

# Galatians

## Chapter 5 - Christ Sets Free

### Agitators Deprive You of Freedom (vs.7-12)

**Galatians 5:7-12:** You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is. But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished. I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.

Well, in reading these verses, you can tell that Paul feels impassioned about what he believes. It is our faith that came into being because of the Spirit of God within me.

He beckoned me. He called me. It's inexplicable, really when you consider it. I received the Lord at a young age, but I'm saying to myself, "What made me bow my knee? What caused me to cry and ask for salvation?" The power of God moving, inspiriting me.

As Galatians will say, we now have the Spirit of God's son within us that cries out, "Abba! Father!" To realize that we can talk to God as our Father is such an amazing thing. I mean, you go to the Old Testament, and you see that the Israelites are very clear about, "I don't want to go up the mountain. You go, Moses, because lightning, all these noises; things are shaking. I don't want to go up there." And you realize that God who created the universe wants to be my Father; desires me to have a relationship with Him. It's such a miraculous thing. Something happens in our life, and we're moved.

The way that Paul puts it, in particular in Chapter 3, if you look at the very beginning and he's kind of confused because in in so many respects, it's easy for the world to get into our lives and we begin to forget just how marvelous our salvation was.

(Galatians 3:1) “You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?”

When you heard that message of Christ dying on the cross for you, it was almost as if the picture was right in front of you. That you were watching Him die on the cross for you because His salvation became your own, and you were touched by this.

Paul writes this in Galatians 2:20,

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

“I came to the realization that somebody died for me.” God died for me, gave His life for me, and it was like we saw that, right? I mean, he's telling everybody, “You remember that moment? It was like God moved in your heart, and you said, ‘That was for me.’” A spiritual change takes place. Were renewed; were recreated, and how miraculous that is. You just can't explain it.

Unfortunately, the world gets back into our thoughts and before long, as he says in Galatians 3:1, “Somebody's bewitched you, and you forget this whole thing of what really happened.”

He makes mention of it in Galatians 4:15 as well,

“Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.”

And we realize that Paul had come into their setting at a time in which he was having trouble with his eyes. “What happened to the sense of blessing? Why aren't we on fire the way we used to be?”

So, if you look with me in Galatians 5:7, the passage opens up,

“You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?”

So, all the way through the Book of Galatians, he's bringing us back to that foundational point. It is the gospel that is the focus of Galatians. Obviously, it's the focus of our faith. The gospel, we clearly understand, is

the good news. The good news that God loves you. The good news that God is saving you. The good news that God is coming again. The good news that God is eradicating all your sin as far as the east is from the west, to remember them no more. Talk about all the wonderful, good news about the gospel; how He transforms our life, how it was all Him and none of us. If in fact there's another gospel that's being preached, a gospel that says, "Well, it's kind of part of us and part of Him," Paul says, "Let him be accursed if he preaches that because it's all Him." I mean, there's nothing freeing in thinking that my salvation is based a little bit on my works. There's nothing freeing about that because I'm wondering, "Then, how much?" And "Then, what exactly does He want me to do to be saved? Is it possible for me to be that kind of person?" Of course, by the works of righteousness, no man, no flesh should be justified. So, all the way through the Scripture, it's telling us this. Somebody is hindering.

His question that he brings up is,

(Galatians 5:7) “You were running well; who hindered you...”

“Who caused that?” I think it's interesting that Paul doesn't seem to know exactly who it was. He would have mentioned him like John does in his epistles of John; he mentioned specific people. Paul doesn't know who it was, but something is permeating. Something is shifting around, hidden. As Jude will say, “There are those that are in your love feasts like hidden reefs.” They're there. You can't put your finger on them, but the thoughts have been flying, and it's caused you to lose a sense of freedom.

The church, according to 1 Corinthians 3, it's very clear, there is only one foundation. There's only one foundation that the church can build upon, and it's Jesus Christ. Our hope and our desire is to preach Him. Paul will say to the Corinthians, “We came to you knowing nothing, but Christ crucified. We didn't come with persuasive words of wisdom, but we came pointing to Him. It's only Him.”

Man gets in the mix and before long somebody's talking about how good they are or we're talking about, “We're

from this particular sect, or this particular influence.”

