



THE SIMPLE GOSPEL

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GALATIANS: WALKING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Galatians 5: 16-26

The gospel, or good news of Jesus Christ, while incredible is not incredibly complicated. Even though the implications are far reaching, the good news itself is actually quite simple. Often believed to be best for those starting their journey with Christ, the gospel informs and shapes everything in the Christian life, from brand new believer to seasoned disciple. The gospel is how we are transformed and how we play a role in the transformation of those around us. Join us for a nine week study walking verse by verse through Paul's letter to the church in Galatia. Go to doxa-church.com to learn more about Doxa, find service times, or support the making of disciples in the everyday stuff of life.

We'll be reading out of Galatians chapter five, verses 16 through 26.

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I want you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another."

This is the word of the Lord. You can be seated.

Good morning everyone. My name's Eddie, if you're new. Welcome. Happy 4th of July weekend. I, yeah, we heard in the Passing the Peace if you just walked in, that Americans eat 150 million hot dogs over the 4th of July holiday. And it's honestly disgusting. I mean, that's honestly, and my son eats like 10% of those. So you can imagine how, how sickened I am by that. But. Pleasure you guys could all be here. You never know who's gonna get to join us on 4th of July weekend with all the vacations. I'm glad that you guys are all joining us and honestly this is perfect for what we're gonna be talking about today.

All right, we are in Galatians five. Open your bibles, open your apps, whatever it is to verse 16. I'm gonna pray for us and we will get started talking about what it means to walk by the Spirit.

Lord, a moment of calm just feels like a breath of fresh air these days. It's amazing how busy our holidays can feel. So much to do, so much, so much to perform for, so many people coming into town, leaving town. I pray that these next 30 minutes, would they just be a, would they be a relaxing break from the, the craziness that is our lives, the complexity of our culture? And might we find a way to abide in you in a way that is fresh and new to all of us? So many of us want so much information about you, but this is a time we get to actually get to know you personally. And so, Lord, would you show up in ways that none of us are expecting this morning? Would there be courage and calm and clarity from me as I communicate your word? And Lord, would there be protection by the power of the Spirit here for my friends, their hearts and minds as they hear your word, but also for me as I communicate. I pray that this be a place of the Lord this morning in ways none of us were expecting in powerful ways, Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen.

All right, well, as we study walking by the Spirit, I think what's helpful to understand about growing is that there are really two proper ways, things, like products, goods, homes, cars, whatever are produced. There's only really only two ways things are produced today as we see them. The first way is through manufacturing. Manufacturing. This is where machines are essentially assembled. They're crafted for very specific tasks, right, to produce some sort of outcome. Okay? So in order for something to be manufactured you need to find the raw materials that might not otherwise come together. You need to build essentially a machine that's gonna reorganize those materials, and then you need to run the machine with a press of a button, pull of a lever, flip of a switch, whatever, and then your desired widget will sort of be produced. Okay? This is how we make things like iPhones and watches and clothing and processed foods and everything else in between. That's how we make those things right. Now, we've gotten more efficient over the years, as you may recall, in producing things like a machine in processing. You may recall in 1913, Henry Ford came up with this idea of an assembly line where people would stand in line and just do the same thing as they built the car over and over, and it made the process really efficient. Then as we've gone, we've sort of gotten a little smarter and we've even built machines that can essentially take the place of the human beings in the assembly line. So this shot here is from the Tesla factory in the Bay Area,

