

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians

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Chapter Eleven -

Stand Fast Therefore in the Liberty

The fifth chapter of Galatians begins the application of doctrinal truths set forth in the first four chapters. Paul leaves no stone unturned in his attempt to show the Galatians the folly and foolishness of being led about by false teachers, legalizers, and mixers of Law and Grace. He did everything in his power, as the HOLY GHOST dictated to him, to point out that the person who is saved by Grace is kept by Grace. JESUS is not only the author - He is also the finisher of our faith. He is not only the Alpha, but also the Omega - and everything between the A and Z. Paul sums it up thus: "**Ye are complete in Him**" (Colossians 2:10).

The message thus far in the first four chapters of Galatians is the message of salvation by Grace, justification by Grace, victory by Grace - and in the end, final salvation of soul, body and spirit - by Grace. Paul boldly declares the believer to be free from the Law (Romans 8:2); the believer is dead to the Law (Galatians 2:19); the believer is delivered from the Law (Romans 7:6); and Paul clearly declares, "**CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERYONE THAT BELIEVETH**" (Romans 10:4). He brings the message of the first four chapters to a close by saying, "**CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON . . . so then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman (the Law), but of the free (children of Grace)**" (Galatians 4:30-31).

He opens chapter five with these tremendous, precious words: "**STAND FAST THEREFORE IN THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST HATH MADE US FREE, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.**"

Notice the last word of the doctrinal section of the Epistle to the Galatians: "**Free!**" The believer is free . . . he is set at liberty. The believer is delivered by the Deliverer, the Lord JESUS CHRIST, who conquered the world, the flesh and the devil, hell and the grave. Salvation by the marvelous grace of GOD means deliverance and freedom. There is no bondage in Grace:

"**If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed**" (John 8:36).

"**Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**" (John 8:32).

Someone is probably saying, "Mr. Greene, it seems that would cause loose living. Seemingly you are permitting a license to sin." You are dead wrong!

"**As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God**" (Romans 8:14).

"The Lord is my Shepherd . . . He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (Psalm 23).

The HOLY GHOST leads the believer into the paths of right living. GOD never gave any man a permit to sin, and the preaching of pure Grace does not license believers to sin. The truly born-again child of GOD does not crave the beggarly elements of the world. We are free indeed . . . not free to sin, but free to serve the Lord JESUS from the heart, because of love - not because of fear, commandments, and compulsion. God does not compel sons to serve the SAVIOUR. The sons of GOD serve Him because they love Him. We love Him because He first loved us. The believer is dead to the Law - but alive unto GOD.

Notice the words of Galatians 5:1: **"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."** Paul is simply saying here: "Stand fast, be firm, do not surrender one mite, one iota, of your liberty!"

I have been traveling for more than twenty-eight years in evangelistic work. I have been in churches that are supposed to be fundamental Bible churches, but beloved, the poor members there are under Law. They are bound to a little group of selfish, self-centered people who shout long and loud about the grace of GOD, and then submit to the commands and the demands of the denomination or the fellowship to which they belong!

Some Christians shout, "Independent! Unaffiliated!" But when you dig below the surface you find they are not independent; they have a machine of their own, and the minister dictates to and commands the members.

According to the New Testament, born again believers are led by the HOLY GHOST, not by the preacher in the pulpit. The preacher is the overseer, the leader - but he is not to command. He is to lead, and not to be "[lord] over God's heritage." He is to be an "[ensample] to the flock." Every true minister is the under-shepherd of the Lord.

The admonition given in Galatians 5:1 was needed by those to whom Paul was writing. Many of the believers there were tempted to return to Law in order to avoid persecution and the loss of members of their family and friends. They were being accused of being lawless . . . law-breakers, guilty of making the grace of GOD an occasion (a license, a permit) to commit sin; but in spite of the accusations hurled at them, Paul admonished them to "STAND FAST! Do not compromise to keep the friendship of your family, your friends, or your fellow believers. Stand fast in the liberty you have received in the grace of GOD. Do not go back to the yoke of bondage from which you have been set free!"

