

Fulfilling the Law of Christ

Text: Galatians 5:26–6:5

Theme: In Christ, we are now free to fulfill the law of Christ in serving one another as the church

Introduction — fruit: what does it look like?

- we know what real, physical fruit looks like
- if I say, “Think of bananas” you know what to picture in your mind
- or oranges, apples, grapes

But what does spiritual fruit look like?

- how do we see it appear in our own spiritual lives
- but remember first: this fruit comes from the Holy Spirit in our lives
- then, recall to mind that this is the result of work of Christ in our lives
- and, don’t forget, this all comes because of God’s grace alone thru faith alone
- oh, and one more thing to recollect: you do not produce it, grow it or anything
- this is all a work of the Holy Spirit

You & I should always give praise and thanks to God for this

- because we have been justified in Christ, we have the Spirit & He produces His fruit in us
- when we are justified, it is as if we have obeyed perfectly because Christ’s obedience is now ours
- this is not a new law; something we are under obligation to obey
- no, the fruit of the Spirit flow from our justification, being declared righteous by God
- our justification yields the fruit of our sanctification

So, back to the original question: what does this look like as we live our Christian life

- well, it is active, not idle
- our faith is to work through love, which in itself is an action, not simply an emotion
- we are not to be passively idle in our pursuit of holiness
- no, no; rather, we exert great effort in pursuing Christ
- as we do so, we put Christ on display to others around us
- His holiness is what shines out from us, in word, thought, and deed

In the text before us, Paul shows us what this fruit looks like lived out

- it looks like the law of Christ being fulfilled in us and through us

First, we see it...

I. DISPLAYED WITH HUMILITY

- **(Galatians 5:26 ESV) Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.**
- you & I who have Spirit within us now live Christ-shaped lives toward one another
- we are void of conceit: no pride, no arrogance, no self-admiration or high self-regard
- it means we do not provoke one another either
- this means we don’t stir people up, especially to anger
- we all know “pot-stirrers”—those who seem to enjoy getting people worked up
- in Christ, by Spirit, this ought never be who we are
- and there is to be no envy among us as the church
- envy of any kind is just right out the window

- it doesn't matter if it is in regards to possessions, influence, place in life, or anything else
- all this is a work of flesh, as we saw in v. 21

1. Think of Adam in the Garden

- before sin entered the world, what was it that caused Adam to sin?
- why did he reach out, and try to grasp equality with God by eating from the forbidden tree?
- same thing that made Lucifer get cast out of heaven
- pride, conceit, arrogance, thinking more highly of his own desires than those of God
- he also envied: he was discontent as mere mortal
- he believed the lie of Satan: you can be like God
- Adam envied what he did not have, it is that simple
- contrast this with what our second Adam brings us
- we become a new creation with a new heart brought about by Christ
- His Spirit is poured out within us & is not marked by envy, rather humility

2. What it looks like

- **(Galatians 6:1 ESV) Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.**
- those marked by gentleness are called spiritual, by Paul
- a spiritual person isn't someone floating around all super-pious and what-not
- no, they are indwelt by God's Spirit
- it is we, then, who are to restore with gentleness those caught in sin
- remember how you too, once dead & found out in sin, were treated gently by God
- this gentleness was a medical term referring to setting a broken bone so it could heal properly
- this is how God treated you
- **(Isaiah 42:3 ESV) a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.**
- and Christ fulfilled this prophecy, Matthew 12.20
- humility and gentleness are both marks of Christ-likeness

3. We cannot stand in final judgment of anyone

- only God has perfect righteousness & can preside as judge over another
- call to mind that you are a forgiven sinner
- when it comes to restoring another forgiven sinner who repents: do so in gentleness & love
- we also do this because we know we can fall into sin & need to be restored as well
- in humility, don't ever think you can't fall into any sin—you have its seed within you
- so bring it to Christ, crush it, have the Spirit kill it
- this fruit gets displayed in humility

Second, we see each believer then...

II. FULFILLING THE LAW OF CHRIST

- **(Galatians 6:2 ESV) Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.**
- by speaking of "the law of Christ" Paul does not mean Jesus is simply another Moses
- it is not Christ versus Moses
- no, here is what Paul is getting at by this phrase
- he has already told us...
- **(Galatians 5:14 ESV) For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."**

- because Christ fulfilled God's law perfectly, all the demands of law are met in Him
- now we are enabled & equipped to fulfill the law & actually love our neighbors
- **(Romans 8:3–4 ESV) 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**

1. Legal versus Gospel obedience

- legal fulfillment of the law, according to Scripture, is simple
- it is what we are required to do but cannot do
- it is when we attempt to obey in our own strength
- it is when we think we can get by on 9 out of 10 and God will think that's pretty good
- but this fails on every single point: think of it as a pass/fail test
- if you personally obey the law perfectly perpetually, then you pass: you enter eternal life
- but we fail, even on just one point
- here, in Galatians 6, it would be refusing to bear one another's burdens
- it would be rejecting some forgiven sinner who has sinned again, instead of restoring him or her
- what we need, however, is gospel obedience
- instead, we who are now in Christ—remember Galatians 2.20
- **(Galatians 2:20 ESV) I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.**
- because of this glorious truth, we can fulfill the law of Christ
- how? By believing in Christ, who fulfilled the law for us
- by not striving in our own strength, trying to appease God

