pleasanter; and, to point out the way to obey it, he adds;

Ver. 14. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Seeing that they made so much of the Law, he says, If you wish to fulfill it, do not be circumcised, for it is fulfilled not in circumcision but in love. Observe how he cannot forget his grief, but constantly touches upon what troubled him, even when launched into his moral discourse.

Ver. 15. But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another.

That he may not distress them, he does not assert this, though he knew it was the case, but mentions it ambiguously. For he does not say, Inasmuch as you bite one another, nor again does he assert, in the clause following, that they shall be consumed by each other; but take heed that you be not consumed one of another, and this is the language of apprehension and warning, not of condemnation. And the words which he uses are expressly significant; he says not merely, you bite, which one might do in a passion, but

also you devour, which implies a bearing of malice. To bite is to satisfy the feeling of anger, but to devour is a proof of the most savage ferocity. The biting and devouring he speaks of are not bodily, but of a much more cruel kind; for it is not such an injury to taste the flesh of man, as to fix one's fangs in his soul. In proportion as the soul is more precious than the body, is damage to it more serious. Take heed that you be not consumed one of another. For those who commit injury and lay plots, do so in order to destroy others; therefore he says, Take heed that this evil fall not on your own heads. For strife and dissensions are the ruin and destruction as well of those who admit as of those who introduce them, and eats out every thing worse than a moth does.

Ver. 16. But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Here he points out another path which makes duty easy, and secures what had been said, a path whereby love is generated, and which is fenced in by love. For nothing, nothing I say, renders us so susceptible of love, as to be spiritual, and nothing is such an inducement to the Spirit to abide in us, as the strength of love. Therefore he says, Walk by the Spirit and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh: having spoken of the cause of the disease, he likewise mentions the remedy which confers health. And what is this, what is the destruction of the evils we have spoken of, but the life in the Spirit? Hence he says, Walk by the Spirit and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Ver. 17. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary the one to the other: that you may not do the things that you would.

Here some make the charge that the Apostle has divided man into two parts, and that he states the essence of which he is compounded to be conflicting with itself, and that the body has a contest with the soul. But this is not so, most certainly; for by the flesh, he does not mean the body; if he did, what would be the sense of the clause immediately following, for it lusts, he says, against the Spirit? yet the body moves not, but is moved, is not an agent, but is acted upon. How then does it lust, for lust belongs to the soul not to the body, for in another place it is said, My soul longs, Psalm 84:2 and, Whatsoever your soul desires, I will even do it for you, 1 Samuel 20:4 and, Walk not according to the desires of your heart, and, So pants my soul. Psalm 42:1 Wherefore then does Paul say, the flesh lusts against the Spirit? he is wont to call the flesh, not the natural body but the depraved will, as where he says, But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, Romans 8:8-9 and again, They that are in the flesh cannot please God. What then? Is the flesh to be destroyed? Was not he who thus spoke clothed with flesh? Such doctrines are not of the flesh, but from the Devil, for he was a murderer from the beginning. John 8:44 What then is his meaning? It is the earthly mind, slothful and careless, that he here calls the flesh, and this is not an accusation of the body, but a charge against the slothful soul. The flesh is an instrument, and no one feels aversion and hatred to an instrument, but to him who abuses it. For it is not the iron instrument but the murderer, whom we hate and punish. But it may be said that the very calling of the faults of the soul by the name of the flesh is in itself an accusation of the body. And I admit that the flesh is inferior to the soul, yet it too is good, for that which is inferior to what is good may itself be good, but evil is not inferior to good, but opposed to it. Now if you are able to prove to me that evil originates from the body, you are at liberty to accuse it; but if your endeavor is to turn its name into a charge against it, you ought to accuse the soul likewise. For he that is deprived of the truth is called the natural man. 1 Corinthians 2:14 and the race of demons the spirits of wickedness. Ephesians 6:12

Again, the Scripture is wont to give the name of the Flesh to the Mysteries of the Eucharist, and to the whole Church, calling them the Body of Christ. Colossians 1:24 Nay, to induce you to give the name of

blessings to the things of which the flesh is the medium, you have only to imagine the extinction of the senses, and you will find the soul deprived of all discernment, and ignorant of what it before knew. For if the power of God is since the creation of the world clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, Romans 1:20 how could we see them without eyes? And if faith comes of hearing, Romans 10:17 how shall we hear without ears? And preaching depends on making circuits wherein the tongue and feet are employed. For how shall they preach, except they be sent? Romans 10:15 In the same way writing is performed by means of the hands. Do you not see that the ministry of the flesh produces for us a thousand benefits? In his expression, the flesh lusts against the Spirit, he means two mental states. For these are opposed to each other, namely virtue and vice, not the soul and the body. Were the two latter so opposed they would be destructive of one another, as fire of water, and darkness of light. But if the soul cares for the body, and takes great forethought on its account, and suffers a thousand things in order not to leave it, and resists being separated from it, and if the body too ministers to the soul, and conveys to it much knowledge, and is adapted to its operations, how can they be contrary, and conflicting with each other? For my part, I perceive by their acts that they are not only not contrary but closely accordant and attached one to another. It is not therefore of these that he speaks as opposed to each other, but he refers to the contest of bad and good principles. cf. Romans 7:23 To will and not to will belongs to the soul; wherefore he says, these are contrary the one to the other, that you may not suffer the soul to proceed in its evil desires. For he speaks this like a Master and Teacher in a threatening way.