Verses 2-6: **"Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law; YE ARE FALLEN FROM GRACE. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."**

The legalizers and Judaizers - the teachers who had come along behind Paul - insisted that the

Gentiles must become Jews and submit to the rite of circumcision according to the Law of Moses, in order to be saved. Paul opposes this preaching and declares boldly, "If you Galatians submit to circumcision after the Law of Moses, you become debtor to do the whole Law and you are under the curse and condemnation of the Law! CHRIST then can profit you nothing. If you turn to circumcision as a part of salvation, then you are under the Law, debtor to the whole Law!"

Paul preached, "You cannot be saved by Law AND Grace. You are either saved by Law, or by Grace . . . there can be no mixture of the two. It must be all of Grace, or it is not Grace at all. If you look to the Law for justification, you totally miss the Grace of GOD and the liberty it brings. If you turn to circumcision as a part of your salvation, CHRIST is become of no effect unto you. Whosoever of you Galatians are justified - or seek to be justified - by the Law of Moses, you are fallen from Grace!"

Well! Someone is saying,

"Mr. Greene, do you really admit that it is possible to fall from grace?"

According to the Scripture I have just read, there is such a thing as falling from Grace! But what is the meaning of this expression, "**Ye are fallen from grace?**"

There are many denominations (and tens of thousands of church members and preachers) who teach that one who has been truly born again, truly washed in the blood, truly saved by the Grace of GOD, can fall from Grace, completely lose his salvation and his position in Grace - and burn in hell forever. They tell us that when a Christian ceases to work and live the testimony of Grace, that person has fallen from Grace.

I am not discussing the doctrine of falling from Grace, or "once saved always saved," as some refer to eternal life. What I want to point out here is the truth that Paul is attempting to get across to the Galatians who are trying to mix Law and Grace. It may be interesting to you to know that this is the only place in the Word of GOD where the term "**Ye are fallen from Grace**" is used . . . or any term like unto this one having to do with falling from Grace. Here we learn that the moment a believer begins to work, to try to keep the Law or to be circumcised in order to keep himself saved, that person has fallen from Grace. The harder a person works to be saved or to keep saved, the further from Grace that person has fallen.

It is utterly impossible to mix works with redemption. It is possible for a believer to fall from Grace, but it is not possible for a believer to fall from sonship if the believer is truly born into the family of GOD, is truly a son of GOD through the application of the blood of JESUS to the heart.

GOD saves us through the power of the blood, covers us with the blood - and keeps us by the power of the Blood. The whole process is by Grace through faith plus nothing.

I preach with all my heart that a Christian should do all the good, perform all the good works, he possibly can. A Christian should not be unfruitful (read Titus 3:14). We should bear fruit, more fruit, much fruit. We should not be satisfied with thirty-fold, or sixty-fold.

We should strive for a hundred-fold . . . and according to I Corinthians 3:11-15 it is possible for a born again son of GOD to enter GOD's Heaven and completely lose his reward! Works do not save us, works do not help to save us; works do not keep us saved, works do not help to keep us saved. From the beginning to the end of a true experience with GOD, it is all Grace plus nothing. **"AND IF BY GRACE, THEN IS IT NO MORE OF WORKS: OTHERWISE GRACE IS NO MORE GRACE. BUT IF IT BE OF WORKS, THEN IS IT NO MORE GRACE: OTHERWISE WORK IS NO MORE WORK"** (Romans 11:6).

If there is any one thing that is clear and understandable in the New Testament, it is the fact that Law and Grace do not mix . . . cannot mix. It is all of Grace - one hundred percent Grace - plus nothing.