which I had an opportunity to tour, which is awesome. Now, at Tesla, human programmed arms produce vehicles at a given rate. And so all humans need to do is sort of make sure that the robot arms do what they're supposed to do, okay? We're getting really efficient at producing, but now with the prevalence of artificial intelligence, the job's gotten even easier. With the AI now being able to take the place of the human in that process and the AI can essentially assess the quality of the robot assemblies and even make large scale changes or even change the intention of whatever they're building. It's crazy, right? Manufacturing, all that to say requires gears and grinding and machines. But if done properly, it will produce a given result. It's processed. That's the first way you can grow things. The second way you can produce things is organically. A little less shiny but still, nonetheless a possibility. This is how organic food production happens, right? Fruits, vegetables, roots, along with even animals and agriculture essentially they kind of grow on their own. They kind of grow on their own. And what needs to happen is that the fruit or the vegetable needs to receive the basic necessities that are naturally produced by the world. Water, nutrient from the soil, oxygen, sunlight, all of these different things. And if it receives them, no machine builds them up. They just simply grow and change. They go from seed to fruit. Now, if you ask a farmer about this process, they'll tell you it's not an easy process, but it is an automated process. It is an automated process. Fruits, vegetables, agriculture oftentimes grow when they have the resources they need.

In your spiritual life, you have two options for your growth and for your salvation, okay? You can go mechanical. You can go mechanical. You can rely on the grinding and the machinery of your decisions and the choices to produce a desired outcome. That would be great, manufacturing your spiritual growth. One prayer at a time, one small group at a time, one sermon at a time. Or you can go organic in your faith. You can be set up to receive the natural resources that you need and you can grow, how do I say this? Automatically, freely. You see the main point here in today's scripture in Galatians chapter five, is that earning your salvation, as we've been talking about by working really, really, really hard to please God and to please yourself, is operating your spiritual life as a machine. This is where God, you read God's book, this Bible here, we see his guidelines and his rules and his way of life, and we begin to manufacture, manufacture something that looks a lot like a faith. We build big machines. We oil the gears in our lives, spiritual lives. We slowly grind our way towards the things we want most. The patience, the peace, and the joy. At least that's the hope, okay? However, receiving God's grace freely and then receiving this Holy Spirit and walking with the spirit is like growing organically. We are, if we're a tree, there is no grinding necessary, guys, just receiving the sunlight and the air and the water, and then growth happens as we produce fruit. Now, those two sound really awesome. Which of those two ways of life sound more appealing to you? Which of them? The mechanical life or the organic one?

Do you know what the key difference is between the two? I mean, there's a lot of differences, but what's the key difference between the two if you're kind of deciding what's gonna work? In the mechanical life, the moment you stop grinding, the moment you stop working hard to produce something, the moment you stop working and pushing and oiling is the moment you stop producing the desired outcome. It's the moment you stop. But in the organic life, the work being done to produce the fruit is not an internal desire. It doesn't come from within. The

