

“Of Sanctification” part 5, WCF 13.2.3

2021.01.31 Sabbath School Lesson

Hopewell ARPC, Culleoka, TN

WCF 13.2

*This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man;(g) yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part:(h) whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.(i)*

*(g) I Thess. 5:23. (cf. 5:12–28)*

*(h) I John 1:10 (cf. 1:5–10); Rom. 7:18, 23 (cf. 7:14–25); Phil. 3:12 (cf. Php 3:7–16).*

*(i) Gal. 5:17 (cf. 5:13–26); I Pet. 2:11.*

WCF 13.3

*III. In which war, although the remaining corruption, for a time, may much prevail;(k) yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome;(l) and so, the saints grow in grace,(m) perfecting holiness in the fear of God.(n)*

*(k) Rom. 7:23.*

*(l) Rom. 6:14; I John 5:4; Eph. 4:15, 16.*

*(m) I Pet. 3:18; II Cor. 3:18.*

*(n) II Cor. 7:1.*

Gal 5:13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup> For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*”<sup>15</sup> But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

<sup>16</sup> I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

<sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

**Liberty to fight the flesh instead of one another**

**Liberty to keep the law instead of being condemned by it**

**Liberty to walk in the Spirit as our Almighty Ally**

**Liberty to crucify even desires** (“battling” over “brokenness”)

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**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—** transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via [tinysa.com/hopewellarp](http://tinysa.com/hopewellarp))

Lord make us to not to take for granted. The good that you are doing us now in this class and the worship to come and the day which we gather which we visit heaven, even we pray that you'd bless our study now that we would be instructed by Christ our prophet who teaches us the will of God and that your spirit would help us give light to our mind and warm our hearts.

And stir up our wills towards you. We as these things in Jesus name. Amen.

So we come to the third part of the second paragraph of Westminster Confession 13. Ah.

And the first two parts were this sanctification is throughout in the whole man. Yet imperfect in this life. There are abiding still some remnants of corruption and every part. And then this week. We come to this third part whence arises a continual and irreconcilable war. The flesh lusting against the spirit.

And the spirit. Against the flesh. And then you'll notice. The footnoted references just gives us Galatians 5:17, but you remember that? When they give us approved text they mean for us to read and understand and apply it and context and so we will be considering Galatians 5:13 through 26 and then also they give first Peter 2 verse 11.

When psoriasis they continual and irreconcilable war. So, what is it that caused this reconcilable and continual war to arise? One is that whenever God brings someone to faith in Jesus Christ? Gives them union with Christ and dwells them with their him or her with their with his Holy Spirit.

He gives them a desire for righteousness a desire to please Jesus. One of the ways we know that we have been called according to his purpose is he's made us to love him and that one of our favorite verses all things work together for for good for those who are who love God who are the called according to his purpose.

That's how you come. To love him by being called and you cannot be called according to his purpose. You cannot be brought to faith in Christ without coming to love him. We love him because he first loved us but if we love him we keep his commandments. And we've studied already especially from first Thessalonians 5 and seen that the sanctification is throughout in the whole man.

So in every part of how we think how we feel choices behaviors, we make we have this new mission this new desire. To love the Lord and to obey His word and to serve Him and everything that we do. Well, that's our mission but we also have an enemy in opposition and obstacle.

There are still remnants of corruption in every part. We talked about how we are still sinful and in every way we especially spent time in first John 1 if we had had the time to get into Romans 7, we'd have seen that not. Only are we continually still stands sinful that we are walking in the light but we still have darkness in us.

Remember that from last week in God is only light but in us we have that new nature that he has given us because he is light and in him is no darkness at all but we also have remaining sin darkness that remains even as we walk in the light and the light exposes it and we attack it.

So if you have these two things both going on you love God and you have this new desire to please him in every way but you have remaining darkness and it is in every part of who you are and every good that you want to do evil is right there with you Romans 7 says whenever you want to so that it feels like there's a law in your members the that evil is right there with you you have been conscripted who whether a military.

Person or a you know, who's learned it near vocabulary, what does conscripted mean? Drafted into service. January 29th, which was what two days ago. Sorry running on empty two days ago was my dad's birth certificate every day every year. I wish I wish my dad a happy birthday on the 28th and a happy birth certificate day on the 29th he was the firstborn son in Egypt you party when you have the firstborn son they by the time they figured out they hadn't done the recording of the birth yet the office was closed they weren't able to do it until the 29th.