I know someone is asking the question, "What happens to a believer who thus falls from Grace and returns to Law or works for justification?" The answer is very clearly stated in verse 4: **"CHRIST IS BECOME OF NO EFFECT UNTO YOU, WHOSOEVER OF YOU ARE JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW; YE ARE FALLEN FROM GRACE."** What the literal Greek language says here is simply, "Ye are severed from CHRIST. Ye who would be justified by the Law, ye are fallen away from Grace."

The Greek translated by the Authorized Version as "**become of no effect**" has the same meaning as "severed . . . or brought to naught." The same expression is used by Paul in Romans 7:2 where the Authorized Version translates it "**loosed** [discharged]." Read Romans 7:6. The effect of such loosing (discharging) or severing from CHRIST has nothing to do with sonship. What is meant is simply that during the time the believer is practicing Law, CHRIST becomes of no experimental effect.

The believer's position in CHRIST has not changed, but the believer's liberty is lost and therefore his joy is lost. And if the believer continues in this state, the reward will be lost.

Salvation is by Grace through faith . . . totally and entirely independent of good works; therefore the believer as a born again son cannot be severed from CHRIST, loosed from CHRIST, or discharged from GOD's family; but the believer's fellowship can be interrupted, his testimony can be hindered, his reward can be lost, his joy can cease . . . and he can become unfruitful.

That is the reason this precious old Book admonishes the little, tender children of GOD in these words: **"MY LITTLE CHILDREN** (not little sinners, or little backsliders, or little fallen-from-Grace folks) **THESE THINGS WRITE I UNTO YOU** (my little children) **THAT YE** (my little children) **SIN NOT. AND IF ANY MAN SIN** (anyone of my sons) **WE** (John the Beloved, and all of the beloved little children of God) **HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER, JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS** (that is the Lord JESUS who was holy, pure, undefiled, untouched by iniquity, no guile in Him . . . the righteous One, GOD in flesh, GOD's purity and holiness): **AND HE** (GOD's holy One, GOD's just One, GOD's only begotten, virgin-born Son, JESUS) **IS THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS** (the sins of the precious, tender little children): **AND NOT FOR OURS ONLY** (that is, JESUS not only died and atoned for the sins of the little children), **BUT ALSO FOR THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD** (JESUS died to save "**whosoever will**," regardless of color, class, or creed)" (I John 2:1-2).

Beloved, Grace does not give a license to sin; Grace does not give a license to practice sin; but **"If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us"** (I John 1:10). These words are spoken to the little children. The entire first Epistle of John was dictated to John the Beloved by the HOLY GHOST, that we might enjoy our spiritual birthright - and our spiritual birthright is full joy: **"AND THESE THINGS WRITE WE UNTO YOU, THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL"** (I John 1:4).

I am so glad the GOD I serve, the GOD I love, the GOD I have trusted all these years does not kick me out and damn me when I stumble . . . when I falter and fail. You might as well face it - failure to do all that you do to the glory of GOD is sin, because the Bible clearly states, **"WHATSOEVER IS NOT OF FAITH IS SIN . . . TO HIM THAT KNOWETH TO DO GOOD AND DOETH IT NOT, TO HIM IT IS SIN."**

The grace of GOD does not license us to sin, but the grace of GOD takes care of the believer (the little child) if he does sin. Hallelujah! What a SAVIOUR!

I have been saved over twenty-eight years and I have never entertained the thought or the desire to return to the beggarly elements of the world and the things of the devil. Truly born again children of GOD do not crave the hog pens of the world, the cesspools of iniquity, and the ungodly lusts of the damned. Set your affection on things above. Look up! Jesus sits on the right hand of God the Father! "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face; and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and Grace."

If the believer refuses to confess his sins and refuses to judge himself, then he will be dealt with by the chastening hand of Almighty GOD . . . and a believer can commit **"the sin unto death."** Paul warns, **"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world"** (I Corinthians 11:30-32).

