

What Matters Most?

Standing on Grace series

by Bill Aumack

What a day. What a day. Baptism. We've got some more transfers coming in here shortly. Professions of faith and some transfers. It's a great day. It's Mother's day. Perfect day.

And to start, I want to talk about Volkswagens. Stay with me. It's a long burn, but we'll get there. Okay. And specifically, I want to talk about this Volkswagen. The Volkswagen bug or Beetle type 1. [see the Power Point for pictures] Anybody here have a Volkswagen beetle? Couple of us, yeah. Or parents maybe had it. They started manufacturing the Beetle in 1938 and continued all the way till 2003. It's the longest run of automobiles in the history of the world. 21 1/2 million bugs were made. Crazy. Now, from 38 to 44, they really went to the war effort. 45, started general production. And they were just basic transportation.

For those of you that had it, you know, no air conditioning. It had what it called a heater, but it didn't produce a lot of heat. Air cooled, just basic transportation. But they were fun. Now, we didn't have a bug in my family. We had the square back. The square back. Basically the same car with a different body on it. My brother and I used to like to ride in the back seat, you know, in the back part where there was no seat days before seatbelt laws and whatnot.

But there was also the fastback, which is exactly like the other one, except they hacked off all of the extra storage space. I don't think it was any faster. So I don't know why they called it that. And of course, there was the van. If you had one like this with the rag top and those extra windows, man, they're big money today. I saw one on Barrett Jackson, went for \$100,000. I'm like, it's a Volkswagen van.

But they were everywhere. They were so iconic. Remember flower power, right? And before fast and furious, we had our own movie franchise, Herbie.

The love bug. Right. I mean, they just kind of took over our society and as what happens when you get guys and machines and motors. We started making hot rods, but Volkswagens didn't have, you know, very powerful engines. So we started trying to fix up the motors and even take the motor out and put something else in it to make it faster. You know, we made all kinds of hot rods out of them. Here's one where they took the air cooled engine out of the back and put a water cooled V8 in the front. I can't imagine how fast the Volkswagen is with the V8 in it. This one Looks pretty serious. I don't know what kind of engines in the front of that. We can't see it, but it's probably a V8 or something. And just crazy. Crazy.

And then there were the kit cars. Remember the kit cars? So many kits. I think at one point there's like 25 different kit cars. You could get. You could get one to make your car look like a Bentley. If you squint a lot, kind of sort of looks like a Bentley.

[big mic pop] Is it still on? Did it go off?

Okay, you get one that looked like a 40 Ford. Now why do you want your Volkswagen to look like a 40 Ford? I don't know, but you could do it. Then there was the one like this. Remember this one? The whole top lifted up and you scooted under it. Supposedly have a sports car. There was the very popular Bradley gt and, you know, one that looked like an old British motor racing car or something. This one is a cross between a DeLorean, a Bricklin and a Lotus. I don't know what that's supposed to be.

But my favorite were the dune buggies. The Meyer Manix dune buggy. So cool. So cool. Remember a couple weeks ago I did, or recently I did a children's story about a van I worked on in shop class. While I was working on my van, my shop teacher used to like to build dune buggies like this, and I helped on a couple of them. We'd get pipes and we'd weld them up. And then the front end was the VW suspension and then in the back, it just had the whole VW engine, axle, transmission, everything. And in Ohio at the time, if you put a little body on it like that, a windshield and lights, it was street legal. Boy, did we have fun with that. It had a little thing in the middle where you could pull it back and it would lock up that wheel. If you pushed it forward, it would lock up that wheel. Donuts for days. Donuts for days.

[big mic pop] How come it always does that to me and not pastor?

All right. But my favorite was the Baja Bug. Oh, I wanted a Baja Bug so bad. This is a pretty modern looking one, but, you know, even just the old school bob the fenders a little bit just have. That's the most fun you can have at 40 miles an hour right there. That's just great, right? Cruising around town. Have to worry about potholes or anything. This is great.

But when you look at these cars, which one is the real VW? Does it have to be stock? All original. Is this VW? What about the ones that have a different body on it? Or the dune buggies? Are they still VWs, or are they something else? And, you know, kind of depends on what matters to you. And this is popular in hot rodding. We do this all the time. We take a bumper off this car and seats out of that car and an engine out of this car. We put it all together, and when you get all done, you're going to have so many parts. Is it a Chevy? Is it a Ford? Is it a Dodge? Who knows? It's a Heinz 57 varieties. It's a little bit of everything, right?

But you get to the point of, well, what matters? How do I know what it is? And the same thing can happen to us as people, too. Moms. It's Mother's Day weekend. Great day for moms, right? We pile the love on moms. And we should. It's good. All good. And if we went around and asked everybody here today, do you like being a mom? I would bet that most of you would say yes. But I bet that somewhere there's moments where you wonder, why did I sign up for this? They just want a maid or a cook. And I don't know why I'm doing this. Right, dad? Same thing. And it's not just moms and dads, right? It might be at work. You know, normally you're a good employee, but sometimes you disagree with the boss. Or maybe you have a good relationship with your spouse, but sometimes you have a disagreement with your spouse. Does that make you a bad employee or a bad spouse?

