

# Dying to Live

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[ 0 : 00 ] I'll do turn, if you would, to Galatians chapter 5. Galatians 5, and we concentrate this evening on verses 19 to 26. And the title is Dying to Live.

The fundamental problem with this world, as we've often said, is that mankind has ruptured the right relationship between ourselves and God, our Creator.

We've asserted ourselves, our own egos against God. We've said, we want to rule the world, not you. And the result is the world that we see around us.

A world where all other relationships also have been ruptured and spoiled as a result. Back in Genesis chapter 3, it's very clear the world is as it is because God has put the world under a curse because of man's rebellion.

But it's equally clear that it's all our fault. It is because of our egocentricity, our self-assertion, our self-rule. But the glory of the gospel is that it has rescued believers from this evil age for the new creation, for a world of right relationships, restored in Jesus Christ.

[ 1 : 24 ] And this new creation is not yet fully consummated, but it is begun. Jesus Christ is the firstborn heir of the new creation in his resurrection life.

And the Christian church is, if you like, the beachhead of the new creation. Already in existence here on planet earth in the midst of all the remains of the present evil age.

The church is the united community in Christ where we are all one in Christ Jesus. Where we are united together in Christ by one spirit, by one faith.

The church is already, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the great witness in the world of the new creation. There is no Jew or Greek, says Paul.

There is no male or female, no slave or free. All are one in Christ Jesus. One in value and in love. All are heirs to the promise of Abraham, to the promise of being sons and daughters of the living God.

[ 2 : 35 ] And that's the result of the gospel. That is the result and the reality of our salvation. As we said this morning, the Christian gospel is not just about individual salvation for souls, but it's about a people, it's about a family, it's about the household of God, united together in Christ.

That's God's goal. And we're freed from the old world, from slavery to sin and to the law and to the flesh, in order that we might fulfill our destiny, in order that we might be a community, serving one another in love.

That we might be a community exhibiting to the world the depth and the enormity of that love, the love of Jesus, the Son of God who loved me, gave himself for me.

And so a couple of weeks ago we saw in verses 13 to 15 that so clearly. We saw that we are freed for love.

And we're freed to love. That's the church that describes what our life together is to be. A life of serving one another in love. But we have to ask, does that describe our life?

[ 3 : 52 ] We find it so hard, don't we? Of course we do. Why is that? Well, because as we saw last week, not only are we freed to love, but we are freed to fight. There's still a war on.

The new creation life has begun. The life in the Spirit has begun. But we have to still live it out for the meantime in this sinful world. In these sinful bodies. With the remains of our sinful nature.

And we've got to battle against it. And while we're still in this world, there's a battle raging within us. All the time between the new life of the Spirit in us. And the dregs of our old sinful nature.

Which sometimes don't seem like dregs at all, do they? They seem so powerful. And so we fight.

But the promise, as we saw it last week, there in verse 16, is that we fight to win.

We fight with a promise. Walk by the Spirit and you will not succumb. You will not gratify the desires of the flesh. It's a real promise and it's a real promise backed by power.

[ 4 : 55 ] In verse 18, you are led by the Spirit. Who does have power to lead you. Who does have power to impart life. Who does have power to fulfill in you God's commands.

Who has power also to lift from our shoulders the terrible weight of the guilt of sin. So we walk by the Spirit, says Paul, with a promise of victory.

But now you see Paul's getting down to specifics. Alright, that's the strategy. That's the theology.

But so far it may all seem a little bit general. What does it mean to walk by the Spirit?

What does it look like? How do we know if we're doing it or not? How do we know we're on track or maybe way off track? There's something in us as human beings, isn't there, that always wants to have specific rules.

Specific guides for everything. We want that security of knowing that we've done what we have to do and therefore we're alright. At the heart, you see, it all comes back to our desire for self-justification.

[ 6 : 02 ] So that we can satisfy ourselves and be content. We can have a kind of moral security. Knowing, well yes, I've done all these things right. I must be okay. It's deep within the human heart.

