

GALATIANS 5:22-26 – LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Introduction

- Have you ever seen someone mimic someone? Perhaps you had a mentor who you simply adored you changed things to become like them. Maybe you have a three year old who copies everything you say or do.
 - We were created to mimic God—we were created in the image of God, to reflect his character.
- The story of the Bible is one of a grand redemption. Redemption is the freedom or the liberation of those who have been enslaved. The message of Galatians is that saying though it has enslaved us is destroyed through the power in the work of the Gospel.
- An aspect of the gospel that is prominent in Galatians chapter 5 is that we now have been liberated from our sin and have freedom in Christ. But as Americans we normally think freedom means autonomy and that we are free to do whatever we would like. But Galatians 5 says that our freedom is to be used to become a servant.
- There are two ways to live: and life dictated by the flesh or a life dictated by the Spirit. Last week Jon noted that a life lived apart from the gospel is a life lived in the flesh. But now in verse 26, Paul is saying that there is another way to live, there is a way to live with true, genuine freedom in the Gospel. And I have freedom but surely manifest itself in a godly character.

BIG IDEA: By the Spirit, the gospel transforms our lives.

Billboard: We are transformed by (1) submission to the Spirit, (2) mortification of the flesh, (3) walking with the Spirit

Aspect #1 - We are transformed by submission to the Spirit (vv. 22-23)

Submission - An ongoing trust in the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, the power for change and the hope of eternal life.

- Submitting to the Spirit is an act of trust not just the first time we get saved, but a daily, habitual practice of every Christian.
- **Verse 22** – The fruit of the **Spirit** - The fruit comes from the Spirit. The life of Christian character is birthed out of the Spirit's initiation and work.
 - How does the Spirit transform us now?
- In the OT, God dwelt with His people in the tabernacle behind the Holy of Holies was his presence; his presence was present but restricted. There existed a huge curtain between God and man but Jesus, hanging on the Cross, cries out, 'It is finished,' and listen to Matthew 25:51, "*And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.*"
 - **Read 1 Cor 6:19**, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

- You were once possessed or controlled by the sinful nature of your heart but now in Christ, you are possessed or controlled by the most Holy God, the Holy Spirit himself!
- What happens when someone takes over a broken down residence? The new owner is going to make repairs and changes. The new owner of your home is now in the business of making changes. The Spirit is now in the business of producing fruit in your life.
 - Fixer Upper Illustration.
 - Notice that Paul says “fruit” instead of “fruits.” The Spirit is interested in forming you as a whole person, rather than compartmentalized pieces.
- Returning again to the theme of the image of God, the primary work that the Spirit is doing is repairing the broken image that exists inside you. He is doing a supernatural work of reordering your life to reflect his character, which is the fruit of the Spirit.

Application

- It can be easy to look at a list like this and get discouraged about our way with Christ. When I look at this list, I am confronted with the reality that I am often not these things
 - Read Philippians 1:6 — take heart in knowing that God has not only begun a work in you, but will be faithful to complete that same work.
- Our call is to submit to the Spirit for a life of transformation. But is that it? Are we just to sit on our hands and simply be passive agents? While I do believe that this work is the Spirit’s, I also believe that we are called to be active, called to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in us. We are called towards something.

Aspect #2 - We are transformed by the mortification of the flesh (vv. 24).

Mortification - An ongoing battle with our sinful nature whereby sin is killed through the power of the Cross.

“Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work; be always at it while you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you.” - Owen

- “Belong to Christ” – Notice first that all calls to mortification are done in the context of union with Christ and belief in the Gospel. There is no killing of sin without the Gospel.
- “Have Crucified.” – σταυρόω – **Destroy through the crucifixion of Christ.**
 - If we are to engage in the battle of fighting sin, it must be done in faith in the finished work of the Gospel.
 - “Let faith look on Christ in the gospel as he is set forth dying and crucified for us. Look on him under the weight of our sins, praying, bleeding, dying; bring him in that condition into thy heart by faith; apply his blood so shed to thy corruptions: do this daily.” – Owen
- You cannot achieve the fruit of the Spirit without the killing of the flesh and vice versa. They are two sides of the same coin – we are called to a life of Christlike fruitfulness which is rooted out by the destruction of sin.
 - Read Romans 8:11-13, “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh

you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

▪ “A man may easier see without eyes, speak without a tongue, than truly mortify one sin without the Spirit.” - Owen

- I ask you as Owen asks you, “Do you mortify? Do you spend effort putting to death the flesh? Do you put energy into this task? Kill sin brothers!”

Three Ways to Mortify

1. Intentionally - You must resolve in your heart to put to death your sin by faith in the Gospel. You cannot tame your sin or to simply correct sin’s behavior—it must be a radical, intentional process of mortifying your flesh.
 - a. Illustration about taming the lion.
2. Communally - Living in a highly individualized culture has often made us weary of doing things communally, yet the call of the Gospel is one to invest our lives into other believers. If we are to affectively kill sin our lives, it must be done in the context of community. We need to rally around one another, encourage one another, convict one another, and love one another.
3. Christologically - Notice that Paul says that those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh. This is both a past work and an ongoing present work. The verb “crucify” is past tense, drawing you to see that mortification happens only through the historic work of Christ’s death and resurrection; the verb is also active rather than passive, showing your ongoing role in crucifying your flesh through the power of the crucified Lord. You can only kill your sin through the killing of the son of God.

Aspect #3 - We are transformed by walking in the Spirit (vv. 25)

Walking - An ongoing obedience to commands of God empowered both by the Spirit and the finished work of Christ

- “live by the Spirit...” This is the bedrock of our walking in the Spirit—a life that is founded in the Spirit. Apart from the Spirit bringing the Gospel to bear to our lives, we would be completely lost. What informs our spiritual growth is the Gospel and the Spirit’s work in that Gospel.
- “Keep in step...” This is the outworking of living by the spirit, we keep in step with the Spirit.
 - This word is used as a military term, noting soldiers staying in formation. If we are to profess Christ, to have been forgiven in the Gospel—our conduct must be in formation to that Gospel.
 - Therefore, Paul is calling us to pursue obedience to God and the Scriptural commands, noting that it is first the Gospel’s work and the Spirit’s empowering

to produce the fruit. So what we see in the first aspect is the Spirit's authoritative power to produce fruit in our lives and what we see in the third aspect is our role in growing in obedience towards God. These two cannot be divorced—we are to pursue God while also knowing we can never pursue without him drawing us.

- In other words, the indicative gives birth to the imperative.
- Since Paul grounds the command “keep in step with the Spirit” with being born alive by the Spirit, **we must never pursue obedience to God as a means to gain his favor. We do not pursue the fruit of the Spirit to be loving, gracious, patient, etc. Rather, we pursue the fruit of the Spirit knowing that God has been gracious to us, patient to us, etc.**
 - We obey God from his pleasure rather to gain his pleasure.
- In the last 10 years, there has been a Gospel resurgence, where the Gospel has become the main focus again. I am so thankful for this moment and what it has produced. Yet, with all things, there is a tendency to swing the pendulum too far. Often times the Gospel is preached yet with no call for obedience for believers. Are we called to trust and obey the Gospel? Yes! Are we called to walk in step with the Spirit and obey God's commands? Yes! To propose one over the other is a false dichotomy. When the dichotomy exists, we don't know what to do with a lot of the Scriptures:
 - Psalm 119:17-18, “Deal bountifully with your servant, that I may live and keep your word. Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.
 - Psalm 119:34-35, “Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.
 - Psalm 1:1-2, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.”
 - Matthew 5:6, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”
 - Luke 6:46, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do I what I tell you?”
- Christian—if we have been united with Christ, if we have been found in his Gospel, if our sins have been forgiven, we are called to keep in step with Spirit, to obey his commands, and to delight in his law.
 - Illustration about conversion story