Before long, we're talking about the people that we know rather than the person that saved us, and it doesn't take long before the conversation goes awry, and we begin exalting all the wrong things. I remember a number of years ago there was a church that I had attended, and they were having a church split. I went to the pastor, I said, “So, what's the problem?” And he said, “Well, a couple came into our church and started teaching a class on the side, and they started teaching ultra-dispensationalism.” And if you're sitting there going, “I have no idea what he just said.” Then I say, “Praise God.”

But the point was that they were proclaiming things that were outside of the foundation of why we meet. The gospel is the pillar and the support of the church. It is what we're about. It is us proclaiming Christ, not proclaiming man's wisdom. It's not proclaiming a philosophy or a method. It is us proclaiming Christ, and to get off of that, things begin to go awry. People begin to talk about all kinds of things that they shouldn't be talking about and before long, the wrong emphasis comes within the body, and a loving fellowship seems to turn on each

other over something that never was the foundation of the church.

If you look with me in Philippians 2, we realize that Paul is calling the church to unite. Strange that he would have to do that. It says this at the very beginning of Chapter 2,

(Philippians 2:1) “Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,

(Philippians 2:2) make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

(Philippians 2:3) Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit...”

That is to say, you don't come in with your own agenda. We come in to exalt Christ, period. How uncomplicated is that? How wonderful that salvation message, that wonderful gospel unites us.

(Philippians 1:27) “Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ...”

What was the conduct worthy of the Gospel of Christ? Well, here we go, you're only pointing to Him. Your conversation isn't about your greatness, or your degrees, or pedigrees, or anything else. It's about how wonderful God is. You want to talk about God? I'm with you. You don't want to talk about God? I don't have much to say because whatever conversation it is, it will soon go awry. See, it will soon divide, because somewhere along the line your opinion is going to be different than mine. I know that's shocking, but your opinion is going to be different. Our faith isn't about opinions; our faith is about the truth.

Paul will write this to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:16,

“... great is the mystery of godliness...”

Now, that phrase comes off of him saying that the church is the pillar and support of the truth, and the realization that in order for anybody to be pleasing to God, it's a mystery. It is the mystery of the gospel. When you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, He changes your heart. He transforms. You're not the same person. If any man is in Christ, you become born again. Old things have

passed away. All things have become new in Christ Jesus. That's a rebirth. That's a born again. I didn't do that. You didn't do that. God transformed me because of my love for Him, because He was first place in my life. Godliness is actually a mystery. You can't make yourself be godly. The harder you try, the less godly you are because you just get frustrated and miserable and angry at everybody else because they're not as good as you which makes you feel better for just a short time. Then, now you feel more miserable. It's a long story, but the point is that there is no peace for the wicked, but it's only through the rest of Christ.

So, Philippians 1:27 says,

“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

Now my question is, what unites the church? The answer is very simple. We have one focus, the gospel of Christ. How freeing it is when you think about it, because you

don't need to come into the church saying, "In order for me to be somebody, what do I have to do?" You just come in and you start right away loving God, and we're just immediately attached. I mean, isn't that freeing when you think about it, that you don't have to jump through any hoops, and you don't have to prove yourself to anybody? You just love God because of what He's done for you and wow, are we so united. When we talk together, we're talking about how wonderful this gospel is. Not only the hope that's within us, but how the opportunities then begin to afford themselves, or we begin to see or realize wonderful opportunities to share this gospel with somebody else and the church becomes a light. We encourage one another, for what purpose? To proclaim the gospel, whether it be in word or in deed, we encourage each other. We say, "Brother, you want to get your life right, you want to do the right thing so that we can be a light." Let your light so shine before men that they would see your good works and glorify God in heaven. We're not doing the good works to be saved. We're doing the good works that our light would shine, that the gospel would be proclaimed, and we begin to

unite around this work. We go out into the world, and we get beat up and whacked up and we come back to the church, and we then surround each other and begin to encourage one another and say, “Brother, let me pray with you. Let me let me mend you. Let me help you so we can go back out into the battlefield and proclaim that wonderful gospel because that's why we exist.”

It is the main point of Galatians. If you go all the way back with me, Paul states this,

(Galatians 1:1) “Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead).”

(Galatians 1:3) “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

(Galatians 1:4) who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.”

(Galatians 1:6) “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel.”

If you look at the end of verse 7, they “want to distort the Gospel of Christ.”