It's deep within human society. Ultimately, that's what underlies all the spiralling nonsense of bureaucracy that we live under. Rules and red tape and all these sorts of things.

Why? Because for the petty bureaucrat, of course. It's the security of saying no. The security of knowing you've never made a mistake. And it's crippling us in so many ways.

It all comes back down to this thing in our human nature. We want to have rules and boxes and feel that we can have achieved and done everything we're meant to do. And so when Paul gives this swinging talk of walking in the spirit, it seems so free.

It seems so unnerving. It seems very dangerous. How do we know we're on the right track? Walking in the spirit. William still, in his little book on Galatians, puts it this way.

[ 7 : 10 ] Life in the spirit is as different either from libertinism, that's license, or from bondage, as an aeroplane flight is. From either plunging through a bog or keeping meticulously to the white line down the middle of a straight and narrow road.

It's life in another dimension where a whole new set of rules operate. But that kind of freedom is scary, isn't it? How do we know we're soaring with the spirit of God and not in fact running away with the freedom of the flesh?

There's no rules. Well that was the argument you see of Paul's opposers, these other teachers in Galatia. Of course they said. You're going off track, right, left and centre.

So you must have rules. You must have moral restraints. You must have these religious authorities. Otherwise you're going to head for disaster. Well, powerful argument.

But no, says Paul, no. Submission to an earthly authority will never, ever be able to deal with your sinful nature, with your flesh. However strict it is, you know that.

[ 8 : 21 ] And we do know that, don't we? We see it with the law of the land. It's what our governments are constantly struggling with. You can't pass laws to make people good. The very best you can do is restrain and reign in evil.

By keeping it imprisoned. By putting people under lock and key. In bondage. And Paul is saying here, yeah, it's just the same in the church.

You'll never bring about positive life transformation by merely earthly means. Either by the authority of leaders, rules and regulations.

Or by the opposite. By anything goes. By allowing everyone to do as they please. Never. You'll only either lead to suffocation and death and misery. Or to chaos and anarchy.

And self-destruction. The only way, says Paul, is submission not to an earthly authority. But to a heavenly one. To God's control.

[ 9 : 21 ] To his spirit's control in our personal life. And in our church life. But how do we know who's in control? And if it really is the spirit who's in control of us.

How do we ensure that we're not under control of some other spirit. Our enemy. The evil one. Well the answer, Paul says in this passage we're looking at tonight. Is you have to turn to look at the practical symptoms.

These are the things that tell you who's really in control in your life. We've got to have an honest assessment of your personal life. And of your church life.

And see what the evidence says about who's really in control. Is it God's spirit? So that our life together clearly shows evidence of fulfilling our destiny as a holy people.

Filled with joy. Loving one another. Serving one another in love. Or in fact is the flesh really in control. Our enemy.

[10:24] Showing evidence that there are works that ultimately clearly lead to destruction. To walk by the spirit you see we need to identify always the areas in our life.

Where the spirit is not yet fully in control. And so we can submit to that control. And allow him to lead us in every part of our life.

And that's what Paul does here in these verses. First of all in verses 19 to 23. He calls us to honest reconnaissance. Who's winning the war? Look at the signs. Then verses 24 and 25.

He gives us an essential reminder. As to how it is that we do win the war. And then in verse 26. Brings it right down to earth. With a very penetrating application.

So let's look first at verses 19 to 23. Honest reconnaissance. It's essential in any war isn't it? To have honest reconnaissance. To find out what's going on. We've got to ask the question. Who's winning the war?

[11:23] Sometimes it's difficult isn't it? Seeing that in Iraq at the moment. But which way are the signs pointing? Are they pointing one way or the other? Who is winning the war in our personal life?

And in our church? That's the question for us. And Paul lays out here two contrasting sets of signs and symptoms. The signs of health. Living according to the Spirit's ascendance in our life.

