

Conquering the Dilemma Introduction (Part 1)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 September 2018

Preacher: Willard Lyons

[0 : 00] Music This morning, I'm going to use the message today to serve as an introduction, if you will, to a study that we're going to begin this Wednesday night, calling it simply Conquering the Dilemma of Christian Living.

And so we're going to use the message this morning to kind of kick that off. Unbeknown to Brother Mike Dersham, Sunday School lesson this morning was an introduction to this introduction to the study.

And that reminded me, I was thinking just about that a minute ago, and it reminded me of something I heard on the radio not too long ago. A preacher was preaching and was making a mention that somebody had told him that sometimes in building sermons, it's like building a house, but sometimes the front porch becomes bigger than the house itself.

And so, you know, you've got an introduction to an introduction to the study. So I want to invite you, though, to come on Wednesday night. Don't know how many weeks it's going to take to get through it, but it's going to be a study in the book of Esther.

I know that Brother Lee had, about a year ago, finished up my first study in Esther, but this is going to be different.

[1 : 49] We're going to find that there's an allegory in the book of Esther that deals with the matter of Christian living and Christian life. And beautiful picture. And so we'll be dealing with that.

So I invite you to come and be a part of that on Wednesday nights at 630. And so be looking forward to that, if you will.

All right. So to begin with, turning your Bibles to the book of Galatians, chapter 2. Our Sunday school class has been studying in Galatians. But I felt that this is one verse in particular would be a great way to kick off the study we're going to be looking at.

So let me invite you to stand together as we honor God's word and look at Galatians, chapter 2.

Begin in verse 15, just for the setting and the context of what the scripture is saying.

We who are Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.

[2 : 58] Even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law. For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

But if while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

For I build again the things which I, if I build again the things I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God.

Now verse 20 is the focal point for us. For I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

And the life which now I, I now live in the flesh. I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

[3 : 57] Pray together with me, if you will. Father, we thank you again today for your love and grace and your mercy and goodness to us. And for the privilege that you've given us today to just be together to hear from you, to worship you.

Lord, we're not here by mistake or circumstances that have just brought us here. But you've got us here today. You've drawn us here. And you have a purpose in doing that.

So I just ask that you secure that purpose in every heart, every life that's here. Enable us not only to hear what you're saying through your word, but to make the personal application as is appropriate for us as you speak to us through your word.

So thank you for that. And again, ask your blessings upon Pastor Mike. And ask that you continue not only to watch over he and his team, but also to give clarity of purpose that you have in that trip and in the partnership.

So just work your marvelous work in all of that. And we're going to thank you and praise you for what you do there and for here this morning as well. And it's in Jesus' name, for his sake we do pray.

[5 : 07] Amen. Thank you and be seated if you will. that he gives us, gives us freedom from the guilt as well as the penalty of our sin.

That's a tremendous thing. We recognize that when Jesus died on the cross and he was slain there for us, that that secured for us freedom from the penalty of sin.

He died in our place so that we do not have to die spiritually. But again, that's not all there is to the process. Paul says in the book of Romans that he rose for our justification.

That is not only freedom from the penalty, but freedom from the guilt as well. Amen. Aren't you glad that he does that so thoroughly and so completely?

Freedom from the penalty, freedom from the guilt as well, so that he does not recognize us as sinners. He recognizes those that have placed faith and trust in Christ as justified saints of God.

[6 : 42] Amen? Amen? Thank you. Yeah. Yeah. Now, let me step on some toes here just a moment. Can I do that already?

We've got to be careful in things we say, because a lot of times we say things that we don't recognize or that we don't think it through. How many times have we heard people, and some of us have done that.

I haven't done that. I haven't done that. But the old phrase, we're simply sinners saved by grace.

Now, I understand, I understand the implication of that, and it's a true implication.

But I think it should be, we were sinners, but we've been saved by grace. Amen? We're justified, freed from the penalty and the guilt of sin.