resources a tree receives grows it naturally, and it grows it in perpetuity, so long as the tree receives the resources it needs. This is what it means fundamentally to walk by the Spirit. This is what we're talking about today. What does it mean to walk by the Spirit? This isn't about speaking in tongues. This isn't about shaking and baking on the ground to get the Holy Spirit to come inside of you, okay? This is not all this stuff. What it means to walk by the Spirit is that you would grow in an organic, such a way where you'd get the resources from God you need in order to produce the fruit he's calling you to produce. It's not white knuckling your faith. It's growing it organically. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. We call these the fruit of the spirit, right? These are what they are. Now, my guess is if you're here and you're a Christian, or maybe you're not a Christian, either way, whatever you might be, you feel like you hear those words and you think, I, I guess I could want some of that in my life. Like who here doesn't wanna be more loving or more patient or more self-controlled or more good? Goodness, it says. Like, who doesn't want those things? We all want 'em, don't we? At least to some degree, those things are good. I would want that. I wanna be more self-controlled. I wanna be more patient with other people. I wanna be more loving. I wanna be more joyous. I wanna be more, more peaceful. Of course I do. Might I submit to you and say that if you live a life without Jesus, whether you're a Christian, whether you say you're a Christian, but you don't, Jesus doesn't affect your life at all and you don't use the Spirit, or you're not a Christian at all, might I submit to you and say that if you live a life without Jesus, these values, these fruit that you long for will only ever be aspirational for you. They'll only ever be out ahead of you. You'll only ever desire them. You'll never actually receive them because the mechanical nature of a life without Jesus and a life without closeness with the spirit means you'll always be grinding. You'll always be grinding in that machinery. You'll always be working and you'll be assessing and you'll be oiling things and you'll be hoping you're doing a good enough job in your faith, just like a machine. And as a result, you can't grind and you can't build and you can't push forward and also enjoy the peace of God at the same time. The moment the machine switches off is the moment your peace is always out ahead of you. You can't ever get it in mechanical life. It'll always be out ahead of you. Peace will only ever be there and you'll strive and you'll work for it, but you'll never get it. You'll never get it. But if you walk by the Spirit in faith in Jesus, you can have peace and joy, not someday, but today, right now. This is a weird, bizarre sort of symptom of American Christianity and it's because we were sort of like pulled up by our bootstraps in our zeitgeist, in our, in our ideologies and thought processes. We always believe that like success is like way out there. The difference is if your faith is built on a machine, you do have to produce something and that becomes your success. But if your faith is organic, there is no switch that shuts off the growing of an apple on a tree. If it receives the resources it needs, it will produce. The joy and peace you long for can be had in this very moment, so long as you're willing to sacrifice being the machine and enabling yourself an opportunity to grow an organic spiritual life. This is not an intellectual exercise, this is a spiritual one that you must receive. You just have to get it from the God, right? You just have to understand. Instead of enforcing rules on ourselves and others and grinding away trying hard to live a good life so you could be a good moral person or, and so that everyone will see it or whatever it is, you simply sort of grow as you're close to the spirit and he just develops you following the good moral ways of Jesus because well, you know Jesus and you know what he'd want you to do. For now, we want that. I want to show you some elements of what it means to

walk by the Spirit, but the fear is that you would go create a list of things you need to do and then we're kind of back where we started. So the goal here is to give a few insights of what it means to walk by the Spirit and not a list of how to do it. Okay? So let's do that together starting in verse 16. Verse 16 says, Paul says,

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. You're not under the law."

One of the bigger things I see in counseling as a pastor or even something that comes up oftentimes in my own heart, actually quite oftentimes in my own heart, is this idea that if we're tempted to sin and I have this sort of war going on in my heart over sin or whether I should not sin, then I'm sort of failing at being faithful. I'm sort of failing at it like, like part of me wants to, if I'm honest with you, feel, see and do something that isn't good for me or good for someone else. And another part of me doesn't want to do those things cuz I know they're not good for me because God says they're not. But because it's even a conversation in my head as I'm going back and forth, all of this guilt and shame comes rushing into me, all of it. Like all of a sudden I'm guilty, I'm shameful. And if for when I do actually do succumb to this sin, then I'm sort of flooded with not just a legitimate conviction from God that what I did was wrong, but also a lots of toxic guilt and shame that God doesn't love me, that I'm too far gone or maybe that I shouldn't even have tried in the first place and I'll never be, I'll never be what I need to be in order to be good enough. Even worse, and I do say even worse, is what I often do is I look in the mirror and I say, you know what? You messed up today, but tomorrow's the day you stop playing Christian. Tomorrow's the day you stop messing around, you get your mind right and you do better. And you finally get to where you need to go. You need to change as if me trying hard apart from the Spirit's intervention will sort of do anything in the first place. I'm sure no one can relate. Here's what you need to know about walking by the Spirit. And here's the first thing, realize that struggling is part of the process. Realize that struggling is part of the process. Paul says here, but God says through Paul here, the flesh is against the Spirit and what? The Spirit is against the flesh, right? They're against one another, which means you are necessarily going to be experiencing some sort of stress as a result of God's Spirit working in you. That's part of the process. So it says the flesh and it's corrupted nature, and to be sure, our sin, our flesh is in this corrupted state. It desires to keep us doing things that cause harm that maybe feel good in the moment, but cause harm to ourselves, others, our communities, and certainly to our relationship with God. That's what happens, right? It doesn't want us to do the things the Holy Spirit wants us to. That's part of living in this. And so we experience the tension, and I'll just say it, it's hard enough not to lust or to be greedy or be envious or to be jealous or to feed your ego when your sin and your spirit are waging war at one another. It's already hard, isn't it? You're already experiencing that, but it's 10 times worse when we add toxic shame to the mix and begin to shame ourselves for struggling in the first place, it makes it so much harder.