And signs of disease. And ultimately death. The flesh in the ascendance. First of all in verses 19 to 21. He takes the works of the flesh.

And lays them out here in this horrible list. He says they're obvious. You don't need the law to tell you these are wrong. Every decent human being. Has enough light in their conscience. To see that these things are wrong.

If we're honest. If we're not deluding ourselves. And predictably we see in these verses. That where the flesh rules. Where egos are in charge. There is chaos isn't there?

[12:24] It's a picture of disordered and ruptured relationships. In every sphere of life. And that's what always happens when we turn our back on God's Spirit. When we turn our back on His rule and direction.

And instead become preoccupied with ourselves. Either by irreligiously seeking self-satisfaction. And fulfillment. Or are just the same by religiously trying to seek self-justification.

And save ourselves. Both the same in the end. Commentator C.K. Barrett says that. All the sins in this list are not carnal. Lusts of the flesh.

In the way we tend to think about it. But they are all self-centered. They're all manifestations of egocentricity. Of self-love. And he says you cannot belong to Christ.

If you belong to yourself. I think that's a very good way of putting it. All of these things are symptoms of the disruption. That is the result of displacing God.

[13:27] From the absolute center of the universe. From the center of our way of thinking. Instead of seeking God alone. For our satisfaction. For our identity.

For our sense of purpose. For our salvation. Instead of seeking all that in God alone. We seek it in the desires of the flesh. In other words. We're seeking ultimate meaning and salvation.

From this temporal passing world. And you see. When you elevate even the good things of this world. Even the very best gifts of God.

And you make them ultimate. You begin to worship them as gods. Well that's what leads to disaster. We turn all these things. All these wonderful things.

Into perversions. Right relationships. With the created things in this world. For us. Depends upon a right relationship with the creator. So under the control of God's spirit.

[14:29] With God at the center of our lives. As God. Earthly blessings that God gives us. Are just exactly that. They're blessings. But under the control of the flesh.

Under the control of our selfish. Ego centricity. Even earthly blessings. Become misused and abused. And lead to chaos. Chaos and perversion.

In every area of human life. And that's exactly what this awful list describes. It's not exhaustive.

Paul says in verse 21. And things like this. He could have gone on. It's just a sample.

My goodness. It's what a sample. It's more than enough to make the point. Isn't it? You see they're all to do with destroying right relationships. You see that? Verse 19.

We can divide it into four areas of life. First of all. It's abuse of sexual relationships. Immorality. The first one there. Just means sex outside marriage. It's considered quite normal in that society back

then.

[15:32] Just as it is today. As long as it doesn't get too out of control. Serial monogamy. That's the socially accepted norm today. Isn't it? But you see. When self-satisfaction.

Is the heart of our understanding about sex. Instead of God's purpose for sex. As a wonderful gift to sustain. And to express lifelong marriage.

When self-satisfaction becomes the be all and end all. It quickly leads to the next thing. To impurity. It's a word that means dirty sex. All kinds of natural. Unnatural practices and perversions.

And that very quickly leads to sensuality. Or debauchery. One scholar says that that word means this. A love of sin so reckless and so audacious.

That a man has ceased to care what God or man thinks of his actions. Uncontrolled sexuality.

Reigning supreme you see. And that's pretty much parts of our society today isn't it?

[16:36] Brazen. Aggressive promotion. Of all kinds of perversion. And these are the things are they not? That are destroying the fabric of stable family life.

Stable community life. Stable children's lives. And it's that progression of course that destroyed the ancient empires of Greece and Rome.

We better take that seriously in the West today. Second it's abuse of spiritual relationships. Idolatry. Serving other gods.

And that's all bound up with sorcery. Seeking other powers. The word there is the word we get our word pharmacy from. Don't worry if you're a pharmacist. It's because drugs were all bound up with false worship and paganism.