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVETH. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? BUT IF YE BE WITHOUT CHASTISEMENT, WHEREOF ALL ARE PARTAKERS, THEN ARE YE BASTARDS, AND NOT SONS" (Hebrews 12:6-8).

I do not believe I need make any remarks concerning that passage - it is self-explanatory, very easily understood. A person who can practice sin, live in sin, enjoy sin and prosper therein without the chastening hand of GOD upon him, has never been truly born into GOD's Grace by the power of the Blood of JESUS CHRIST. To join a church, to be baptized and live a good life for awhile, does not mean a person has been saved. Who has been saved and who has not been saved is known only by GOD Almighty. You may say, "I KNOW Preacher Greene is saved," and I may say of some person, "I KNOW that person is saved." But in reality you do not know, I do not know. All we can know of another person is what we see on the outside; but GOD Almighty looks on the heart.

I have two boys. They are young men now, but when they were just little lads I chastened them

with a switch, with my belt, and in other ways. I did it because I loved them, not because I hated them. I chastened them because I was their friend, not their enemy. GOD chastens every child He has; and any person who claims to be a Christian but has not been chastened of the Lord is a spiritual illegitimate . . . he has never been born into GOD's family, according to Paul and the dictation of the HOLY GHOST through his pen!

Do not get angry with me for what I have said - I have simply pointed out Hebrews 12:6-8. I did not write it; I am just preaching it. GOD did not ask my permission to put that passage in the Bible. It was put there because it is truth . . . "**Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free!**" Therefore, stand fast in the liberty of the marvelous Grace of our God!

In Corinth, Christians died under the chastening hand of GOD while out of fellowship . . . and yet, the HOLY GHOST said, "**But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world!**" That is what the HOLY GHOST said through the pen of Paul. They were chastened of the Lord that they should not be condemned. Condemnation to a Christian is impossible.

GOD, through chastening, brings the Christian to his knees in tears. Peter wept bitterly when he saw the tender eyes of Jesus looking his way after he had denied Him, after he had even cursed and sworn that he did not know Him! Praise God for Grace!

Paul testifying for himself and all believers, says in verse 5:

"**We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.**" The believer's hope is in the HOLY GHOST of GOD, and it is by faith. Please note: "**By faith!**"

In JESUS, circumcision does not avail anything. Uncircumcision does not avail anything; but faith is the key, the heart, the soul, the life, the essence of salvation. "**Faith... worketh by love.**" Salvation does not come through circumcision, baptism, confirmation, ceremony, joining the church, turning over a new leaf, doing the best you can, living a good life, being honest and upright.

Salvation comes by faith alone. Faith that saves is ours only by hearing the Word of God, and faith which is living faith . . . saving faith . . . does not abide alone. Faith which saves will do more than save.

Fire which smokes, burns as well as produces smoke. Faith which saves produces works . . . the work of love. The salvation we enjoy through faith is without works - but faith which does not work is dead faith. Living faith produces works. Study carefully Ephesians 2:8-10 and James 2:17-20.

Verse 7: "**Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?**" The Galatians had begun in the Spirit - and they were now trying to be made perfect and become holy by the works of the flesh. Paul declared that an enemy had given them this idea.

Verse 8: "**This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you.**" What Paul is saying here is simply this: "You Galatians may rest assured that GOD has had nothing to do with your

deviating from His Grace and turning to legalistic practices. The enemy has done this!"

Verse 9: "**A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.**" No doubt Paul is referring here to the parable of the leaven in Matthew 13:33. It is alarming, it is amazing, and very strange that many Bible teachers teach that leaven is a symbol of the Gospel which is to be mixed in the world until finally the Gospel will bring the whole world to salvation and thus the whole lump will be leavened and we will have Utopia - a kingdom of righteousness on earth. There is no Scriptural ground for such a doctrine.

