

Gal 5:16-26

Good evening and thank you for joining us! Would you please turn in your bibles to Galatians 5? We left off last time in our study in verse 15, so tonight we'll be picking up in verse 16 of chapter 5 and finishing the chapter. Since we're only studying 11 verses we'll be doing a deep dive in the scriptures this evening.

We've spent a ton of time talking about legalism throughout this study haven't we? And as we've mentioned the concern of the legalist is that walking in the Spirit gives a person license to sin. But as we're about to see, the argument that only rules and laws can keep us holy is absolutely debunked in these verses.

Tonight's study is all about what it means to walk in the spirit, and that's the title of tonight's message, Walking in the spirit.

Let's pray.

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

And so just a spoiler alert, because walking in the spirit is one of those things we commonly say but have trouble explaining, we're gonna spend significant time just on verse 16.

The "lust of the flesh" is a biblical name for "selfish desires." And how does a person overcome a lifestyle of self-gratification, that lifestyle that is so prevalent around us? The answer is in verse 16 "walk in the Spirit..."

What does it mean to walk in the spirit? Well you can tell if someone walks in the Spirit because they will look a lot like Jesus in their actions and attitudes.

Jesus told us that the mission of the Holy Spirit would be to promote and speak of Him **John 15:26 But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me**

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

When someone is walking in the Spirit, they're listening to what the Holy Spirit says as He guides them in the path and nature of Jesus.

It's interesting that Paul uses the term walk. In fact walking is a metaphor used several times in Scripture to describe spiritual progress.

In our restless and jet setting society we often think of walking as slow and unspectacular. But walking means progress.

Now to walk in the spirit doesn't mean we have to be thinking about our dependence on God every second of every day. It's impossible to be thinking about this all the time. We have jobs to do, lives to live that God's given us.

So although we can't bring it to our conscious mind every second, we can walk in the Spirit by trusting in Him in all our circumstances. The more that we acknowledge our dependence on God, the more consistent we will be in trusting in Him and in walking by the Spirit.

So, Paul here exhorts us to walk in the Spirit and to live after the Spirit, or on the spirit side of our lives. Now we know that mankind was created by God in fellowship with God.

It's wisely been said that God is a superior Trinity; man is an inferior trinity. The superior Trinity is made up of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The inferior trinity is spirit, soul and body of man. And it's in the realm of the spirit where mankind meets God. His Spirit bears witness with my spirit that I am a child of God.

John 4:24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

You remember in the garden of Eden when God instructed Adam regarding the tree

Genesis 2:16 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Of course Adam ate, but he didn't immediately physically die. However his spirit died as Adam broke fellowship with God. God would not fellowship with man dominated by the flesh. And of

course, that's exactly what the temptation led Adam to—the fleshly domination.

Adam and Eve saw that the tree was pleasant to look upon, it was tasty to eat and it would make him wise as God. **1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.**

When Adam and Eve ate, they were surrendering to their fleshly appetites and by doing so, the flesh dominated. The flesh began to rule, and mankind's consciousness was now filled and absorbed and obsessed with the bodily needs and the bodily desires.

And so in the fullness of time, God sent His Son Jesus to die for man's sin, in order that through Jesus we can be born again by the Spirit of God and become again a spiritual being.

In John 3 when Nicodemus came to Jesus, Jesus addressed this very topic with Nicodemus **John 3 1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."**

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Jesus described the spiritual rebirth, which takes place when a person by faith receives Christ as their Savior. There is a work of God's Spirit within the heart, and they are born of the Spirit, and now again have a spirit that is alive and is conscious of God.

Have you tried to explain this very thing to people and they don't understand?

The Bible says **1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**

To try to explain the things of the Spirit to the natural man can be incredibly frustrating at times. Because we have been born of the Spirit, we can understand it; it's as plain as can be.

But because they're not born of the Spirit and have no understanding of the spiritual dimension of life, it's like you're speaking a different language. You talk about the joy of giving, the joy of morning devotions, of coming to church in worship, of trusting God by faith, of the biblical roles in marriage and they just don't understand.

But we were once the same way. Things which were once a mystery to us that we couldn't understand are now very understandable. They're revealed by the Spirit, the truth of God to our hearts.

Let us not forget **Ephesians 2 1** And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

We once lived to fulfill the desires of our flesh and of our mind. But God has made us alive in Christ Jesus. And now our spirit is alive. And our spirit being alive, again we can experience fellowship with God, the joy, the blessing of fellowshiping with God.