It's all to do with people seeking spiritual power in other places. When people turn away from the one true God they don't stop seeking spiritual power. They seek it in all kinds of other ways.

[17:39] Often so destructive. So dangerous. So damaging. We see that all around us today. Third there's abuse of social relationships. Look at verse 20.

All of these things that he lists here are the hallmark of egocentric living aren't they? They're all marks of self-centeredness. All things that destroy relationships of all kinds.

Destroy marriages. Destroy families. Destroy working relationships. And destroy relationships in churches. Enmity. Hatred. Strife.

Jealousy. Fits of anger. Rivalries. Dissensions. Divisions. Envy. Well we all know that don't we? It's perfectly obvious. It's plain says Paul.

Finally. Abuse of substances. Drunkenness. Wild orgies of drinking. And. That's just as much a part of. Today's pagan culture as it was then.

[18:37] Addiction to all kinds of substances. Some of them. Some of them good gifts of God we could say. Fine wines. Fine foods. But when you turn them into gods. Seek all your satisfaction there.

Craving for self-satisfaction. I would become abused. Perverted. And things like that Paul says. I could go on and on. But that's enough to show you the disordered.

The perverted relationships in the world of sexuality. And spirituality. And social relationships. And substance. That are the hallmark. Of the reign of the flesh.

The rule of the human ego. Self-seeking. Self-satisfying. And we all know that don't we? It's plain says Paul. And notice two things.

First. Yes. He does start and end the list. With flagrant sins of sex and sensuality. And it's true that. We know in the church.

[19:34] We're not free from these problems. We need to take the warnings. We're all sinners. Let's not be fools. We all need to listen to that. Don't we? We've all got hormones. Far too many of them.

Seems to be most of the time. We mustn't be naive. If you think. That you're immune from these sorts of things. Whatever your age or sex. You're a fool. Be careful.

Paul's a realist. Even if sometimes we're not. That's why in chapter 6 verse 2. He says if you're helping somebody else. Who's got themselves in a mess in their life. Watch out that you don't go the same way.

If he starts with these. Then we must take that warning. But do you see that the main focus of the list. is all these things in the middle. About social relationship breakdown.

Isn't it? The problems of egocentric. Selfish and self-serving people. In the church. That's what he's speaking about. He's writing to the church.

[ 20 : 33 ] And isn't that true? It's not just a first century problem. Is it? Verse 15. Churches. Where people are biting and devouring one another. Verse 26. Provoking.

Envy one another. Sometimes it's out in the open. It's open battlefield warfare. We've seen that in churches. Sometimes though it's covert operations.

It's secret. It's hidden. Special forces. It's just as destructive. Isn't it? And it all works to destroy the church of Jesus Christ.

And that's serious. Says Paul. That's just as serious as sexual misconduct. Don't just sit back and say. Well I've never done that. Look at these other things.

And say. Has that been in your heart? And so the second thing he tells us. To note. Is that if you destroy the church of God like that.

[ 21 : 28 ] He will destroy you. Verse 21. I warn you. Those who do these things. Including all these things. That wreck the relationships. Within the church of Jesus Christ.

Will not inherit the kingdom of God. And will not inherit. Means be cast out. Remember chapter 4 verse 30. What does the scripture say?

Cast out the slave woman and her son. They will not inherit. With the son of the free woman. They'll be judged. Notice that Paul is very clear here.

As in fact is the whole of the New Testament. Judgment. Judgment. Is by our works. Remember Jesus? Matthew 7.

Many will say on that day. Lord, Lord. And I'll say to them. Depart from me. You workers of iniquity. I never knew you. Hang on a minute. I thought you'd been telling us.

[ 22 : 25 ] For weeks and weeks. That the whole thing in Galatians. Is about faith alone. Salvation by faith. Justification by faith. Well yes it is. But real faith is never alone.

That's Paul's whole great message. You can't have the faith that forgives. You can't have that justification. Without. The faith that unites you to Jesus. That gives you a new life.