Because there's a moment where we struggle. What matters. Now, we can all agree that maybe if you disagree with your boss every single day, if you fight with your spouse every single day, maybe there's an issue there that we need to deal with, right? But once in a while, those things, those things happen. And so the question becomes like, well, how do we know who we are? Are we good people that occasionally have a bad day? Or are we bad people because

we don't have a good day every day? Because when you look at social media, you know, we're supposed to have a great day every day, right? Each day is better than the one before. And it's just like that VW has been modified so much, we don't know what it is. Sometimes we don't know where we are. And you may have been there. You may be there right now, and it's not fun. Maybe it's a little bit like that alcoholic or that drug addict who is trying to stay clean, but is just desiring that hit so bad. And as Christians, we're trying to do the right thing. But I so want to tell him off, right? I so want to show that guy on the freeway the international one finger salute of friendship. And we get lost in who we are and what matters the most.

And Paul talks about this in Galatians, chapter five. Open your Bibles with me to Galatians chapter five. I can't believe we're finishing up. Next week is our last week. We've been going through Galatians and Galatians is a tough book to go through. You've got to struggle with Galatians a little bit, right? This is not necessarily easy reading. So I hope you've been having a good time going through this and learning as we go through this now, verses 1 to 12. I'm not going to talk about a whole lot. I hope that you read this on your own. And it's talking about. Paul is talking about being free in Christ. Okay, and what does that mean when we're free? We're not under the law.

We've talked about this, how the law convicts us, but it shows our sins, but we're not under that. We're free of that, but we still have to keep the law. And that starts to maybe get a little weird. But I like the end of verse 6. Look at the end of verse 6 with me.

Galatians 5, verse 6. *The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.* If you don't get anything else I say today, please get that. That may be one of the most important lines we've read in this series. In my opinion, this is what matters.

We're going to talk a little bit more about that as we go on. All right, but let's jump to verse 13. We're going to start there. Before we start reading, there's a word, a term they use, and the Greek word for flesh or *sarx* refers to the sinful state of human beings. Sometimes when we see being in the flesh, we think that means that we're not a spirit, we're not a ghost. We have a physical

body. But what it's really talking about here is the sinful state of human beings. And you say that word like it rhymes with the word Marx. It's Sarx. Okay, that's what I was trying to remember because I knew I did that. I looked it up. But you say it's what. It kind of rhymes with marks. It's sarx. And that refers to the sinful state of human beings. So he's going to use this being in the flesh. And this is what he's talking about.

So verse 13. You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh. That sinful state. Rather serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command. Love your neighbor as yourself. If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. So I say, walk by the Spirit. And you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit to what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other. So that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

All right, remember our ten Commandments series here. Recently we learned that there were two basic commandments. Love God, love your neighbor as yourself. Right. And we keep those two commandments. It's what it says in verse six. Faith expressing itself through love.

When you love your neighbor, do you murder them? No. When you love your neighbor, do you steal from them? No. When you love your neighbor, do you commit adultery with their spouse? No. You don't have to remember to do all these things when you love them. Right. Comes naturally. I don't have to walk around all day going, I gotta remember not to punch Irene. Because I love Irene, so I don't ever think about punching her. You're safe, Irene.

So, right, we're talking about this love that's there. And if you're led by the Spirit, that is contrary to being led by the flesh. They're opposites of each other. So when you're doing this one, can you do what's over here? No. Right. You can't be bouncing back and forth. Right? Right now I'm going to be loving to Maggie. Right now I'm going to be mean to Gustavo. And then I'm going to be.... Right? I mean, that's just like a split personality. Okay? So we don't do those things. Okay.

Being led by the Spirit does not mean that we stop obeying the God given laws. When we're led by the Spirit and we have freedom in Christ, we love each other. When we love each other, we automatically keep the law. Make sense? Make sense?

I don't have to walk around all day going, what was the law again? Because I'm being loving towards everybody. I just naturally keep it okay, now that means we don't have to obey the God. I mean we are obeying the God given laws. But some churches and some denominations and the Jewish leaders in particular were very good at making a whole bunch of man-made religious laws. And Paul's saying, you know, we're not beholden to all of that. We keep God's law. We don't necessarily have to keep all of these man-made religious laws. Right. Now this next part is kind of interesting because there's a thing in here, like verses 19 and 20, maybe 21, and Paul talks about some of the things we do. And some people have called this the 15 deadly sins. You ever heard that term, the 15 deadly sins? Couple heads shaking. I don't know what makes these sins more deadly than any other sin. So I don't particularly like that name. I'm going to use the name that Paul uses, which is acts of the flesh. And then we're also going to talk about the fruit of the spirit. Okay, so then remember the spirit and the flesh are opposites.