Now, because sometimes I think we use that phrase as a means of an excuse, and we're going to look at that more a little bit later.

[7 : 53] But thankfully, God, when we place faith and trust in him, and he brings us to that point that we can do that, then he does that work of justification, freeing us from the guilt and penalty of sin.

And then he gives us a positive righteousness, which is the righteousness of Christ, so that we enter into a right standing with God.

Great stuff. But not only that, he does something else to me that is tremendously marvelous. He places within us the divine spirit, the spirit of God, the Holy Spirit.

He places within the life of the believer. And he does that for a purpose, because there are certain aspects of the work of the spirit of God that he does within the life of the believer.

Or he desires to do, I should say, and seeks to do. And that is, I guess, basically to guide us, lead us, direct us into the designed will of God, and then also to empower us to be able to satisfy whatever that will is, to have the performance of it done in our life.

[9 : 10] So it's a tremendous picture of what he does. But also, in Galatians chapter 5, we recognize that the spirit of God also has the work of producing the graces of Christ within our life.

We'll look at those things a bit later on. In Galatians chapter 5, Paul calls them the fruit of the spirit. And in reality, it's the graces of Christ, or some of them, that the spirit of God wants to produce within us.

So it gives us the reality, gives us the idea here, that not only are we freed from the guilt and penalty of sin, but we're freed from, we're given a righteousness, and we're given the spirit of God within us, because there is something that God wants to make us.

And that simply is the instrument of the Lord Jesus through which he lives his life. Now think about that just a moment.

If we're saved by the grace of God, Jesus is living his life in and through us. That's why he gives us the imperative of being obedient and yielded to the spirit of God.

[10 : 32] Ephesians chapter 5, verse 18, speaks of responsibility then, as believers, that God gives us. You know the verse well. Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess or unsavedness, but be filled or controlled with or by the spirit of God.

That's his command to it. And it's written, as you know, as a command, not as a suggestion, but as a command. We are to moment by moment be yielded to, controlled by the spirit of God that dwells

within us.

Now, there's something else about that, as we see. Not only does the spirit of God have a desire to control us, to lead us and direct us into the will of God so we can be utilized by him to that fullest degree, but there's something else we see here.

Look in James chapter 4, rather, verse 5. James chapter 4, verse 5. Verse simply says, Do you think that the scripture saith in vain, the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

Let me read it to you in an expanded translation. Do you think that the scripture says in an empty manner and to no purpose that the spirit or the Holy Spirit has been caused to make his permanent home in us, has a passionate desire to control us to the point of envy of any control indwelling sin may have over us?

[12:12] What a picture James paints here. He tells us that the spirit of God that dwells within us is jealous. He's jealous over us.

And that jealousy is so strong that it drives him to the point of envy. And that envy is the idea of, he's envious of any time we allow the nature of sin that dwells within us to take control of our lives. And so we see that battle that takes place within us between the sin nature and the spirit of God, which we'll look at later. Now, when Jesus died, he didn't simply just die that we might be saved from a bad conscience or sinful habits that have been a part of our life.

Now, certainly that's a part of that. But look at what Romans 5.10 says to us. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Salvation, a continuous process. As far as our standing with God, it's an accomplished purpose, an accomplished activity, if you will, or action.

[13:42] But salvation is also a progressive thing. We are saved from the guilt and penalty of sin, but one day, and we are being saved, if you will, from the power of indwelling sin and its influence upon our lives.

Sanctification, if you will. Now, two aspects of the life, of the death of Christ here and his work on Calvary as seen in Romans 5.10.

He reconciles us to God, he says, by his death. Reconciliation, bringing us back into a relationship of favor with him. Not one of enmity anymore.

It's one of favor and, if you will, friendship. So he reconciles us to God by his death. But then also, he said, he saves us by his life.

God, being the righteous God, had only one option as far as we are concerned. And that is to find us guilty as sinners.

[14:46] Sinners by the very nature that we possess, thus dead, as Paul says, in our trespasses and sins. So the only thing left for him to do with that is to pass the sentence of death upon us.

