

Week 10: Galatians 5:24: Church

Read Galatians 5:18-25

Gerry Fostaty tells this story in a book entitled *As You Were: The Tragedy at Valcartier*. In a class of very young army cadets, the adult instructor is handing out dummy grenades for children to examine. Apparently, one can tell dummy grenades from real grenades because the dummies are brightly coloured - orange, pink, blue – not the military green colour of live combat weaponry. The children are encouraged to take apart these dummy grenades, put them back together, and examine how they work. Apparently and disastrously in with the orange, pink, and blue grenades is at least one live green grenade. The children are passing this live green grenade along with the toy grenades down the line of cadets. They are taking the pin out and placing it back in; they are holding the safety lock and they are disassembling and reassembling the green grenade along with the coloured grenades when one little boy pulls the pin and putting the grenade in the wrong place, or holding it the wrong way, or holding the pin out for too long... There is a loud noise. This one deadly green grenade mixed in with the harmless other-coloured grenades brings much injury, destruction and death.

The result of this green grenade in a room full of children is essentially the same as what results when hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, and the like wind up in our churches (Galatians 5:19-21). These are our green grenades. When we put ourselves first, engaging in selfish ambition instead of thinking of others as greater than ourselves (Philippians 2) the results are essentially the same. Just as the green grenade brings physical death when people handle it improperly; Paul reminds us that hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, and the like bring everlasting death to

those who are consumed with them. Paul says that those who indulge in these – Galatians 5:21 - will not inherit the kingdom of God.

So what can we do about this? The Apostle Paul says, in essence, that we need to remove the green grenades from the room; we need to remove these things from the church. We need to, Ephesians 4:31-5:2a: “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you. Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us.” Strictly speaking, Christians by definition have already done this. Galatians 5:24: “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have [already] crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” Therefore if we haven’t already, today let us remove the green grenades from the room.

When have you had the chance to put away the green grenades by being kind and compassionate to another and forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you?

¹ Based on the sermon *Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 4:27-32, Philippians 2:14-16: Green Grenade*. Presented to The Salvation Army Swift Current, April 21, 2013. On-line: <http://sheepspeaks.blogspot.ca/2013/04/galatians-519-21-ephesians-427-32.html>