

“Through Love Serve One Another”  
Galatians 5:13–26  
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September 4, 2016 – Evening sermon

Prayer:

Father, thank You for Your boundless love, Your amazing grace and how You have poured Your love on us that we would be called Your children. Father, we ask that You would use Your Word and by Your Spirit You would teach us from Your Word. Change us, encourage us and sharpen us as we study Your Word for we pray this in Christ’s Name, Amen.

Let’s start this study by looking in Galatians 5. Galatians 5:13–15 says [13] *For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.* [14] *For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* [15] *But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.*

What amazing love God has given to us. He has lavished His love upon us that we would be called His children. It’s amazing to think that we were dead in sin and God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to die for us. In this love and through this love He calls us to serve one another. Have you ever known someone that serving seemed to just be a natural part of their life? I have known several people like that but one really stands out to me.

In 1998, I was living in Troy, Alabama and Belinda and I had four children. At that time they were 8, 6, 3, and 1 years old. We had been working with Briarwood and Campus Outreach for 13 years and we had been given away to Eastern Shore Presbyterian Church in Fairhope, Alabama to help start a Campus Ministry Outreach there. Because of how much stuff we have with four young children and all that comes with that we get a rental truck and pack it full. We get a few hours of sleep before we have to leave Troy for Fairhope and I’m dreading unloading this rental truck. We drive up to the house we were going to rent in Fairhope and there are ten people standing in front of it which I didn’t expect to see. They are smiling and waving at us and as I pull in I’m thinking “Thank you Jesus!” I was so encouraged that these people were looking forward to helping us unload our truck.

The pastor at Eastern Shore, Mack Griffith prays for us and basically tells me to stand to the side and just tell them where to put all the stuff as they bring it off the truck. My wife is taking care of our four young kids so she can’t help with the truck. Then a tall, slender fellow with straggly hair and dirty jeans walks up and grabs a box and Mack tells him to put the box in the kitchen. After putting the box in the kitchen the man comes back rather quickly to grab another box and Mack says to him “Hey Fred that box goes to the Master Bedroom.” I asked Mack who this man was and Mack could tell I was a little skeptical of him and Mack said “Oh he is a deacon at the church and a local doctor here in town.” Here I had judged him just by his looks and that day Fred unloaded two to one boxes of everyone else that had been there to help. He was amazing.

A couple of weeks later I was driving to Eastern Shore Presbyterian church that is located just on the outskirts of Fairhope right on Highway 98. It is a very busy highway and as I was driving to the church I saw someone on the side of the road picking up trash. As I got closer I noticed it was Fred and he had gone about a half a mile stretch picking up every bit of trash to make the appearance of the church look better. When I got to the church I said to the

secretary, “Fred is out there picking up trash on the side of the road.” She said “Yeah, he does that sometimes” and she just smiled.

A few weeks after that I was walking down the nursery wing at the church and there was Fred. He was painting the walls in the nursery wing of the church. I said “Hey Fred!” and he said “Hey Benny!” and he just kept painting. I said something to the pastor about Fred doing this and the pastor said “Yeah, Fred came to me and asked if it would be okay to paint the walls in the nursery since it looked like they needed painting and I told him it would. So he took a day off to do that.” I thought, “Wow.”

A few weeks later I heard a bunch of yard machinery going outside the window of my office at the church and I looked out to see who was doing all of this and it was Fred. Fred was weed eating around the grounds and cutting branches while his wife was down on her knees pulling weeds out of a flower bed. It was amazing because it seemed that everywhere I turned this man is serving. It didn't stop there because I would see him at social events and he would always be the last person to eat because he wanted to make sure that everyone there got something to eat. If there was a need of a church member's I would try to get others to help with that need or I would usually show up to make sure it was taken care of and Fred would always beat me to it. I don't know how he knew but he was always there. Any time there was an issue Fred was always there to serve if he could.

I learned a tremendous amount while I was there for eight years in Fairhope just by watching Fred's life. Fred loves the Lord. Fred loves people. His love for the Lord and for people came out in his service to others. He served everywhere he was at. That was just a part of his life and learned so much about serving from him. That is what this passage is talking about for you and me in serving others.