So on my dad's passport and then later on my dad's green card and then on my dad's new American passport says January 29th, that was very important when the draft came. Because there was a lottery by birthday. And if it had been recorded the day that he was born the 28th was within the first the first couple dozen and the 29th was within the last couple dozen so a space of more than 300 in the order of the draft and by God's providence my dad didn't did not end up getting drafted to go to Vietnam and was able to meet my mom and they were able to have a son and you all were able to have me as a pastor yes mister Phil.

What was he born? 45.

1945.

He's. 76 does that help? I wasn't saying that he's 45. Anyway, we don't have that but that much time for illustrations what that means kids is that. It was possible that my dad would have been told by the United States you are in a war whether you like it or not, if you come to Jesus, you are if you belong to Jesus by faith you are in a war, whether you like it or not.

Now, some people will say well. That's not that's not fair. I want to be free but somebody who is a member of an army and is not with his army as it fights a battle is not free. He is AWOL. Those who say if you tell me that I have to fight against my sin you are denying my freedom you are impinging upon my freedom what they're really asking is to be a wall to be absent without leave.

Liberty has a price and liberty has consequences and the liberty that God gives us is not liberty to sin. It is liberty from sin. But the sin is still fighting against you. And so you are if you are free in Christ, you are in a battle. Now if you're in a battle and you're not fighting you are getting killed.

So you ought to fight. And that's where the apostle is talking about in Galatians chapter 5 when he describes what their what their liberty is for what the battle is that they're in and whom they have as an almighty ally. So we've got 14 verses I wonder if we can have 14 readers, but we'll start with Luke who will give us Galatians 5 verse 13.

And then we'll just kind of go around the room take versa to time until we get to verse get through verse 26, please.

So Galatians 5 verse 13 through 26. And if you have a sheet the whole text is on the sheet as well.

But my love served one, another.

All right. How about verse 14?

And you shall note. But the flask against the spirit and spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to one another so that you do not do things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. In other words, the flesh are evident sexual and morality impurity essentiality.

Idolatry sorcery enmity strife jealousy bits of anger, rivalries dissensions divisions.

Envy murders drunkenness revelries and the life forehead just as I also told you passed in time past that those who practice such.

As love joy is thumbs up and gentleness goodness they. Meekness temperance against such there is no longer.

A.

Glory provoking one another.

Called liberty only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh and then goes on to say if you walk in the spirit, you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh for the flesh loss or desires or strives against the spirit and the spirit desires lusts strives against the flesh and these are contrary to one another.

And he picks up a phrase that reminds us of Roman seven from the previous section so that you do not do the things that you wish. God has given you a new desire you delight in his law. In your in your inner being but the things that you want to do you find yourself not doing any say well how is it that I find myself not doing and the answer is because the flesh which remains is warring against against the Holy Spirit and so he says you're free, but use your freedom to fight the flesh instead of one another that's very interesting because often when you hear someone start to protest liberty it comes in in conflict with someone.

Else who wants to talk to them about something some application of what the Bible tells us. God commands us to do what the Bible tells us please is him and and we ought to be stirring one another up to love and good works we ought to be helping one another as he is actually going to if you if we were to turn the page into chapter six brethren if a man is ever taken in any trespass you who are spiritual restore such a one in spirit of gentleness concerning considering yourself as you also.

Be tempted. Did bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. Yes that means in earthly things but it especially means in the context as we are in the battle against our sin that we are to be helping one another. And so when you go to help somebody and they say legalist Pharisee Christianity.

Instead of. Yes, I'm in a battle against my center of that wasn't battling against my sin, thank you. Now, it's going to be more complex complex than that. There's going to be more to it but that is the general idea that you are fighting your flesh first and foremost.

And that we should not be fighting one another. So rather than you've been called to Liberty. Only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the laws fulfilled in one word even in this you shall love your neighbor as yourself, but if you bite and devour one another beware unless you be consumed by one another.

So first thing is if you are free in Christ recognize that you are free from the flesh to fight the flesh and to help one another instead of biting and devouring one another. Your freedom is one that puts you in a battle recognize who the enemy is. So who's the enemy in the battle?

Your flash and so far before we get even to verse 16 who are our allies in the battle. Verse 16 is when we're going to get to the spirit we need almighty. I like as the other allies aren't that impressive. One one another okay, so we're all in the battle and we're loving our neighbor as ourselves.