Through the Holy Spirit. What he's saying is. If you do these things. Well there's no evidence of the Spirit's life in you. Is there? Therefore there's no evidence of real faith.

He's not talking about our past sins. He's not even talking about lapses. In the present. That we're ashamed of. That we've repented of. But what he is saying. Is that to go on unrepentantly.

With that attitude. Means that we cannot inherit. The kingdom of God. Because you're sowing to the flesh. As he says in chapter 6 verse 8. That means you can reap only destruction.

[ 23 : 25 ] So be warned. Says Paul. It's a real warning. Look at the relationships in your life. And look at the relationships. In the church. And say who's winning the war? Who's winning?

In contrast. In verses 22 and 23. He speaks of the signs. Of the Spirit's rule. And it's the very antithesis. Isn't it? Of the force of destruction.

And disruption of relationships. Caused by the flesh. It's not a list of new obligations. Works of the Spirit. No. It's a rounded description. A balanced description.

Of the natural results. Of attitudes. That are transformed. By the Spirit of God at work. Attitudes that are transformed. By love in our hearts. It's one fruit.

It's not many fruits. But it could be all summed up. By one word. Love. It's the fruit of love. It's love at work. That's why love. In verse 22.

[ 24 : 24 ] Is very first in the list. It's emphatic. Everything else in that list. Flows out of that word. Love. It's the flavour of a community. Where the only thing that counts.

Is faith. Working through love. Where the only thing that matters. Is serving one another. Through love. It's a description of love. Manifest in all the relationships.

Of the church. D.L. Moody. Put it this way. He says love. The fruit of the Spirit. Is simply love. Love in its many manifestations. Joy. He says.

Is love exalting. Peace. Is joy. Is love resting. Patience. Is love on trial. Kindness. Is love in society. Goodness. Is love in action. Faithfulness.

Is love on the battlefield. Meekness. Is love at school. And self-control. Is love in training. I rather like that. It captures something. Of what this is all about. Too often you see.

[ 25 : 22 ] We take these little verses. Out of context. We turn them into a little sentimental meditation. About the many flavors of the fruit of the Spirit. Or whatever. But Paul's point is much more pointed.

He's saying to the Galatians. You need to take a mirror up to your own life. To your church life. To your personal life. And see just how different your conduct is from this. He's putting his finger on

relationships.

In their congregation. And saying. Where is the attitude of love? Where is it? We mustn't lose this corporate aspect. Of what he's talking about here.

Paul is saying. Precisely that. This is not a privatized faith. That I'm talking about here. It's not a matter of me and my Lord. Day by day. No. True Christianity.

True evidence of right relationship. Between me and my Lord. Is manifest in right relationships. Between me and my Lord's people.

[ 26 : 23 ] The church. Professor James Dunn. Whom I have to say. I cannot recommend. Generally. On Galatians at all.

But. Has a very good comment here. Quote. Joy was for Paul. A shared experience. Strengthening the bonds of community. And peace was not reducible.

To a personal tranquility. But included all that made for social well-being. And harmonious relationships. That's absolutely right. You see. It's the same with faithfulness.

That's the opposite of selfish ambition. And division. Self-control. Is the opposite of self-indulgence. That ruins relationships in the church. That's what life in the spirit looks like.

Says Paul. This is the evidence of a spirit-filled church. This is what it means in the flesh. A mature church. A joyful, harmonious church. A fruit-producing fellowship.

[ 27 : 22 ] It all flows from that attitude of love. The love of the Savior who loved me. And gave himself for me.

Again that key verse. You see the love. Is the love that gives. And serves. And whereas the list of the works of the flesh.

Came with a warning attached. This list comes with a promise. Do you see verse 23? Against such things there is no law. You won't find any law that bends these things. And just as the works of the flesh.

Must lead to condemnation. So the fruit of the spirit. Must lead to no condemnation. Because it's the evidence. That the righteous. The requirement of the law.