Through love serve one another. This word for serve in Galatians 5 here, is the strongest word in the Greek for the English word serve and it literally means to become a slave to another – to give oneself up completely to another person's will. In the book, Building Up One Another, by Gene Getz, it says “This means we are to serve one another in the most devoted sense, to give ourselves totally to one another and to become slaves to one another.”

Jesus taught often on serving, servanthood and loving one another. One of the passages on this comes from Mark 10. Here in Mark Jesus had just told His disciples for the third time that He is going to go to Jerusalem and die for them, us and His people. He tells them that people will mock Him, spit on Him, flog Him, kill Him and that He will rise again. So what was His disciples' response to this?

*Mark 10:35–41 says [35] And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” [36] And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?” [37] And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” [38] Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” [39] And they said to him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, [40] but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” [41] And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.*

Basically the other ten were mad because James and John had beat them to this because they also wanted to sit at the right and left of Jesus in glory. Jesus sees a teachable moment here because He sees the selfishness and worldly thoughts of His disciples. He is also teaching us

here. Mark 10:42–45 says [42] *And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. [43] But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, [44] and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. [45] For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Jesus is basically telling them that their perspective is all wrong here because they are thinking like the world. They were thinking about what others could do for them. They wanted the place of authority where everyone is serving them and they are telling them what to do but that’s not My Kingdom says Jesus. In His Kingdom those who are great are servants and He tells them they are to serve everyone. Jesus even says that He didn’t come here to be served but to serve. He will even lay down His life for them and for all His people. Jesus wants them to go and do the same thing.

God has called us to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. In love He has called us to serve one another. In Martin Luther’s commentary on this passage in Galatians says “Therefore the Apostle has given this rule for the faithful that they should serve one another through love and that they should bear the infirmities one of another and that they should forgive one another. Without this bearing and forbearing through love it is impossible that peace and concord should continue among Christians. You see many things in me that offend you and I see many things in you that I do not like. If we bear not with one another through love there shall be no end to dissention, to discord, envy, hatred and malice. To serve one another in love, that is to instruct him who goes astray, to comfort him that is afflicted, to raise up him that is weak, to help your neighbor by all means possible, to bear with his infirmities, to endure troubles, labor, ingratitude and contempt in the church and in civil life, to obey the magistrate, to give due honor to your parents, to be patient at home with an unruly family – these are works which reason judges to be of no importance but indeed they are such works that the whole world is not able to comprehend the excellence and worthiness thereof.” Here are some incredible insights on serving one another and how important this is in God’s Kingdom for us to serve one another.

In Galatians 5:13 this passage begins by telling us we’re set free and we’re set free to serve one another. John 8:36 says [36] *So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.* God has set us free through Jesus Christ. We are set free both from and to. Colossians 1:13–14 says [13] *He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, [14] in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.* Romans 6:18 says [18] *and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.* We are set free from the guilt of sin and the penalty of sin, death and hell. We are set free from the bondage of sin. From the tyranny of Satan, we’re set free from fear.

We are not only set free from but we’re set free to. We are set free to in Christ. We are set free to follow Christ, to serve Christ, to produce the fruit of Christ, to do the good work that He created us to do and to glorify Christ. In this passage we’re set free through love to serve one another. The Cambridge Bible for schools and colleges makes this statement; ‘By love serve one another. The service of God and of man for His sake is a lone perfect freedom. Too much stress cannot be laid on the expression ‘serve one another.’ Act as a slave to your fellow men. This is true Christian liberty.’

So how do we experience true Christian liberty as we serve everyone around consistently? It’s not natural for me. For some of you it may be a natural thing to serve consistently. In order to do this, it is supernatural but God does begin this work in us to move in

us to serve one another by His love. That's why it says in the text, 'through love serve one another.' Love is the means and the motivation of our serving of one another. So whose love is it when it says 'through love serve one another'? Is it talking about Christ's love for us or His love that He poured in us or our love back to Christ or our love to one another? It is talking about every one of those loves but it begins with Christ's love for us as He does a work in our life through the lavishness of His love on us and His Spirit in us which enables us to repent. For that is where it starts.