So I want my neighbor to do well in the battle. It's kind of like, you know, none of us are the champion the spirit is the champion. He is the one who leads the war. He is the one who wins the war and yet we are all alongside one another and we're all doing our part and we, Hold the line together and we advance together and we are to be helping one another.

If you take the analogy when we start complaining or we forget that the sin is the enemy and that my brother is an ally it's like it's like if you say come on, let's advance. He says Liberty accountants. I will not answer you. Or help me advance. I am free from you.

All right, yeah, no. I am free not to help you. Okay it. Make you can see what the apostles say it's ridiculous isn't it but that's what we do with one another in the battle against sin, so the first thing is to recognize who the enemy is and who the allies allies are you shall

love your neighbor as yourself thankfully, however we are not one another is only allies if we were battle would be lost and it would just be getting miserably defeated and going on to bite into our one another because that's what sin does.

Now we have a mighty ally and brother Jeff gave us the mighty ally who's the mighty ally. The holy spirit is our mighty ally and because he's our mighty ally we have a different relationship to the law, so verse 18 if you are led by the spirit you are not under the law.

Now if you talk about fighting our battle in terms of fulfilling the law in verse 14 does being not under the law in verse 18 mean that we are not trying to keep God's law. That makes nonsense of the passage, doesn't it? But when the law was condemning us.

Because that's what the law does it doesn't just give what you have to do it also says what happens to you it says what the penalty is if you break it and what is the penalty for breaking God's law. Death and not just physical death, but the eternal pouring out of the wrath of God upon you.

Okay, so if you come to Jesus you are not under the law like that anymore in fact one of the things that that being under the law or under the condemnation of the law the judgment of the law would mean would be that we would not God would not do us the good of giving us his spirit and helping us to put sin to death but the law can't condemn us anymore.

Why can't the law if you are if you believe in Jesus and you belong to him why can't the law demand that you die that demand that you be punished?

Yes Christ has been punished for us. So if Christ has already been punished for your sins. Would God be right if he punished you for them too? No and so since Christ has been punished for our sins. God is righteous and just remember from last week in first John not just to forgive us our sins but also to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, so we're not under the law that way now we have the ability to fulfill the law so our liberty is not liberty from keeping the law it is liberty for keeping the law.

Are liberty is liberty from being condemned by the law punished by the law. Yes, David.

I don't know the history of it it is a biblical principle but it's also one of those things that I think the Lord has so written on men's hearts that is just undeniable it's like the law of non-contradiction.

Anyway, I'm not sure to answer that question, yes. Jeff. Not.

Our our liberty is not from keeping the law but from being condemned by the law. We are still wonder obligation is obligation of our creatureliness our obligation of all redemption obligation of love unto him he is God and and we are not and there are many ways that we are under obligation to keep the law of God, but we are not under judicial penal obligation.

Because the Lord Jesus has already taken our punishment for it. Okay, so verse 16 is actually a promise isn't it someone read for us verse 16 again.

Anyone.

Walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the loss to the flesh, okay, so the the Holy Spirit who is God is the one who is making us to walk in the spirit and give me 25 again verse 25 someone.

Thank you so the Holy Spirit doesn't just make us alive and say all right now you're on your own but he also and dwells us carries us along as we walk so our liberty is. To fight the flesh not to indulge the flesh or give an opportunity for the flesh verse 13, our liberty is to keep the law not to be condemned by the law our liberty is to walk independence upon someone.

Now. That is something that our pride fights against kids sometimes mom or dad will be helping you do something and you may feel like you are ready to do it by yourself when mom and dad know that you are not. Is that let me do it by myself saying I want to be free.

But it's actually mom and dad's help that has made you free and you're doing well because you're being helped and as soon as they yeah take their hand off of yours if you're you know, you know writing letters and numbers for the first time and and mommy's helping you make the shapes and you see how great the shapes are coming out while mommy's and is helping you and and you say, oh I could do this, let me be free and she takes her hand off and what happens.

It's all misshapen and out of line her dad is is you know, you're not doing the training wheels thing you're doing the the dad kind of holds you steady thing and he runs alongside you and you really like going fast and in fact you might want to go a little faster than dad is ready to go with you and you say let me be free and you start hitting those pedals and suddenly you you veer off and bam under the grass or the gravel of you know, whatever you got next to the sidewalk of the babe or whatever.