So, we're to walk in the Spirit, walking in fellowship with God. And when we do, we won't be fulfilling the desires of our flesh. So walking in the spirit is easy right-we all do it every moment of every day right? Well not exactly....

17 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. Walking in the Spirit is the key, but it doesn't always come easily does it? Ever notice how much there's a battle going on inside of us between our flesh and the Spirit? Why is there a battle-because the flesh and the spirit are opposite of each other.

And when the flesh is winning that inner battle, we don't do the things that we wish, we don't live the way we want to; we find ourselves under the flesh instead of under the Spirit.

Notice too this means that we cannot blame Satan and his demons for all the conflicts that we experience. Our own sinful nature is responsible for many of them

There is a warfare that goes on in the life of every believer. Once the spirit has come alive, now there's a battle for the mastery of me. Will I be mastered by the Spirit or will I be mastered by the flesh? If I am mastered by the flesh, then I have the mind of the flesh, my mind is constantly upon fleshly things.

But if my life is dominated by the Spirit, then I have the mind of the Spirit. And I'm thinking of God, and I'm thinking upon spiritual

things, and the glorious result of that is a life and joy and peace in the Holy Spirit, even in the midst of difficult circumstances.

This warfare going on presents a choice- am I going to yield to my flesh, or am I going to yield to the Spirit? And this comes up every day in many situations, and each time we have the choice. Which will we obey?

The flesh cries out-get mad, just let it out, blow off steam or give into the sin.

Or I can walk after the Spirit and say, "Oh Lord, Help me to abide with you in this moment, to just keep the right attitude."

Driving story...

Obviously these verses aren't speaking of a once-in-forever kind of a thing like salvation. It's once that we reckoned ourselves to be crucified with Christ, when we accepted Him that this conflict arises and we have to make the decision to reckon ourselves dead to the old ways of life.

Romans 6:11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

You ever given into the flesh, the HS speaks to you, convicts you, and you try to argue with Him on why it was ok to do it?

And in His gentleness He keeps speaking to me until I get to the place where I recognize how wrong I am, and I say Forgive me, Lord. Help me, Lord. Thank You, Jesus, for Your forgiveness and for Your love and for Your grace to me."

Now there's good news and bad news with this. The bad news is that this war takes place until we take our final breath. The good news is when we pass from this earth we'll be in the presence of the Lord and this battle will be over!

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.The influence of God's Spirit does what the Law could never do.

The antidote to the flesh is not found in the law, but in the Spirit — and if we are led by the Spirit, we are not under the law. We don't need to be under the OT law, because we'll fulfill the will of God through the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit leads us to do the will of God, and He does this primarily through Scripture. He helps us to understand the will of God as He has revealed it here.

We might have expected Paul to write that since we are led by the Spirit we are not under the flesh. But instead we read that we are not under the Law. Point being that the Christian cannot overcome the desires of the flesh by remaining under

the Law. The Judaizers were telling the Galatians that submission to the Law as the way to overcome the flesh, but God's word says submit to the Spirit to overcome the flesh.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, What the sinful human nature produces, unless checked, are ugly works. Paul identified several categories of sins of the flesh here. It's almost as if he's saying ironically: Look at the accomplishments of the flesh! And he starts out by listing different kinds of sexual sins

which are: adultery, Adultery is violating the marriage covenant by sexual immorality

fornication, sexual relations outside of marriage

Uncleanness, covers many sexual sins such as pornography or suggestive speaking filled with double meanings.

lewdness, sometimes translated licentiousness, which speaks of the idea of "ready to sin at any time." It describes the person who flaunts their immorality,

In verse 20 Paul now lists religious sins

20 idolatry, Idolatry is the worship of anything but God

sorcery, -witchcraft, which attempts to use and/or aid the powers of evil and the practices associated with that.

Paul now moves to sins against other people..

Hatred, Just as love is the inner motivation for the kind and good treatment of others, hatred is also an inner motivation.