2. A new mind

- Christ is now in each one who believes
- Spirit gives us a new heart, a new mind & we must think and act with it
- this means always considering the source of our obedience: Christ
- because we have been joined with Christ, have union with Christ, His obedience is ours
- so, don't be like some Christians in some churches
- "See that person over there? They sinned horribly. We must avoid them at all cost lest we sin"
- "Did you hear about so-and-so and the way they sinned? I would never do such a thing"
- no, we fulfill the law of Christ by bearing their burden
- this word is used 5x by Paul in Galatians
- it means helping to carrying the weight
- word used of Christ, carrying His cross to Golgotha
- this load is pressing down, nearly into the ground
- you, who have Spirit of Christ bearing fruit in you: help them, restore them
- share the load of repentance and restoration

3. Corporate obedience

- there is a "whole church" aspect to this restoring and bearing
- there must be corporate humility—all of us acknowledging that but for the grace of God go I
- this is why it is needful for us to examine ourselves before communion
- not just individually, but corporately, confessing our sin & seeking God's gracious forgiveness

- we pray for the sinner, that they'd repent and be restored
- sadly, too many churches view church discipline as way to cut sinners off from church
- when it is to be the path of restoration via repentance
- so, bear the load with them, pray for them, stand beside them, help them

4. Humble obedience

- you keep hearing this word this morning and for good reason
- this is all about Christ's work in us, it is marked by humility
- so, Paul writes in v. 3
- **(Galatians 6:3 ESV) For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.**
- remember: you & I are beggars who have been blessed with a feast in Christ Jesus
- when other beggars come looking for food, we must not act like we bought it, cooked it, served it
- instead, we remember that we are great sinners, but we have a greater Savior
- Christ provided the meal: His body, His blood, His life, His grace

5. Individual obedience

- this is living in the kingdom of Christ, not the kingdom of Adam
- building on this, Paul writes in v. 4
- **(Galatians 6:4 ESV) But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.**
- what does he mean by this, because it sounds like he just contradicted himself
- no, simply walk thru this with me
- first, Paul says: "test your own work"
- test your own individual, personal obedience in this manner
- hold it up to the law first, all of its demands you couldn't meet
- then hold up your obedience to perfect righteous obedience of Christ
- you still can't measure up, but He did...and did it for you
- do what Paul did then: boast in Christ Jesus, not in yourself
- so, second, keep on boasting in Christ
- do not compare yourself to others: I'm doing better than they are or I'm way worse than that
- no, each of you given task of obeying by Christ: so obey as He gives you grace
- you are responsible to Jesus for your obedience, not someone else's
- so, if you're going to boast, let it be in Christ & His work done for you
- only compare or examine yourself by Christ & His obedience
- run to Him, look to Him, cling to Him
- your only hope is His perfect obedience, not in your own imperfect obedience
- so much so is this that Paul then helps by saying in v. 5
- **(Galatians 6:5 ESV) For each will have to bear his own load.**
- you will bear your own responsibility for obeying Christ, not for another's
- we can either look to Christ & His perfect righteousness
- or we can look to ourselves
- if we lean on our own devices, no one else to blame when we fall...and we will fall
- so, look to Christ and Him alone.

In this whole passage, then, we see the great concern we are to have for the church as we seek to...

III. RESTORE & BEAR

- we need constant reminders of our sinfulness
- this then leads us to need constant prompting to recall God's grace in Christ
- let this also bring you humbly to your knees as you see your great need of Holy Spirit
- we can never think we have arrived while still this side of heaven
- Satan loves to see us grow comfortable, unaware, self-sufficient
- this should not characterize any of us

1. Humble & content

- those Christians living out the fruit of the Spirit look humble and content
- they are burdened for repentant sinners
- they long to help restore them gently rather than use self-righteousness to beat them up
- we do not compare ourselves as Christians to other Christians
- instead, we look to Christ alone
- ask yourself then: how much do you pray for one another?
- if you think this too much to bear, you need to be humbled by God's grace
- how much does the sin of others bother you enough to drive you to your knees for them?
- how do you react to them: shunning and running? Or bringing and clinging them to Christ

2. The leader of the church

- all this applies to every Christian, but especially to elders of the church
- part of the calling of spiritual leaders of the church is this very ministry
- we are to call to repentance, to help mend those broken spiritual bones
- we come alongside and help bear the weight of following Christ for we know it too
- granted, this is never easy work
- but Jesus said it was His yoke that is easy and His light burden
- so, please, pray for me, Kyle, Kevin, Jon, and Jeff
- pray that we fit well into Galatians 6 and it is true of us, seen in us
- pray for us to know & exemplify humility, to exercise gentleness
- pray diligently that we be filled with love of Christ

Conclusion – Joyfully walk in the Spirit

- this is how we will, as an entire people known as Albion Evangelical Free Church, bear fruit
- we display this fruit by letting Christ shine thru us
- this isn't something just in the abstract or theoretical realm
- this is concrete love in action, humility on display, gentleness given to another
- each of us should be in constant prayer for how we can live this fruit out to one another
- cry out to the Lord for how you can be burdened by someone else's sin & help them bear up
- you have, each one of you, who are in Christ, been crucified in your flesh
- Christ now lives in you because He loves you and gave His life for you.