Of God is being met in us. Who walk. Not according to the flesh. But according to the spirit. As Paul says in Romans 8 verse 4. You see verse 18.

[ 28 : 19 ] If you're led by the spirit. You're not under the law's condemnation. It's a promise. The fruit of the spirit leads to life. Because it's evidence. Of the forgiving love of Christ.

At work in your soul. So. Paul asks us. From your honest reconnaissance. Who's winning the war. In your personal walk.

Who's winning the war in our church. Is it the flesh or the spirit? Which of these things characterize our church life here.

The way we relate to one another. They react and react. When we have differences of view from one another. Which is it? The flesh or the spirit? Which is it?

In our personal life. Where is it evident? In our attitudes. In our actions. Our spiritual ambitions. Driven by the flesh.

[ 29 : 17 ] Or by the spirit. Remember that judgment is by character. And what we are therefore is fundamentally the most important thing. That's why the New Testament is far more interested in the fruit of the spirit.

Than the gifts of the spirit. It's possible to fake one. But not the other. William still wrote somewhere that. The devil could most probably have faked. Jesus cleansing of the temple.

But he could never have faked his dying on the cross. For our sins. So which is it for us? Well you see. If it's not the attitude and expressions.

Of verses 22 and 23. That means that we cannot be fighting on the right side. We cannot be walking properly in the spirit. We're refusing to obey the truth of the gospel.

We're refusing to walk in line with the truth of the gospel. Remember those two are the same.

Walking in the spirit is the same as. Walking in step with the truth of the gospel. Chapter 2 verse 14.

[ 30 : 19 ] And if we're honest. We must be honest. That's true of all of us isn't it? There's parts of our lives. Every one of us.

That are still under the rule of our own ego. Our own self. Where we're not submitting to the truth. Where we're not bending the knee to the spirit's rule.

Where we're avoiding the truth of the gospel. The gospel of the cross. And we're forgetting how it is. That we came alive in Christ by the spirit.

We were crucified with Christ. Says Paul. And we're forgetting that we go on exactly as how we began. By an ongoing death with Jesus.

By an ongoing crucifixion. Of everything that is left in our old life. The flesh. That's what Jesus meant when he said. Take up your cross daily.

[ 31 : 15 ] And follow me. We died to begin our new life. And we go on dying. To go on living. That's Paul's message.

That's the great paradox. That's at the heart of the Christian faith. That's why we all need verses 24 and 25. An essential reminder. A reminder of which side we're on.

And how we fight. You see. What Paul's telling us here. Is that just as the Christian life began. With a decisive step of repentance and faith. So it goes on in a daily life.

Of constant repentance and faith. Of constant death and life. Of constant crucifying the flesh. And walking in the spirit. See 24 tells us that.

Paul is reminding us of our side. Of that decisive change. In our relationship with the world. That happened when we believed. Do you remember in chapter 2 verse 20.

[ 32 : 15 ] He says. We have been crucified with Christ. That's the objective side. We died with Christ. When the spirit applied his life to us. When we believed. But here is our responsibility in the matter.

Verse 24 says. We have crucified the flesh. It's not that God does his bit. And we do our bit. But rather that. In believing. We have made a decisive move.

To turn our back on the world. To turn our back on the ways of the world. On its self-centeredness. On its egocentricity. We have put all that on the cross. Once and for all.

Just as Paul says in chapter 6 verse 14. The world has been crucified to me. And I to the world. It's decisive. It's done. We came to Christ.

We have put our old life on the cross. We have repented. We have turned away. We have turned to Christ. But you see. We must keep it on the cross. In a life of ongoing repentance.

[ 33 : 18 ] Because until the very end. Until the consummation of the new creation. We're at war. We have an enemy. The flesh. We're in a battle. With our old life. And we must be merciless with it.

It's like a dangerous criminal. That's dying. Nailed to a cross. We can't afford to go up. And pull a few nails out. Lest it summon its strength.