This is the problem with putting our faith in politics or politicians- you can't elect righteousness into office. See laws can be passed

to punish the evil that men and women do against each other; but no law can answer the problem of hatred, which motivates those acts.

contentions, strife, or an argumentative spirit

jealousies, self centered animosity

outbursts of wrath, temper outbursts

selfish ambitions, putting others down to get ahead

Dissensions, divisions

Heresies, beliefs contrary to scripture

21 envy, wrong desires to have another's possessions

murders,[fn] drunkenness,

revelries, means unrestrained partying.

and the like; This is not an all encompassing list. Things like these similar violations of God's moral will

...**21 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.**

Now to be clear this isn't saying that a single act of envy or hatred or sexual sin will send a person who professes Christ to hell. But the Bible is saying that a person who consistently practices the works of the flesh - is proving that they don't have a relationship with Jesus, and is headed to hell

Now, it's interesting, a list similar list to this is given **Revelation 21:7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things,[fn] and I will be his God and he shall be My son. 8 But the cowardly, unbelieving,[fn] abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters,**

and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

It's a solemn warning to every one of us who would live after the flesh or would want to live after the flesh to know that we cannot submit our lives to the flesh these things and inherit the kingdom of God.

So we know what the flesh produces, what does the spirit of God produce?

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, It's not surprising that love is first mentioned because it encompasses all of the following fruit that is described. **1 John 4:8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.**

Some commentators believe that the following eight terms are just describing what love in action looks like.

Now the word love here is that ancient Greek word agape. Remember in the greek language there were four distinct words for “love.”

Eros was the word for romantic or passionate love.

Phileo was the word for the love we have for those near and dear to us, brotherly love

Storge is the word for the love that shows itself as natural, familial love such as the love between a parent and child

But agape love describes a different kind of love. Agape chooses to love the undeserving. This is loving people who aren't easy to love; even loving people you don't like. This is the fruit of the HS.

... **22 Joy** This isn't just the joy we feel because of a great vacation or great set of circumstances. This is joy that can abide and remain, even when circumstances seem terrible.

It was Spurgeon who said "Believers are not dependent upon circumstances. Their joy comes not from what they have, but from what they are; not from where they are, but from whose they are; not from what they enjoy, but from that which was suffered for them by their Lord."

Btw the word joy is found 158 times in 150 verses in the Bible.

Peace this isn't just describing the peace that comes when everything is calm and settled. This is a peace of God, which surpasses all understanding

longsuffering, means that we can have love, joy, and peace even over a period of time when people and events annoy us. God is not quickly irritated with us so we should not be quickly irritated with others. **Romans 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?**

kindness, tender concern, uprightness
goodness, uprightness of heart and life

faithfulness, reliable

23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. These aren't the gifts of the Spirit, which are distributed on an individual basis by the will of the Spirit that we see in 1 Cor 12 and Romans 12. Everything we just read is something for every Christian who walks in the spirit.

Now some commentators see a natural division here in these listings

Notice nine spiritual fruits are grown in three clusters of three each. Cluster #1 flows from our relationship with God: 22 love, joy, peace... Cluster #2 involves our relationships with each other: 22 longsuffering, kindness, goodness... And Cluster #3 centers on our relationship with ourselves: 22 faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.

But notice none of these attributes can be man-made, they're not mustered by the flesh. They're the work of God's Spirit in the life of the believer. How many times have we tried on our own to conjure up joy... or be kind... or exert self-control..only to fail?

But when we trust in the Holy Spirit to produce what we lack, and He'll manufacture true, genuine, Juicy fruit... A spontaneous joy, a peace that flourishes despite fear, lasting patience, genuine kindness, decision-altering self-control. It's beautiful

But don't forget the context of what we're studying. When we're walking in love, what rules can be laid down? You see, we don't need the law because we're walking in love.

24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. God has a place for our flesh, with all its passions and desires. He wants us to nail it to His cross.

Crucified is an important word. Paul could have simply chosen the word "killed," but he used the word crucified because it reminds us of what Jesus did for us on the cross. It also reminds us that the death of the flesh is often painful.

Please notice that the 'crucifixion' of the flesh described here is something that is done not to us but by us... Now in Romans 6 we're told that by are told that by faith with Christ 'we have been crucified with him'. But here it is we who have taken action."

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. "The Spirit has given us life. Now we just let Him direct our steps. Not sprinting or racing, just walking, day by day.

Now there is a hidden danger that can even come when we're walking in the spirit-look at verse 26

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. If we're not careful we can become conceited in our walk in the Spirit. This is a clever trick of Satan. We can be sure that we're almost always right and everyone else is wrong. It often happens gradually, so Paul warned, "Do not become conceited."