Ver. 18. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

If it be asked in what way are these two connected, I answer, closely and plainly; for he that has the Spirit as he ought, quenches thereby every evil desire, and he that is released from these needs no help from the Law, but is exalted far above its precepts. He who is never angry, what need has he to hear the command, You shall not kill? He who never casts unchaste looks, what need has he of the admonition, You shall not commit adultery? Who would discourse about the fruits of wickedness with him who had plucked up the root itself? For anger is the root of murder, and of adultery the inquisitive gazing into faces. Hence he says, If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law; wherein he appears to me to have pronounced a high and striking eulogy of the Law, if, at least, the Law stood, according to its power, in the place of the Spirit before the Spirit's coming upon us. But we are not on that account obliged to continue apart with our schoolmaster. Then we were justly subject to the Law, that by fear we might chasten our lusts, the Spirit not being manifested; but now that grace is given, which not only commands us to abstain from them, but both quenches them, and leads us to a higher rule of life, what more need is there of the Law? He who has attained an exalted excellence from an inner impulse, has no occasion for a schoolmaster, nor does any one, if he is a philosopher, require a grammarian. Why then do you so degrade yourselves, as now to listen to the Law, having previously given yourselves to the Spirit?

Ver. 19, 20, 21. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wrath, factions, divisions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I forewarn you even as I did forewarn you, that they which practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Answer me now, you that accusest your own flesh, and supposest that this is said of it as of an enemy and adversary. Let it be allowed that adultery and fornication proceed, as you assert, from the flesh; yet hatred, variance, emulations, strife, heresies, and witchcraft, these arise merely from a depraved moral choice. And so it is with the others also, for how can they belong to the flesh? You observe that he is not here speaking of the flesh, but of earthly thoughts, which trail upon the ground. Wherefore also he alarms them

by saying, that they which practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If these things belonged to nature and not to a bad moral choice, his expression, they practice, is inappropriate, it should be, they suffer. And why should they be cast out of the kingdom, for rewards and punishments relate not to what proceeds from nature but from choice?

Ver. 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.

He says not, the work of the Spirit, but, the fruit of the Spirit. Is the soul, however, superfluous? The flesh and the Spirit are mentioned, but where is the soul? Is he discoursing of beings without a soul? For if the things of the flesh be evil, and those of the Spirit good, the soul must be superfluous. By no means, for the mastery of the passions belongs to her, and concerns her; and being placed amid vice and virtue, if she has used the body fitly, she has wrought it to be spiritual, but if she separate from the Spirit and give herself up to evil desires, she makes herself more earthly. You observe throughout that his discourse does not relate to the substance of the flesh, but to the moral choice, which is or is not vicious. And why does he say, the fruit of the Spirit? it is because evil works originate in ourselves alone, and therefore he calls them works, but good works require not only our diligence but God's loving kindness. He places first the root of these good things, and then proceeds to recount them, in these words, Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. For who would lay any command on him who has all things within himself, and who has love for the finished mistress of philosophy? As horses, who are docile and do every thing of their own accord, need not the lash, so neither does the soul, which by the Spirit has attained to excellence, need the admonitions of the Law. Here too he completely and strikingly casts out the Law, not as bad, but as inferior to the philosophy given by the Spirit.

Ver. 24. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

That they might not object, And who is such a man as this? he points out by their works those who have attained to this perfection, here again giving the name of the flesh to evil actions. He does not mean that they had destroyed their flesh, otherwise how were they going to live? For that which is crucified is dead and inoperative, but he indicates the perfect rule of life. For the desires, although they are troublesome, rage in vain. Since then such is the power of the Spirit, let us live therein and be content therewith, as he adds himself,

Ver. 25. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk,

-- being governed by His laws. For this is the force of the words let us walk, that is, let us be content with the power of the Spirit, and seek no help from the Law. Then, signifying that those who would fain have introduced circumcision were actuated by ambitious motives, he says,

Ver. 26. Let us not be vainglorious, which is the cause of all evils, provoking one another to contentions and strife, envying one another, for from vainglory comes envy and from envy all these countless evils.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net