And jump up. And attack us. And overpower us. We've put it on the cross. Our flesh. Our sinful nature. We must keep it on the cross. And that's the constant message of the New Testament. Because God has done this for us. And in us. We must do it. We must reckon on it. We must make it real. Day by day. In our lives. Not just theory. Look over to Colossians.

Chapter 3. Just a few pages in your Bibles. It's especially clear here. It just makes it very, very clear to us. Look at chapter 3. Verse 3. Paul says. For you have died.

[ 34 : 17 ] And your life is hidden with Christ in God. Therefore. Verse 5. He says. Put to death. Therefore. What is earthly in you. Sexual immorality.

Impurity. Passion. All these things. That we've just been reading about in Galatians. Put to death. Verse 8. But now you must put them all away.

Anger. Wrath. Malice. Slander. Obscene talk. Do not lie to one another. Seeing that you have put off the old self. With its practices. And have now put on the new self.

Which is being renewed in knowledge. After the image of its creator. Verse 12. Put on then. As God's chosen ones. Holy and beloved.

Compassion. Kindness. Humility. Meekness. And so on. Do you see? You're just saying the same thing here. God has put it off. God has put it to death.

[ 35 : 12 ] Now you must put it to death. In practice. In your life. Day by day. It's the other side of putting on. And that other side is in verse 25.

Since you have put off. Put on. Says Paul. Since you have lived by the spirit. Keep in step with the spirit. Since you are alive in the spirit.

By faith. Be alive. Walk in faith. Walk in the spirit. You see. We repent and we believe in Jesus Christ. To begin the Christian life.

Well. We repent and we believe day by day. By day by day. To go on the Christian life. It's all one seamless process. There's no changes. It's not that you begin by faith.

And then. Well. You mature by some other way. Or you get some special secret. Or some new blessing. Or some great baptism. Or some special power. No. We began by faith.

[ 36 : 09 ] By saying no. To this present evil age. By saying no to our egos. By saying no. To our self rule of our lives. And we go on.

In a continuous life. Of marching to that drum beat. No other one. Saying no. To the past. And yes. To life in the spirit.

Living by the spirit. Is living in the cross. Of Jesus Christ. It's living by dying. You see how the cross. And the spirit.

Are still inseparable. We began. When the Holy Spirit. Applied the cross of Jesus. To our life. We died with him. That he might live. In us.

And we go on. As the spirit. Continues to apply the cross. To us. Day by day. We continue to die. We continue to mortify.

[ 37 : 07 ] As the. Old theologians used to put it. Put to death. The old ego. The old self. That Jesus life. The fruitful life. The life of the spirit. Might be at work in us.

Now. Do you see what that means? What it means is this. That just like at the beginning. Of our Christian life. When the joy. And the love. And the ecstasy.

Of the new life. Was mixed with the pain. Of death. And cost. As we turned away. From the old life.

As we turned away. From the world. So that it's always going to be like that.

In our Christian life. The joy. And the progress. The peace. And the satisfaction. Is going to be mixed. With a pain. Of turning away. Of crucifixion.

The life of. Of fruitfulness. The life of joy. Of blessing. And peace. And power. Can only be lived. In the pain. Of ongoing crucifixion. As we mercilessly.

[ 38 : 08 ] Put to death. The sin that remains. In our present. Bodily lives. As we painfully resist. Day by day.

By day. The demands of the flesh. And that's hard. Isn't it? But you see. That is. The spirit filled life.

There's no other. Paul says to the Corinthians. We are always carrying about. In our body. The dying of the Lord Jesus. So that the life of Jesus. May be manifest. In our bodies. And that's hard.

In church life too. Isn't it? To live a life. Of crucifying ourselves. Our egos. Our wants.

Our desires. Our views. On how things ought to be. Our desire. To have attention. To our needs. Our resentments.