But thankfully, God, the Son, takes on a body of flesh, goes to Calvary's cross, and extends to us those nail-scarred hands that offer us that forgiveness of sins, that forgiveness of the penalty and the guilt, and gives us that true righteousness and eternal life that he has given to us.

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

Aren't you glad it says he hath suffered once for sins? He doesn't have to do that anymore. It's eternal.

It's forever. And covers all of that. But the work doesn't stop there. Again, Romans 5.10, If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by his death, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

[16:13] Titus 3, verses 5-7 says, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of the gift of eternal life.

A new principle for us then is that of the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God in our lives, in the life of the believing sinner.

There to do his work that was designed for him to do by the Father, in the believer's life. So, in our text the Apostle Paul expresses that way.

I am crucified yet nevertheless I live. I'm crucified with Christ, but nevertheless I live.

Crucified with Christ. Jesus, when he came, recall, was born under the law. In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem those that were under the law.

[17 : 35] Jesus came under that Mosaic law, born under that. He lived under it. He kept it. All right? Every bit of that.

But he did something else as well. He died under the law. He died a death under that law that was not needed for himself.

But he did that so that he might satisfy, if you will, the just demands of that law. So, as a result then, he himself became freed from the bondage of that old Mosaic law.

Likewise, Paul says here, because of his association through faith with Christ Jesus, he likewise is freed from that judicial aspect of the Mosaic law for justification.

So, I'm crucified with Christ. But, he said, nevertheless, I live. How can you be crucified and still live?

[18 : 44] It's because the crucifixion of Christ did in the process. There was resurrection life with Christ as well. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live.

Yet, it's not I that live, if you will. That old Pharisee Saul of Tarsus was crucified with Christ. Everything he did up to that point has passed away.

now there is new life. I am crucified yet, but yet I live. But, it's not I that live, it's Christ that lives in me.

You remember what happened to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. There, he was confronted by the Christ that he so adamantly denied and whose church he persecuted.

Jesus met him on that road and Saul of Tarsus then, at that point, died because he met the crucified, resurrected Christ.

[19 : 55] Yet, now, he began to live. It's not Saul of Tarsus that began to live, it is what becomes the Apostle Paul that begins to live.

A life that satisfies the will of God and glorifies, if you will, the Son of God. So, it's a new life that he has and that new life is the life of a person within a person.

It's the person of Christ Jesus within the Apostle Paul. Jesus living his life out inside of the Apostle Paul. Now, we have to recognize something, folks.

And I think sometimes we fail to comprehend this. It's not just for the Apostle Paul that that happened. Every man, woman, boy, and girl of every generation since Calvary that has been saved by the grace of God has the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God, literally, has Jesus living and wanting to live his life through the believer.

that's the principle of the new life that we have. Now, Jesus said in John chapter 6, verses 56 through 57, He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him.

[21 : 30] Of course, it's not a literal idea of the eating and drinking of the flesh and blood, but it's a symbolic idea of an association with Christ in his death, but later on as well in his resurrection.

The key here is that he says, he that does that, he that associates himself with me as the crucified, then resurrected Christ, dwells in me and I dwell in him.

him. That's the most important aspect of all of that. Now, verily, verily, I say unto you, John 5, 19, here's the principle of the Son.

The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do. For what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

Interesting. The thing we have to remember, Jesus, though he be God in the flesh, was in the flesh.

[22 : 40] Now, I'm not saying by that that he had a sinful fleshly nature, no. He took on a body of flesh and everything he did in his earthly ministry, in that body of flesh, he did as man under the control, direction, and power of the Spirit of God.

I believe the reason he did that is so that you and I could see that and recognize and realize that's the very thing he wants to do in our lives.

For us to be so controlled by the Spirit of God that he lives his life to its fullest in us. Now, that's the principle we're to live by.

Now, we know that up here, don't we? we know that. It's nothing new to us. But it raises a question for us.