(Galatians 1:8) “...a gospel contrary...”

(Galatians 1:9) “...a gospel contrary...”

This isn't our gospel. The gospel is very clear what it's about. Not by any works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His grace and mercy, He saved us.

We come to Galatians 4, and there's obviously people that are hindering. You don't know who they are, but they've caused freedom to be drawn away. Freedom is that sense of, “How wonderful it is that God loves me, and I am now free from my sin. How wonderful it is that it's all about Him and not about me. How wonderful it is that I don't have to jump through hoops and how wonderful it is that I don't have to impress everybody. How wonderful it is that I don't have to please men. How

wonderful that I'm free from all these things because they can really weigh you down.” And the gospel is freeing, but then you start hearing whispers and you start hearing murmurings. After a while, you begin to stay a little bit longer and you begin to listen to what people are saying and they take your focus off of the wonderful love of God. I mean, Hebrews says that we should set our eyes on Him. He's the author and perfecter of faith. Colossians says that we should set our affections on things above, but somehow, we start being drawn away and other things come in. In this particular context, people are talking legalistically or they're talking about the Law, “Unless you do these things, unless you do these things; unless you jump these hoops.” But that's not what the church has been saying. And this is what, because the church says it's the gospel, but there have been those that have crept in that have begun to feed other things into the body. Because of that, there's disruption. “Hindering” would be the word that is used.

You see the same thing if you look with me in Titus 1. In which Paul is very much concerned that there are many

rebellious men. Here again, this may be a shock to you, but there's a lot of people that are extremely rebellious, and there are empty talkers. I think about all the letters, all the epistles that are written, and so many of them are focused on people coming in, disturbing the church. I mean, I love people coming into the church. I'm so thankful that we have visitors. Don't try to change us because we're not changing the message. So, you're going to be miserable and pretty much out before long, if in fact you try to move this message because we're not moving. We stand on the gospel. We know where we stand. We're the pillar and support of the truth.

You go all the way back to Korah's rebellion with Moses, and remember what they said before God? Remember what they said before the whole group? They go, "Who made Moses number one? I mean, we're just as holy as he is." I hear that all the time, "Who made you pastor?" Well, God. So, that's the same thing that fundamentally God said as He says, "Call him out of the tent, bring them here in front of everybody. If I don't open up this earth

and swallow them alive, then obviously Moses isn't the guy, but if I open up the earth and swallow him alive, Moses is the guy." What do you think happened? Yeah, they all go straight to Sheol in front of everybody. Why? I mean, Aaron and Miriam start questioning Moses too, and God says, "I put him there." This is why we believe very strongly in ordination. I don't believe somebody should be in office because they went to college. I believe they should be in office because they were ordained, and they were recognized by the body of Christ that the Spirit of God was moving in their lives. Are there people that fall to the wayside? Absolutely. Did Judas? Yeah. Was he chosen? Yes. That's very interesting, isn't it, when you look at that? So, you have those that fall away.

Nevertheless, God still chooses them for a purpose, and God is the one that orchestrates this. People will come in and they'll go, "Yeah, but I think I'm just as much in authority as you are." You're not any more than a child is in authority over their parent. My kids used to ask me, "Why are you the one in charge?" And I said, "Because I was born first. It really doesn't get any more complicated.

If you were born first, then you'd be in charge, but it didn't happen that way.”

If you look in Titus, it says this,

(Titus 1:10) “For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision (Jews),

(Titus 1:11) who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families...”

You see the church getting upset? It's because there are empty talkers and deceivers because somehow, the conversation got off of God and got onto whatever subject it is. It's bizarre how many different kinds of things that people can bring up that are so against God.

Galatians 5 says,

(Galatians 5:7) “You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?”

What is the truth of the gospel? It's all God. What should be preached from the pulpit? It's all God. We're all saved by His grace and His love, and this should never move off of this pulpit. There's a little plaque here. Let me read it to

you. It's actually a quote from Psalm 29:2, "Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name..." We should never stop doing that, but once the conversation starts going into the realm of "me" or "what I want," you watch, destruction comes. It's very interesting how he equates this.

If you look with me in Galatians 4:8,

"This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you."

This didn't come from a calling. This came from somebody else outside. This wasn't the Spirit of God moving in your heart. You didn't come up with this idea yourself.