There is no excuse for such ignorance! Any person with a good Bible concordance can study "**leaven**" in the Word of GOD. Leaven is always mentioned in the Old Testament in an evil sense. Read Genesis 19:3, and study the references given there. In the New Testament the symbolic meaning of leaven is explained. According to the words of JESUS, leaven is "**malice and wickedness,**" as contrasted with "**sincerity and truth**" (I Corinthians 5:6-8). Leaven is evil doctrine (Matthew 16:12).

JESUS referred to the leaven of the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Herodians (Matthew 16:6; Mark 8:15). The leaven of the Pharisees was their practice of religious externalism (Matthew 23:14; Matthew 16:23-28).

Leaven to the Sadducees was skepticism as to the supernatural teaching in Scripture . . . they did not believe in spirit or angel . . . they did not believe in a resurrection (Matthew 22:23-29). Leaven referring to the Herodians meant worldliness (Matthew 22:16-21; Mark 3:6). Paul uses the term two times: "**A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.**" In Galatians, leaven refers to the false doctrine of legalism - the mixing of Law and Grace. Writing to the believers at Corinth, in I Corinthians 5:6, it refers to immorality in personal life, which, continually tolerated by the Corinthian church, was a dangerous thing for the whole church. What Paul is saying to the Galatians in our present verse is simply this:

"Your legalistic seducers are not great in number . . . but there are enough of them to corrupt your whole church in Galatia. Circumcision is only a very small part of the Law - but if you practice circumcision in connection with salvation, then you have practiced enough Law to place you altogether under the legal yoke of bondage!" Paul did not pull any punches or soft-pedal his stern warning to the Galatians concerning the leaven of the legalizers. GOD help us today to be preachers like Paul!

Verse 10: "**I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.**"

Paul warns that the legalizers will not get by with sowing tares and placing leaven in the assembly at Galatia. Whosoever he be, let him remember his judgment is double anathema. Read again Galatians 1:8-9. The end of these trouble makers, tare-sowers, and leaven-planters "**SHALL BE ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS**" (II Corinthians 11:15).

The dirtiest gang of thieves this side of hell is the gang of preachers who deviate from the Word of GOD and preach a gospel of their own choosing . . . a gospel to please parishioners who refuse to be born again according to the Bible formula. A gangster in the natural sense steals

your money or your jewels. You can get more money and buy more jewels. But a lying preacher will steal your right to Heaven . . . and if you die and go to hell you will never have another chance to enter Heaven. Therefore, I say the dirtiest gang of thieves this side of hell is a gang of preachers who refuse to preach salvation by grace through faith in the shed Blood of JESUS CHRIST-plus nothing!

Verse 11: "**And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the Cross ceased.**" You recall earlier in the ministry of Paul, for reasons known to Paul and to his GOD, he permitted Timothy to be circumcised and to practice certain Jewish observances. Read Acts 20:6 and Acts 21:34. It could be that because of this some of the Galatians brought the accusation against Paul. They accused him of preaching circumcision among the Jews, and then preaching against circumcision when he was among the Gentiles. This was a false accusation.

Listen to Paul's own testimony:

"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; To them that are without Law, as without Law, (being not without Law to GOD, but under the Law to CHRIST,) that I might gain them that are without Law; To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. AND THIS I DO FOR THE GOSPEL'S SAKE, THAT I MIGHT BE PARTAKER THEREOF WITH YOU" (I Corinthians 9:19-23).

Yes, Paul indeed circumcised Timothy. He did it in order that Timothy might be more useful in reaching the Jews; but when Paul visited Jerusalem (according to the account given in Acts 15) and it was demanded that Titus, a Gentile, be circumcised as a condition of fellowship with the other apostles, Paul flatly refused in order that the "**TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL MIGHT CONTINUE WITH YOU**" (Galatians 2:5).

There has been only one Paul . . . there will never be another. I believe Paul did everything he did with a sincere heart, totally and entirely dedicated to the cause of the Gospel. I do not believe he ever willingly did anything that was out of the will of GOD.