You know, this is the generation of the reality stuff. You know, how many programs are there on TV that a reality shows? Which in reality are not reality?

[23 : 58] Amen? They're all scripted. Yeah. But the reality for this is it. We know it all in our heart or in our head, in our minds.

But how much of reality is it in our life and in our living? And that's the thing we need to recognize. That's the question that we need to answer.

To what degree is all of that a reality in our lives. Please don't misunderstand this statement. I'm looking inside you on joy.

But I find myself listening carefully. Especially in our Sunday night sessions when we have the question and answer times and we're responding to certain questions.

A lot of those questions are what should we do? What should we be? How do we do that? And so much of the time I hear a saying this is what we should be doing.

[25 : 06] Okay. And that's true statement. When in reality it ought to be this is what we are doing. Amen?

In the face of those particular issues. We know what we should be doing but what is it we are doing. How much of reality to what degree is all the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God and Jesus living His life through us a reality in our life.

Now recognize something. The Galatians chapter 5 verse 17 says the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. These are contrary the one to the other so you cannot do the things that you would.

That constant battle within us the flesh the earthly nature that sinful nature that we're born with in the life of the believer is constantly at war with the indwelling Spirit of God.

And the purpose of that is the sin nature wants to suppress the things that the Spirit of God wants to do in the life of the believer and attempts to do.

[26 : 26] Likewise the Holy and that's what drives the Spirit of God to envy. The Spirit of God is combating the sin nature this back and forth thing all of these things the Spirit of God and the natural man fighting that battle in an effort to keep the other from being the one to whom we succumb and submit to.

Those things that they desire for us to do. What a battle. Amen? Yeah, that's what Paul says in Ephesians. It's not a physical warfare we're fighting it's a spiritual warfare.

Alright? So, there's the dilemma of Christian living. how in the world do we keep that battle straight? The choice and here's the key for us folks. God gives you and me a human responsibility in all of this. If that battle of the nature of sin and the Spirit of God is going on within us each trying to suppress the other then God gives you and I responsibility in determining who it is that's going to win the battle.

Yeah. Yeah. Is it going to be the nature of sin or is it going to be the Spirit of God? It's our choice. It's a rational choice.

[28 : 07] It's a determined choice that you and I have to make. That's the dilemma. Same thing Paul faced in Romans 7. Remember? Things I desire to do I find myself not doing.

The things I don't want to be doing I find myself doing. Oh wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from this bondage of flesh? A lot of times we stop there.

You know we use the word of God a lot of times to make excuses. Well if Paul couldn't get it right we can't get it right. But Paul did get it right. Because if you go into the rest of that verse thanks be to God which gives us that victory.

Then he goes into chapter 8 and says there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus to those who walk after the spirit and not after the flesh.

he found the key to victory. Amen. It's submission to the indwelling presence of the spirit of God.

[29 : 20] So we have that choice. We've got to develop within ourselves that idea of keeping our eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus and trusting the spirit of God to do his work that he said he could do.

The more we say no to sin the more natural it's going to become for us. Likewise the more we say yes to the Lord Jesus the more natural that's going to become to our life.

So this doesn't continue to be such the drastic problem that it seems to be in our lives. Alright now in Romans 8 29 of course the Bible speaks of the design of God to bring the believer into conformity to the image of Christ.

Now how does he do that? It's the spirit of God in that work of progressive sanctification developing the graces of Christ within our life.