So I want you to get this, I want you to get this. And so I'm gonna give you a phrase to sort of mutter to yourself. It's nothing profound, but it's something that might, you can take home and

it might help you just a little bit, okay? So the next time you're experiencing a conflict in you and you're struggling and the desire to sin is waging war against the Spirit and you can feel that sort of tension, God's changing you and sanctifying you and you're trying to grow, but you're still feeling that tension. I want you to do something for yourself. Take a note card, maybe pin it to your bathroom mirror, tape it to your bathroom mirror, put it in your car, or save it as a screensaver or something on your phone or your computer and write this phrase on it, okay? It's not hard because something is wrong. It's hard because something is working. It's not hard because something is wrong. It's hard because something is working. There should be, friends, a tension in you as you wrestle over sins desires for you. The Bible teaches us all the time, Jesus never sinned and yet he had all of, he was tempted in every way as we are. And he battled and waged war on that. He wasn't some, as agnostics would say, some floating deity who was not even tickled with the idea. He was fully human and embraced the temptations and yet overcome him. That's why he's our great example. And we can look at his example and strive for, but there will absolutely be tension in you. And you're struggling is hard, not because something's wrong with you. You're not some broken fool that just can't get their lives together. That's condemnation and it's demonic. Nothing is wrong with you. What's going on is that something is working in you and his name is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is grinding in you. There should be tension as you wrestle. And guess what? That tension will lessen over time as you spend more time with Jesus and get the Spirit. I will say, if there's no tension in you at all and you're free to sort of do some things that you know maybe God doesn't want you to do or bad for other people, I will say it's possible the Spirit is not present in you. That God has not made his home in you. That you haven't welcomed God into your heart, your soul, your mind, your essence. You haven't done that. You haven't done that. If people have been telling you you're rough around the edges in a specific area and you don't see it, or you very much disagree and that you think you're no, not in fact, I'm not sinful, I'm correct in my decision making. That could be a sign the Spirit isn't present with you. And let me just tell you why this hits you in a weird way, because in our culture, whatever you believe you are, you get to be. Isn't that true? Whatever I decide I am, I am okay. That's, I think therefore I am weird. It's where that came from a couple hundred years earlier. Society isn't brand new. It's not rethinking the zeitgeist of the age. It's actually just, we're just children of a, of an age prior, okay? This is the, this is where the human being is. I think therefore I am okay. And so in Christianity, it's one of the one areas where I can look into your life and I can say, actually, I don't think you are a Christian. I know you said you're a Christian, but Christians are different than that. And so we all go, hold on a second. I can be say and do whatever I want. Well, Jesus says, many people are gonna come to me, and I'm gonna say depart from me. I never knew you. You work is iniquity. I don't even know who you are. You came and sat in my chairs for years and you never got to know me. You put Christian veneer and stickers all over your life, but you weren't a Christian. I don't even know who you are. All that to say, I don't want that for you. This isn't an arrogant thing. I want you to understand that if there's no tension in you, that's actually a sign that God's probably not working in you. Now, that tension's gonna lessen overtime to be sure, but we should be waging war. Paul says, put to death what is earthly in you. That is not a passive activity. Now, if you have no problem doing and saying things that God clearly has said not to do, or even change what the Bible says, or you seek, I don't know, fringe scholars to support your point on why the Bible is maybe not true in an area it says, it's