Somebody started planting ideas in your head. Our salvation was so powerful that the Spirit of God literally called us, and we can say, "I believe because He is real in my life." *"You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart."*

"This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you."

Then, he gives this interesting illustration that we've read before,

(Galatians 5:9) "A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough."

This is used in 1 Corinthians 15 as well as it's used in the gospels.

In fact, if you look with me in Matthew 16, it is this point that I want to focus on today, and that is to just how subtle that leaven is, and why he would use the analogy of leaven. That's a very interesting thought in and of itself. It shouldn't surprise you that the first people that were trying to interject it would be the Pharisees and Sadducees. So, like in Galatians, there were those that were all about elevating themselves. Scripture says that the Pharisees do all their works to be noticed by men. So, the gospel is pointing to God. Man's religion is always pointing to himself.

(Matthew 16:1) “The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.

(Matthew 16:2) But He replied to them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’

(Matthew 16:3) “And in the morning, ‘There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?”

(Matthew 16:4) “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign...”

Now, a sign, fundamentally, without us going into too much detail about this, it's just somebody seeking something that they want. So, they're always demanding; they're always requesting; they're always wanting something for themselves. So, it is to be noted in verse 4 that “adulterous” means being unfaithful, and unfaithful would really focus on the point of unwilling to trust in God and only wanting what they want. What makes somebody adulterous? They're unfaithful to the one that they have devoted themselves to. Ok, so, who are you trusting in? God. So, why do you keep coming up to Him and saying, “Do this for me, do this for me, do this for me. I want this”? Why are you so in love with the things that you desire? Why don't you love Him? Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. So, if you love the

world, you love somebody else. You're an adulterous generation.

So, the point is,

“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.” And He left them and went away.”

Now, Christ is going to draw this into analogy with the disciples, and He's going to warn them about the leaven.

(Matthew 16:5) “And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread.”

Now, we know that Christ had just fed the 4,000 thousand at the end of Chapter 15. So, they begin to discuss with each other about having bread.

(Matthew 16:6) “And Jesus said to them, “Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

(Matthew 16:7) They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, “He said that because we did not bring any bread.””

Now the point is that they didn't get the point. I mean, we won't try to get into their heads. It's just that they totally

missed the point. The question is, what exactly is the point? What's interesting is that Jesus clearly knew where they were heading on this. He knew the tendency of man to focus on his own desires, whether it's self-gratification or self-preservation, you be the judge, but man is self-consumed, not God consumed. If in fact we were consumed with God, then we would be faithful. If we're consumed with other things, we're unfaithful. So, what is seen is that the disciples are thinking about themselves. They're thinking about, "How in the world are we going to get the bread?" which is trusting in themselves. But there's something also very subtle in this whole text that you may not pick up on. You might want to underline it. It says this in verse 7, "They began to discuss this among themselves..."

That's a key phrase. You're going to see it again in verse 8, "But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread?"

Now, they could have come to Jesus, and they could have said, "How are we going to eat tomorrow?" They didn't.

Why? Because at that moment, they began to think in terms of preserving perhaps their dignity, preserving perhaps some facsimile of position, but they weren't going to show themselves unbelieving. So, when we're having a problem with something, our tendency is to unfortunately, not talk to God, but to start talking with everybody else. "You know, I got this problem." Or we might not even say "problem," we might say, "Do you know such and such has a problem? Do you know how he feels about that?" We might bring them in, or we might bring some conversation in that would somehow, maybe even agree with our side or our way of thinking; would somehow get the conversation on us and what we're going to do about something. The thing that would probably be most unsettling to us is if the person said, "Have you talked to God about this?" Because it's not talking to God that's on their mind, and I personally believe that's the leaven. You don't see it coming because you start getting into this self-protective mode, and before long, you're devising ways to do things and leaving God out of the picture. Now, let me just tell you where that's going to lead. That's not only going to lead to