II Corinthians 5:14–15 says [14] *For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;* [15] *and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.* Christ's love controls, compels and constrains us. As we understand the deep, deep love of Christ, His amazing grace and the depth of the Gospel where we didn't deserve anything and we were dead but He made us alive, this love will move us and motivate us to love Him, one another and to serve one another. As we grow deeper in our love for Him we will grow deeper in our service and love for one another.

Ephesians 5:1–2 says [1] *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.* [2] *And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.* William Hendrickson in his commentary on Galatians shares these thoughts about through love serve one another. "What is meant by this love? By means of one brother voluntarily serves the other. Such ingredients are deep affection, self-sacrificing tenderness, genuine sympathy, readiness to render assistance, yearning to promote the brother's welfare, spontaneous giving and forgiving. All of these enter into it." Where Christ is there is love and where love is there is service. So it makes sense when there is little service in our lives, there is little understanding of love but when there is great love there is great service.

When we talk about serving one another it is always a challenging passage because there is a battle, a war going on within us. We truly desire to love and serve one another yet we desire too often to serve ourselves or to be served by others. We battle against our flesh daily. Here in Galatians 5 it goes on to talk about that battle but it also talks about the power we have in Christ by the Holy Spirit in order to live for Him, love one another and serve one another. As we read through the rest of this passage in Galatians 5 notice the battle that is waging war within us and the power God has given us through His Spirit that we might be able to walk in the Spirit to love and serve one another.

Galatians 5:16–26 says [16] *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.* [17] *For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.* [18] *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.* [19] *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,* [20] *idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,* [21] *envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.* [22] *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* [23] *gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.* [24] *And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

[25] *If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.* [26] *Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

The Spirit and the flesh are at war here for they are opposed to each other and to keep us from doing the things that we desire to do. We are set free from sin in the sense that we set free from the guilt, penalty and bondage of sin yet we're not totally set free from the impact of sin because we have the 'old man' or the flesh that is still residing in us and wars against us every day in the things that we desire to do. Praise God the Holy Spirit is fighting and helping us to win that battle daily as we die to ourselves. We also battle against Satan and the lies of the world. The Disciples battled against the same lies from the world that we do. Do you feel that battle? I do. It is a battle every day that is waging within.

Kris Lundgaard, in his book titled The Enemy Within: Straight Talk About the Power and Defeat of Sin, says, "When believers consent to sin there is always a secret reluctance. In Galatians 5:17 not only does the flesh war against the Spirit but the Spirit in us wars against the flesh. The Spirit in us is grieved by our sin and can't delight in it. Since the believer is worn with the sin-hating Spirit he can never give himself to sin fully or absolutely the way the unbeliever can. The believer's consent is like a ship sailing against the wind. The wind may be stiff or light, perhaps even hardly felt but it is always there in the believer's renewed heart resisting the consent to sin. When Peter denied the Master three times there was something inside him that hated what he was doing. When he heard the rooster crow that something burst into tears and 'yes' he said willingly but even as he swore "I don't know" and called down curses on himself, he loved Jesus. His faith never completely failed. This secret reluctance in the believer isn't simply a general opposition to sin as a bad thing yet every individual sinful thought, word, action or feeling, God's grace fights against the will's consent. Just as the flesh resists every spiritual act, the Spirit resists every sin."

Praise the Lord He has given us His Holy Spirit and that His Spirit is waging war against our flesh. As we're battling, sure we are dying to ourselves daily, but the Spirit who has made us alive is waging war. He is taking that Word that is deeply rooted in our hearts and lives and He is empowering us to live the life that God has called us to live. So we have that power to serve for it's the Holy Spirit that empowers to die to ourselves, to live to Christ and to love and serve one another.

Acts 1:8 says [8] *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.* That same Holy Spirit that came at Pentecost, in all His power, is the same Holy Spirit that lives in us. He has given, will give and is giving us the power to live the Christian life, not perfectly until we're in glory, but He will empower us and give us what we need to live the Christian life. He will produce the fruit of Christ in our lives. He has poured the love of Christ in our heart that we might serve one another.