Remember that as we look through this verse 19, *The acts of the flesh are obvious. Sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft. Hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies and the like.* So it's not an exhaustive list. *I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will what? Not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ have been crucified, have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by this spirit, let us keep in step with this Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.*

All right, lot going on there. Sometimes we look at that list of 15 things and we skim through it and we pick the biggies off the list, right? We have sexual immorality, debauchery, idolatry, witchcraft. I'm not doing those,

drunkenness, orgies. I'm not. I'm good. I don't do any of that stuff. Yay me, right? But you know, we skipped over the jealousy, the envy, the discord, the hatred. Like well, I don't hate anybody. Oh yeah, what about the boss's nephew that got the promotion at work that you deserved? Hate that guy. So sometimes we skip over some of that stuff and we say, I'm good. But we need to be very careful about these things. And again, that's not a complete list. There's more in there. Paul didn't know anything about online pornography or meth or, you know, doom scrolling on social media for six hours a day. Right? There's a lot of other things maybe we could add to that list.

You ever heard somebody say something like they say something rude or mean and then they say, hey, I'm just keeping it real, just telling it like it is. Really. Or are you being a jerk? Because there's a way to tell it like it is in truth, in private, in a loving, redemptive way. And there's a way to be a jerk about it. Right. So we need to be careful about the way we're living and the things that we're doing. And what really matters? Is what really matters keeping it real or is what really matters living? Showing our faith through love? Right. What matters? What really matters?

Now we also get the fruit of the spirit here. Now notice it's fruit of the spirit, singular. It's not fruits of the spirit, but it's a whole list of things. Why is that? Because I think they're all supposed to work together. They all come together. You don't ever met somebody who was not a Christian, they're atheist, whatever, not a Christian, but they're a good person that they, you know, they follow the laws, they pay their taxes, they, you know, they're good people. Do they have the Fruit of the Spirit? They're good people.

Let's look again. What is the fruit of the spirit? Love, joy, peace, forbearance. You know what forbearance is? Forbearance is kind of like patience. It's being able to withstand a difficult situation and not retaliate, that have forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. I don't know. I've met friends that were not Christians that had some of those things, but not all of those things. Of course I've met Christians that had some of those things and not all those things too.

But those are the things that our lives should be producing. And we need to look for those things in our life. We need to be intentional about the type of life we live. It doesn't just happen. We need to be intentional and make a priority to do these things right.

We have to be intentional. If you find yourself struggling trying to do the fruit of the Spirit and you seem to end up on the other side frustrated with my boss again, those happen. Those happen. But we need to be careful. Let's look at one more text. Matthew 7.

When I say Matthew 7, where are we in the Bible? What are we going to do? Matthew 5, 6 and 7, Sermon on the Mount. Say it with me. You should always know this. Matthew 5, 6 and 7, Sermon on the Mount. Say it with me. Matthew 5, 6 and 7, Sermon on the Mount. You should always know that whenever somebody says we're going to Matthew 5, 6 or 7, we're going to the Sermon on the Mount. If you have a Bible with red letters, all the letters on those pages are red. It's Jesus talking. So let's look at Matthew 7:15-21.

He says, Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Singular. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit. But a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit. A bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by you, by their fruit, you will recognize them.

Okay, Jesus is talking about leaders and prophets, but I think this applies to everybody, right? You can tell when somebody's leading the kind of life. Now, sometimes we tend to take a microscope to their lives. We look at every little thing and we go, oh, look, there's a speck in your eye. And what's in my eye, the plank, right? This is not what this is for. This is for looking at the general tenor of somebody's life. We all make mistakes, we all have oopses, okay? Those happen.

But we look at the general tenor of somebody's life and we need to be intentional about which group of people you let into your life. Are you letting

the people who are spirit led into your life or you're letting the people who are flesh led into your life?

Now, this side's a little tricky. These flesh led people, because we want to change them to be spirit led people. So you need... You're trying to make friends with them, we're trying to show them a better way. But you don't want to let these people into your inner circle because they are not going where you want to go. Amen.

We want to keep these people in our inner circle that are setting an example for us, that are showing us the way to go.

All right, reflection, have you died with Christ as Paul says, and are now living a life that produces good fruit?

That's the question. I think it's safe to say that all of us have something we struggle with. It may not be all 15 things that Paul lists. It may not even be on the list, but we all have these things. It's okay to have our struggles, but generally which way are we headed?

So our challenge this week is to turn that thing you are struggling with over to God, specifically ask him to take it away and fill up that space with the spirit so. So that you can produce good fruit. If you ask God to take something away, you have to put something in its place. A void in your life is a bad thing. That is an opening for all kinds of evil. So ask God to take that away and put something else into your life. Amen.

Now, you can fool me. I'm easy to fool. You can fool Pastor. He's easy to fool, too. No disrespect, Pastor, but there's two people you can't fool. Yourself and God. And when you do this, you know what you struggle with and what you need to deal with. And that's between you and God. But Paul makes it pretty clear about we need to be spirit led and working on that and leaving the things of the flesh behind. Amen.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for these words from Paul that we have to struggle through. They're a challenge sometimes, but Lord, we're grateful to have them. Thank you. Thank you. We ask that you be with us. You

help us keep our lives. Spirit led and not flesh led. Be with us now in Jesus name. Amen.