

### **Galatians 5:18-end**

*18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, 21 envy,<sup>[a]</sup> drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

#### *The Fruit of the Spirit*

*22 By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. 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 be guided by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.*

### **Luke 11 42-46**

*42 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and herbs of all kinds, and neglect justice and the love of God; it is these you ought to have practiced, without neglecting the others. 43 Woe to you Pharisees! For you love to have the seat of honour in the synagogues and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces. 44 Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without realizing it."*

*45 One of the lawyers answered him, "Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us too." 46 And he said, "Woe also to you lawyers! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not lift a finger to ease them."*

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The passage from Galatians about the fruits of the Spirit is well known to us, and as Andrew is looking at each of the "Fruits" in his thoughts for the day, I thought we'd turn to the works of the flesh - or one of them.

Not the ones Paul describes (which I trust most of us do not do) except as he comes down the list, he mentions jealousy, anger, quarrels and dissensions (bitter differences of opinion) which may be ours sometimes. Little negatives can become bigger ones, which can separate us from God and our neighbour.

But Jesus also saw and spoke of another unspiritual attitude and action that Paul does not mention. That is **hypocrisy**.

He particularly pointed it out here to the Pharisees, who counted themselves as devout Godly people, but who condemned those who did not think like themselves and did not always seem to follow their own advice. It is Matthew who uses the word hypocrite and hypocrisy but our passage from Luke recounts the same sayings of Jesus.

The term **Woe** to you is more like a regret - **alas**. Jesus picks out three ways in which there is hypocrisy. Standing for one thing a Godly upholding of the law, but actually ignoring what God really wants.

So they pick on very tiny things, like tithing very small quantities of herbs. People may have used more than we do to flavour food, but for the Pharisees to expect people to make a note of what they use and “give a tithe to God” is side-lining the original meaning of giving a tenth of income to God to service his worship and give to the poor. It is unjust in Gods economy and bypasses God’s loving intentions.

Secondly, they expect a high place in society. Not much humility in seeking the place of honour in the synagogue and expecting a bow and a scrape in the marketplace. Respect has to be earned.

Jesus does not think these extreme upholders of the law love God and neighbour before themselves - as the law of God required and requires.

Thirdly, the last saying “You are like unmarked graves and people walk over them without realizing it” is a bit obscure. Probably they have made a decree that a person walking over an unmarked grave, even quite unwittingly, will become morally - and/or spiritually - unclean. Jesus sees that following these decrees they make as unwittingly leading a person morally/spiritually away from God.

And the lawyers, who will have drawn up the legal side of the pharisees interpretations of the law, protest that Jesus is insulting them too. Jesus agrees - again with regret.

He thinks of detailed legislation about burdens a man may or may not carry on the sabbath. I quote “**he may not carry a burden in his right or left hand or to his chest, or on his shoulder. He may carry it on the back of his hand, or with his foot or his elbow - or in his ear!**” and of course this would incur penalties and fines. What a burden on a poor man having to feed his animals, take food to his aged parents or the like. Not very loving and not really in the spirit of keeping the Sabbath Holy.

I read “It was only Jesus Christ who is the only one to know what is going on inside, who could make these judgements.”

I remember my grandmother telling me I should not sew on the sabbath. A legacy of a Victorian age. But I wasn’t sewing for work, I was doing it because it was a leisure activity - I enjoyed it! I’m afraid as I didn’t think God was being dishonoured, I carried on enjoying it, and thanking God for the activity! Was that hypocritical?

Hypocrisy can be very subtle, however. We do need to value ourselves appropriately but thinking of our selves more highly than we ought to think is a fine line. And an even finer one is thinking, because we know the love of God for us and we try to follow his ways, that we are superior to others. Even superior in the way we worship. Not what God would want.

We have something so good and we want others to have it too, but we need to know too our own shortcomings, even hypocrisy, and that **God knows them as well**. That should make us more aware of the greatness and overwhelming love of God that he sent Jesus to show his forgiveness and the way back to him.