He tells us in this Galatians 5 passage the importance of walking in the Spirit. In order to love and serve one another we have to walk in the Spirit. We have to walk every moment of every day in total submission to Christ and the Spirit of the Lord. We have to live a surrendered life to the Lord in trusting in Him. No matter what, we have to trust, obey and follow Him. That is what means to walk in the Spirit – surrender, trust and obey. We are to be controlled by Him moment by moment.

This passage also talks of being led by the Spirit. We need to make every decision of our life according to Word of God, being led by the Spirit and in the strength of the Spirit in our life. That is what it means to be led by the Spirit. William Hendrickson said "When the Holy Spirit leads believers He becomes the controlling influence in their life." What is the controlling influence in your life? It needs to be the Holy Spirit, Christ in us, moment by moment every day.

The Holy Spirit by His power and wisdom will actively lead us in the will of God. We must actively walk and be led by the Spirit.

We cannot let anything keep us from being Spirit led. There are many things that tend to come against us. No matter what the world says or the thinking of the world is, we have to follow Christ and be led by the Spirit. Our flesh and our desires are strong and they battle within us but we have to follow the Spirit no matter what we are feeling or where our emotions are. We walk by faith and according to the Spirit's leading, according to the Word of God. We can't be led by circumstances or the consequences of making decisions but we have to be led by the Spirit of God.

William Hendrickson said "What does the life of one who is being led by the Spirit look like?" I took what he said that followed his question and paraphrased it to give to you. They daily praise the Lord for being set free from sin and with joy praise the Lord for His grace, forgiveness and righteousness. They are growing to hate sin more and more in purpose by God's strength to kill it in their life and when they do sin they repent quickly and turn to Christ. They love to worship God and they are engaged in personal and corporate worship. They love the Word of God and are seeking God through His Word as a pattern of their life. The fruit of the Spirit are evident in the growing of their life and they are using their gifts that have been freely given by the Spirit to build up others and further Christ's Kingdom. They don't live a perfect life for no one lives a perfect life but they are growing. They live a life full of grace and full of pursuit of Christ and the things of Christ. We have to be led by the Holy Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of service. Think of the nine fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5 in terms of serving one another through love. Galatians 5:22–23 says [22] *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.* Patience is a good one – to be patient when you serve others. These fruits are fruits that will serve one another.

As a reminder, Galatians 5:13 says [13] *For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.* Christ has set us free to bring Him glory, not to bring glory to ourselves. Christ has set us free to do His will, not to do our will. Christ has set us free to bear His fruit, not to gratify our flesh. Christ has set us free to build His Kingdom, not build our kingdom. We are set free by Christ for Christ to serve one another.

The love of Christ is what moves us to serve one another, to put other's interests before our own, to see the needs of others and meet those needs, to wait on others and be last in line, to do acts of service, to give a listening ear to someone who is hurting when we don't have time, to give grace to someone who said something hurtful to us and not lash back, to forgive others who have wronged us, to be faithful to your spouse, to show honor and respect to your parents, to work hard with excellence at your job or school, to give time and resources to others and make them successful, to use your gifts and talents to further the Kingdom of God and to build others up. This is what it means to in love serve one another. Praise the Lord He has given us His Holy Spirit to empower us to love and serve. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. Thank You Jesus for loving us so much that you lavished Your love upon us and that You served us and gave Yourself for us when we were Your enemies. When we were dead in sin You died on the cross for our sin and You broke into our lives, breathed Breath and gave us eternal life. You forgave us all of our sins

and gave us Your righteousness. Thank You Jesus for loving and serving us. Father, we ask that You would give us a hunger and thirst for You and that You would make us men and women who grow more and more in love and through love we will serve one another, Amen.

### Power Point

I. Serve One Another

II. Set Free to Serve

III. Love is our Means and Motivation to Serve One Another

IV. Our Battle to Serve

V. The Power to Serve

Application:

⇒ Through Love Serve One Another