I believe he told the truth when he said, "**I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith . . . I am now ready to be offered!**"

In verse 11 Paul clears himself from the accusation that had been made against him: "**If I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offence of the Cross ceased.**" What he is saying is simply this: "If I preach to please people, then why am I persecuted?" Certainly they knew he had been persecuted - stoned and dragged outside the city of Lystra for dead. He had been beaten and in prison. No man except the man CHRIST JESUS ever suffered more physical pain than Paul. The Galatians knew this, and they knew down deep in their hearts that Paul was not preaching to please men.

They knew his message was "**God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross!**" Paul

preached JESUS CHRIST - crucified, buried, risen, coming again "**according to the Scriptures.**"

I like verse 12: "**I WOULD THEY WERE EVEN CUT OFF WHICH TROUBLE YOU.**"

I wish some of the educated, polished theologians would use that text next Sunday morning! There are brethren (so-called) who declare that the need of the world is for all religions to get together and have a great world council of churches - and bring in the Kingdom. I wish when this great world council of churches assembles, the Apostle Paul could step on the platform and preach for fifteen minutes! (He would preach the last twelve minutes to an empty house - because the doctors would be gone!) They would not listen to his message . . . they would not endure it, they would not stand it. They would brand him as a fanatic, a crackpot and a fool. To the Galatian believers who had been confused and frustrated by a group of teachers who commanded the believers to be circumcised after the custom of the Law of Moses, Paul said: "I wish that crowd would die!"

That may be a little bit rough - but there is not much you can do about it. I did not write it - I am just reading it. Paul said, "**I WOULD THEY WERE EVEN CUT OFF WHICH TROUBLE YOU!!**" I came here and preached the grace of GOD, you accepted the grace of GOD, you were born into the grace of GOD, you have enjoyed the liberty of the grace of GOD; and now these legalizers and Judaizers come along and command you to be circumcised after the Law of Moses! I wish they were dead . . . I wish they were cut off!"

Verse 13: "**For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.**"

In this verse Paul is saying to the Galatians the same thing he said to the Romans in Romans 14:1-15:3.

Read that passage carefully. Paul said the same thing to the believers at Corinth in I Corinthians 8:1-13. To these churches, to the believers, Paul is saying, "Brethren, you have been called to freedom . . . liberty; only, make not your freedom grounds to satisfy the flesh - but rather enslave yourselves one to another by the bondage of fervent love!"

A born again man, walking in the light as JESUS is in the light (I John 1:7), walking in fellowship with the Father and His SON JESUS CHRIST (I John 1:3-4) will never use his freedom from the Law as an opening to sin. He will never use that freedom to deliver him from the obligation of living a holy, righteous, godly life. "**The Grace of GOD** [which brings this liberty] **...teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ**" (Titus 2:11-13).

The believer is indeed free from the Law; but the love of CHRIST in the heart of the believer constrains him to live blameless, pure, upright.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid!"

Read Romans 6:1-15. Shall we continue in sin because we are not under the Law of Moses - but

under the grace of GOD? God forbid! No, we shall not.

Verse 14: "**For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF.**" The verse is clear, understandable, self-explanatory.

Verse 15: "**But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.**"

I sometimes use this verse when preaching to believers on the subject of "Cannibal Christians."

Churches devour themselves by fussing and back-biting because of jealousy, envy and strife. Instead of being childlike in faith and practice, they are childish, acting like children fussing in the sandbox in the back yard! Churches often devour themselves - they devour each other - as a result of disturbances within the church over petty doctrines. Whichever side wins keeps the building, the other crowd moves out and starts a new building program - and in reality both sides lose . . . no one gains, reproach is brought on the church. I believe we should come out from liberals and modernists, but Paul is speaking here to born again believers who are being confused and frustrated by legalistic preachers. If these believers begin to bite and devour one another, they will be consumed of each other . . . which is what the devil wanted. That is the reason Paul gives warning against such living.

~ end of chapter 11 ~

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