[ 39 : 08 ] Our feelings at times. That. Where we're not appreciated. Or valued. As we ought to be. So easy. You see. Isn't it? For verse 26. To be true of us.

For conceit. For personal pride. For vain glory. As the old versions call it. For that kind of pride. To be king. And to be working.

Its divisive rule. Among us. So easy. Isn't it? That's why Paul brings his theology. Right down to earth. With a bump. At the end of this chapter. All this means.

He says. All this means. In your church fellowship. Brothers and sisters. Death. To that attitude. In each of us. In every one of us.

Once and for all. And day. By day. By day. And week. By week. The only alternative. You see. He says. Is that we're all full of. Vain and false views of ourselves.

[ 40 : 03 ] And that inevitably. Leads either to provoking one another. Being competitive. Trying to demonstrate. Our superiority. Or to envying one another. Being jealous of others position.

Or others influence. Or others roles in the church. If we're proud. And we feel superior. Well. We'll do everything we can. To demonstrate our superiority.

By lording it over. If on the other hand. We're proud. But we realize. That others. In fact. Are superior. Well. We'll resent them. We'll envy them. And Paul says.

Inevitably. That just leads to biting. And devouring. Ultimately. It leads to consuming one another. And we all know that. It's the way of the world. Isn't it? Dog eat dog.

It's the way of the flesh. It's the way of the rule. Of the vain egos. Of men and women. Especially men. Not so.

[ 41 : 02 ] In the church. Of Jesus Christ. Says Paul. Not so. With you. Let me sum up. By quoting from John Stott. To sum up then.

Truly Christian relationships. Are governed. Not by rivalry. But by service. The correct attitude. To other people. Is not. I'm better than you. And I'll prove it. Nor.

You're better than I. And I resent it. But you're a person. Of importance. In your own right. Because God has made you. In his own image. And Christ died for you. And it is my joy.

And my privilege. To serve you. That friends. Is. The life. Of the new creation. And it demonstrates.

The power. Of the new creation. The power. To transform. Selfish. And self-centered. And destructive. Hearts. And to change them.

[ 41 : 59 ] Into hearts. That reflect. The love. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord. Who loved me. And who gave himself. For me. And let me ask you this.

Where else. In the world. Is the world. Going to see. That power. Unless it sees it here. In the church. Of Jesus Christ.

Where else. Is it going to see it. Unless it sees. A people walking. In step. With the spirit. A people. Living. Daily. In the cross.

Of. The Lord Jesus Christ. A people. Living. By dying. To themselves. The world.

Won't see it. Anywhere else. And that's why. It must be. The life. Of the church. Of Jesus Christ. Those who belong.

[ 42 : 55 ] To Christ Jesus. Have crucified. The flesh. With its passion. And desires. Since. We live. By the spirit. Let us also. Keep in step. With the spirit.

Let us not. Become conceited. Provoking. One another. And envying. One another. Amen. Let's pray. Lord.

It is painful. When you. Turn your word. Upon us. And when your spirit. Exposes. The inner. Recesses. Of our hearts. For we all know.

That there. Are many ways. And many places. In the lives. Of every one of us. And in our life together. Where it is true. That more often. We are walking.

Not in your spirit. But giving head. To the flesh. To our selfishness. To our pride. Help us.

[ 43 : 54 ] We pray. For the glory. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ. And for his witness. In this world. To be people. Who walk. Daily. Carrying.

Our cross. Crucifying. Our flesh. That the life. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ. May be manifest in us. And may be seen by all. For we ask it in his name. Amen. We will end. By singing.

One of my. Favorite hymns. Of all time. Number 843. Which speaks. Of just this life. Jesus. I my cross have taken.

All to leave. And follow you. Son of man. Despised. Forsaken. Lord of all. I am or do. Perish. Every fond ambition. All I've sought. And hoped.

[ 44 : 48 ] And known. Yet how rich. Is my condition. God. And heaven. Are still my own. Number 843.