frustration, but it's also going to lead to gathering more people to think like you. You're going to come up with some kind of solution, and before long you're going to begin to stir other people and you're going to say, "How does that leaven spread?" Now, why he would use the example of leaven is to be noted and let me get a little scientific with you. Quite frankly, I'm not a chef, but my wife actually used to do this. She used to add the leaven to the dough and then she put it in the room where our air conditioner didn't work too well and the sunlight shone in and you would come in a few hours later, and you could smell these wonderful rolls throughout the house. [Why don't you do that anymore?] Anyway, the picture here is that you just put a little leaven in the dough and what begins to happen is, and here again, I'm going to get very technical with you, the dough produces carbon dioxide. The carbon dioxide actually forms gas pockets in the dough which make it rise. Now, we're seeing that something that's interjected makes something rise, and I don't know if you're feeling the pride in that or not, but something's rising. Now, beyond the rising, if you leave it too long, it will ferment and it will become

alcohol; which before long, it now controls you. Your thought is initially, “Yeah, I'm just kind of working this out.” And Jesus goes, “You don't even want to start because it's going to come in; you're going to start feeling really good about yourself. After a while, you don't even want to change anymore. It's not going to go well. It's going to go worse.” You're going to go, “Wow, I'm a lot bigger.” He goes, “Yeah. You don't want to sit there any longer than that.”

In this particular passage, what you read is that the emphasis seems to be, “You're talking among yourselves.”

(Matthew 16:12) “Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Which was the trusting in themselves, wasn't it?

To clarify it even more, if you look with me in Luke 12, (Luke 12:1) “Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His

disciples first of all, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”

What is hypocrisy? It's not being transparent. It's putting on a façade. It's discussing things among yourselves, and before long, it starts permeating the whole body and ideas start going.

The passage reads,

(Luke 12:2) “But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.”

What is “leaven”? You're dealing with things yourself. You've stepped away from the gospel. The gospel is all God. He saves. No matter how difficult your problem is, no matter how great your sin is, He saves, and you can come to Him, and you can confess Him. You could be straightforward with Him. “No, I’ve got to talk to somebody about it.” No, you don't. Now, it doesn't mean you can't share. It doesn't mean you can't receive help and counsel. But what it's talking about is that before long you begin to rationalize your way of thinking, and you

begin to discuss with one another, and you become haughty and high minded and full of yourself. Then, you don't immediately just tell everybody how you feel, you just start whispering. That's all you have to do.

Proverbs 18, if you look with me, it kind of gives this sense as well. It's almost like everything goes back to food.

(Proverbs 18:8) “The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels,

And they go down into the innermost parts of the body.”

Have you ever had anybody come up to you and they go, “Come here. I’ve got to tell you something”? “What? What?” “Shh. I don't want anybody else to know, just you and me.” There's just something about that. It feeds into your senses. “Someone's willing to confide to me. I must be pretty special, and it's a secret only I can know.”

There's kind of an esoteric thing in that. So, you begin to treasure it up. It might be about somebody in the church, or it could be about something you don't like, and you just begin to share, “Did you ever feel this way?” “Well, that's really special, he shared it with me, but it also gives me

ammunition in case I ever need it against somebody.”  
When it says, “they go down into the innermost parts,” it actually means you treasure it up for another opportunity. Scandals, gossip, all those kinds of things, and evil stories are easily swallowed. I mean, for some strange reason, the good news is not grabbed onto as readily as a whisper of bad.

Proverbs 26 will say the same thing and really warn us against those that will bring in information. Once again, I do think it's interesting that Paul doesn't even know who's bringing in this information which is telling us what? The guys are whispering. Yeah.

Proverbs 26, if you look with me, it says that you've got to be aware of “the man who deceives his neighbor,  
And says, “Was I not joking?””

Of course, by that time, he's already done his damage.  
Then he goes on and says,

(Proverbs 26:20) “For lack of wood the fire goes out,  
And where there is no whisperer, contention quiets  
down.”

Which is telling us if you have whispers, what is being built up? Contention.

(Proverbs 26:21) “Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire,  
So is a contentious man to kindle strife.

(Proverbs 26:22) The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels,  
And they go down into the innermost parts of the body.”

I mean, a lying tongue is what this is about.

He says in verse 25,

“When he speaks graciously, do not believe him...”

I like conversations that kind of start off with whispering, “You know, I really love the body, but this...” Or they'll start listing all the wonderful things, and then they'll throw in the one leaven. That's destructive.

“When he speaks graciously, do not believe him,  
For there are seven abominations in his heart.

(Proverbs 26:26) Though his hatred covers itself with guile,

His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.”

(Proverbs 26:28) “A lying tongue hates those it crushes,  
And a flattering mouth works ruin.”

Whisperers.