Now that's the conformity to the image of Christ. Christ. Now Galatians 5 verses 22 through 25 but the fruit of the spirit oh by the way somebody said I could go till 2 o'clock so nobody walks out till 2 amen the fruit of the spirit is love joy peace long suffering gentleness goodness faith meekness temperance against such there is no law they that are Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lust if we live in the spirit let us also walk in the spirit look at that a little bit later now the fruit of the spirit is singular word fruit it's the idea of all these things that the spirit of God wants to develop in the life of the believer that are then that all together working together create a unity within the life of the believer a unified life that that flows from the believer as the life of [31 : 36] Christ Jesus now case in point here how completely does all this work in us how completely are we allowing Jesus to live his life through us how completely are we yielded to the spirit of God some of this will finish up tonight but look what he says he gives us the list of the fruit of the spirit here what all that is alright starts with what love starts with love agape love remember remember the characteristics of agape love it's a it's a love that by definition agape is the word that means a love that finds the object love as very very precious it's self sacrificial in nature and character it looks at the benefit of others more than itself now if we had the time we would go to 1 Corinthians 13 which we'll do tonight and look at the various characteristics of agape love alright so many things in there that agape love does and my question to us today would be this how many of those characteristics that we find of agape love do we have operating in our lives how much of it do we find you know what it's kind it doesn't envy it doesn't puff itself up it doesn't vaunt itself it doesn't behave unseemly it doesn't seek its own not easily well that's not easily provoked literally the word is not easily exasperated how many of you have never ever in your Christian life been exasperated let me see your hand okay let me see if you're telling the truth how many of you have been exasperated oh very good how many of you get exasperated quite often how many of you get exasperated when no you didn't play right yeah yeah yeah

I'm about to lose this microphone after all here yeah all right so you see the idea here that all that all boils down to the idea of how much of that we've really allowed the spirit of God to do in our life and that is conditioned on how much we yield to the spirit of God how completely rather we should say yeah love's just one aspect of that fruit joy peace hmm how many ever have restless nights because of some circumstance going on in your life absence of peace love joy peace long suffering all right gentleness goodness faith meekness temperance wow yeah we'll look at those tonight now he ends that that segment in

Galatians 5 by showing us and giving us a reminder of what Christ has produced in us he says in verse 24 then they that are Christ in words they that are in union with Christ in salvation through faith and trust in him have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts all right that again in our identification with Christ in salvation that has resulted in the breaking of the power of the sinful nature over the life now he didn't say it's not still there but what he's saying to us is this it has no right to govern our lives the sin if we've been saved by the grace of God that power has been broken it has no right to claim any right to our life and our living but sadly to say a lot of times we let that happen why because we're not fully yielded to the spirit of God now so they that are Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts and then he says if then in light of the fact that we have divine life in the spirit of God let us then also walk in the spirit yeah what does that mean don't think of it any spooky thing it's simply living in submission to the spirit of God being obedient to what God says in his word letting the spirit of God who indwells you empower you guide you direct you in your life and in your living into the things that are will of God the word walk there is a word that means to walk in a straight line to conduct oneself rightly so it's to conduct ourselves under the guidance impulses and energy of the

Holy Spirit so he gives us there an admonition to live the highest hype of Christian life I went back through that this morning and a song came to mind Dan I'm pressing on the upward way new heights I'm gaining every day still praying as I onward bound Lord plant my feet on higher ground then the third verse says I want to live above the world though Satan's darts at me are hurled for faith hath caught the joyful sound the song of saints on higher ground verse 4 I want to scale the utmost height and catch a gleam of glory bright but still I'll pray till heaven I've found Lord lead me on to higher ground Lord lift me up and let me stand by faith on heaven's table land a higher plane than I have found that I have found

[38 : 45] Lord plant my feet on higher ground oh that that be our delight and our desire that God you enable me I know you you'll empower me by your spirit if I submit to him to live on a higher

plane than what this old world's got to offer amen yeah yeah yeah nothing in this world can give you that joy unspeakable and full of glory that God can and that he will give as we surrender and yield to the spirit of God if we're tired of fighting our own battles if we're tired of trying to work it all out ourselves and finding ourselves so totally inadequate to the process got good news for you if we let Jesus live his life through us that will free us from all that oh it doesn't mean we won't have difficulties doesn't mean we won't have problems circumstances but boy we'll sure walk through them in a different way amen because

Jesus is in control and we're simply abandoning ourselves of ourselves and letting Christ live his life through us you