You don't realize in the moment that the reason you had liberty to write those letters well or the reason at that point that you had liberty to ride your bike well was because you were dependent upon someone else well we are never going to outgrow dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

Okay so saying that you are dependent upon God that you need the continual help of the Holy Spirit is not an attack on your liberty. He is the one who gives you liberty to actually do it as righteous and so in when you when you feel yourself desperately in need of being in your Bible reading your Bible desperately need of praying desperately in need of the word and the sacrament and prayer in the public worship that's not that's not something that you should feel humiliated about something you should be grateful for that.

God has given you an almighty ally. And one last thing liberty to crucify even our desires verse 24 is increasingly important in our current context somebody read for us verse 24.

Those who are Christ of crucified the flesh with it's affections and lusts even the affections of the flesh even the desires of the flesh are part of what we are crucifying. Wrong affections and wrong desires are sinful. And guilty and something that we are actively killing should be weaker and weaker as we are killing them.

One of the things that we are hearing. When you talk about especially in the area of the seventh commandment and purity in in things related to adultery and fornication and then much worse perversions which are coming to be spoken of in an accepting way the perversions even in in many churches it used to be reformed.

One of the ways of talking about it is in terms of brokenness and that the desires themselves aren't guilty and, The that the affections themselves aren't guilty that that's just the way that we are we're in a broken world and we're broken people. Sin is rebellion against God. Even those affections are part of our rebellion against God.

And what verse 24 says if you are Christ's you haven't just crucified the actions of the flesh. You crucified the affections of the flesh. You've crucified the desires of the flesh. So I would recommend because one of the words. That people use in talking about things this way is the brokenness word that you use the word battling.

To describe your fighting against it because that is what you have been brought into. You have brought into a battle even against the desires themselves, not just against acting upon the desires not just against thinking about or dwelling upon the desires but even the desires themselves. You have been brought into a battle against him.

I used to use the word struggling. But the word struggling sounds not just like battling but it sounds like losing badling doesn't it? We're struggling striving maybe better than than struggling but use that in your own heart in your own mind and then if you get into conversation with others use that battling striving because you have an almighty ally.

As you are in this battle. And to have this kind of defeatist attitude that says well it's okay for me to have these affections and desires and you know, that's just who I am and who God made me and this broken world is a broken person. You don't belong to a broken world anymore if you are in Christ Jesus.

You belong to the next world and you are killing with the Holy Spirit as your Almighty Ally everything that is from the former world. And so, When you talk about your your inclinations to sin that is reflexes of the flesh the those aspects of your former nature that you still have within you don't talk about it in terms of brokenness or think of yourself as helplessly hopelessly struggling think of yourself as battling with the Holy Spirit as your ally and your war yes, sir.

Yes.

It is and that's where we get the language isn't it of of our confession that's one of the things that's so grievous to hear that way of talking about sin in Westminster confession. Presbyterian churches are confession says whence arisath a continual and irreconcilable war and is talking from the Bible there, yes David.

Is put on you, you know defeating the enemy in this struggle and as long as you are trying to battle that you will lose and you will lose every time it's it's you know, I I've no slide Christians myself included where that really troubled me because I was failing.

But I didn't I didn't understand that it's God that fights the battle not me yeah, so if we. So if we had if we had taken the time to do all of the proof text in the previous section, one of them is from Philippians 3 working out your own salvation, the fear and trembling.

Which sounds miserable and helpless until you get to the next part right for what for it is. God who works in you both to will and to work according to his good pleasure for his good pleasure so so that sometimes when it's yeah, if we lose sight of our almighty ally on our dependence on him, we feel like we don't even have the willingness to fight.

But we have one who gives even willingness when we don't have it. And that is a great mercy and that's a that's gonna be a good segue into Isaiah 55 when he basically says come to me in repentance and then he basics and you have nothing in you but that's alright.

I send the rain that has life for the ground. I send my word that has life for your repentance and will be starting our worship. With that in a moment praise God. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven. Forgive us. For so often being able and justifying ourselves as free.

When you have given us the true freedom. And we pray that you would make us serious in our battle. Since it is serious, but joyful in our battle. Since you are our ally and the end and the victory are shore. And so Grant to us, we pray not to be deceived by the ways that our enemies demonic and human.

Would have us to think about our sin and our battle. But Grant to us to remember these truths from your word. We do thank you for those whom you convinced from your word beforehand and granted to us through them to have good summaries that we can confess together as we try to be one another's allies as well and stir one another up and love one another as ourselves.

Grant by the power of your spirit for the sake of your son that we would do so for we ask it in his name. Amen,