You know, throughout, there's all these warnings of rebellious people that come in and they literally push a spirit of lawlessness. (2 Thessalonians 2)

You're going to have people that come into the church, according to 2 Peter 2, and they will actually exploit men and people in the church with their greed. In other words, they'll begin to use people and begin to beckon them through maybe money or means or whatever. I think that's why Proverbs says, “If a rich man wants you to sit at the table, put a knife to your throat because he probably wants something if he invited you.” Not those in the church, but I'm just saying.

When you think about these things, you realize that there are a lot of influences that could easily come. The one simple question is, are they wanting to proclaim the gospel? Are they wanting to elevate Christ or do they have another agenda? Is their focus, "What is God saying and how can we encourage you to draw closer to Him?" Or is their focus maybe a little beef; maybe a thought; maybe an idea that goes aside from, that they bury indifference with something? Is it divisive in any way? Scripture is warning us about these things that come in. The way that Paul ends this particular passage, he says, "I wish that they would mutilate themselves." Now here again, we might perceive that being a little overboard. Let me maybe translate it. It does sound better in the translations. He's literally saying, "I wish that they would cut themselves off from us." I mean, if they're so miserable, why don't they leave? I've often wondered about that, but no, they just keep throwing out that leaven, and it just causes more people to rise up. It just causes more people to get drunk with their own desires.

Before long, you know it's fundamentally like, and we'll just end with this passage, Isaiah 28, when he begins to talk about the way that God's people have rebelled against Him and how their pride had literally taken them away, He describes them this way,

(Isaiah 28:1) “Woe to the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim...”

Where did the alcohol come from? You've got to have leaven to make it.

“... And to the fading flower of its glorious beauty...” (that God has given)

He goes on and he talks about,

(Isaiah 28:6) “A spirit of justice for him who sits in judgment,

A strength to those who repel the onslaught at the gate.

(Isaiah 28:7) And these also reel with wine and stagger from strong drink:

The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink,

They are confused by wine, they stagger from strong drink;

They reel while having visions,

They totter when rendering judgment.

(Isaiah 28:8) For all the tables are full of filthy vomit, without a single clean place.”

Where does it lead? Here again, Paul is warning the church you don't want people to come in and hinder. You say, “Well Pastor, how do I stop this?” First of all, don't listen. If someone's implanting things that are destructive, just say, “Brother, you want to talk about the Lord, you want to build somebody up? Fine. I'll pray with you. You want to maybe share some of your own problems that you're wrestling with? We'll pray together and maybe go through Scripture and maybe help you through that, but if you're trying to cause a division or strife in any way, I don't have any part of it.” And you can actually begin to stop the whole thing. I know very much so that God takes us through Scripture at certain periods of time for purposes, and you'd be surprised how much I don't know. I mean, it would just blow your mind. My brother used to say, “I've forgotten more than you know.” I don't know why he would say that to me. I know that God is going to

use it in a message such as this. There are times I have these little conversations with the Lord, I go, “Why are You wanting me to preach on this?” But that's why I just go through one Scripture after Scripture. I don't believe it's good for a pastor to get on a high horse; a “leaven horse.” I don't believe it's good for him to do that and just keep repeating a message, because now there's probably a problem with him, but I do believe that God gives us Scripture. All Scripture is inspired, and He takes us through different passages, and He knows exactly when they're needed and when they're not. So, may the Lord bless this particular message and help us in this time.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we give You thanks for Your word and the clarity of it. Lord, thank You for rescuing us out of that sin that would so easily beset us. How wonderfully freeing Your gospel is, and how You long for us to be there; remain there, as You tell us in Your word, “As you began in this wonderful path of forgiveness and salvation, so walk in this.” And Lord, help us always to walk in the Spirit of

Your power and it to always be about You and not about us. Help us to die to ourselves. Help us to proclaim Your message and unite around the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Heads bowed and your eyes closed. If there's division and strife within your home, there's a wrong focus.

Somebody's thinking about themselves. If there's really any fellowship, if there's any uniting at all, there has to be a united of mind, united heart, and it has to be Christ. Because anyone else, it would just develop in pride. We're beckoning you to get your heart right with God; to love Him more than anything; to not let anybody move you off of that wonderful focus of following Him; of elevating Him; of glorifying God. "To the glory that is due His name."