possible you don't have the spirit in you. But I will say if that produces even like a minuscule amount of fear in your soul, where like you're like, eh, hold on a second, and you consider it just for like a little, just a drip. Then I can say that actually that might be, that's evidence that God is working in you, that there is a fear of the holy God that we represent. But if you laugh at that point, or maybe you leave in a carefree attitude and even don't even consider the possibility that that's true, it's possible the Spirit's not present, okay? It's possible. The point in all this is that Paul says, if you are led by the Spirit, you're not under the law anymore. And that is the goal, right? To be so led by the Spirit following God that the law has no power over you. And yeah, sometimes we do want that so badly. We want it so badly, we start to feel all the shame and the guilt of not doing it. And it's, and it's hard. But what if in the moments where we're tempted to, I don't know, shame ourselves and guilt ourselves for doing the wrong things, what if we use that energy and pressed into Jesus instead? And we said, Jesus, I'm mad at myself, I'm mad at you. I wanna cry. I wanna lament. I'm broken. I don't, I don't understand why this is happening. What if we did that instead? What might happen in your life? The funny thing would be is that that whole process, you'd actually be end up walking in the Spirit more closely and God would then deliver you by the power of the Spirit to improve. See what you thought was a symptom of your failure is actually a symptom of your spiritual growth. The struggle, okay? That's the first thing. Let's keep going. Verse 19, let's find out what else we can do to walk by the Spirit.

"Now, the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalry, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these."

Okay? That's a, that's a wild list, okay?

"I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

This is a curious set of lists here. I mean, there is things from all over the map. I mean, we got all sorts. We're talking about sorcery now, like we're witches now at this point. Like these are, this is crazy, the list he puts together, and he says something rather obvious. People that do these things are not going to inherit the kingdom of God. They keep you away and it makes sense. But I think what Paul's doing here, just briefly, is he wants to further help us see more clearly where being led and walking with the flesh leads as opposed to walking with the spirit. He's just trying to be really obvious and say, these are the horrible things, okay? That will, this is where inevitably walking by the flesh will lead. And these are the things where walking by the Spirit will lead. And maybe, I don't know where you're at, maybe some of this looks good to you. Maybe, maybe it does, or, or maybe you just say it's not, I don't think any of it looks good to me, but who cares if people wanna do this stuff, like let them do whatever they want. This is America. It's 4th of July weekend. Like they can do it if they want. I'm a libertarian or whatever. Okay? We talked about this last week as we explored pride month in great detail in, in my teaching on freedom. But the key point is then what it is now, which is this, freedom to sin is not freedom, it's slavery. And that's what the Bible teaches it. It teaches that freedom to sin is

actually not freedom. You become a slave to it right? Now, we might think this feels oppressive, that God might restrict our wonderful freedom and he might restrict the ways we wanna live. And maybe he, maybe there's other activities not on this list that are maybe more culturally palatable that God says are wrong. And I'm mad about that, that God would say, no, you shouldn't do that. But as always, God's goal for your life is that you would give glory to him, but that you would flourish. His goal is not to give you the desires that you want in your flesh. It's not that. What does all this have to do with walking by the Spirit?

It means that walking by the Spirit isn't as the most Americans think it is, which is that you get to say, do and be whatever you want with Christian, sort of, but I love Jesus on it. It's not what it is. Walking by the Spirit is about God's glory and you're flourishing and sometimes you're not the best judge of what helps you flourish. The key then is focusing in on God in this process and not you. And that's the big challenge. And here will be essentially the big problem for all of us as we try to walk by the Spirit, choosing self-forgetfulness over self-focus. Fulfilling desires that our sin doesn't lead to our flourishing is self-focused guys, I think you know that. When we are more concerned with how we satisfy our feelings and our emotions than we are with pleasing God or helping other people, we're in a space where our world begins to revolve around us. And a large majority of that which centers around us also happens to be sinful. Okay? It just is what it is. Two ways it's sinful. Sinful in the sense that we do wrong things, but also sinful in the sense that there's a lot of things we're supposed to be doing that we're not doing. I'm not gonna make the assumption that that's not challenging for you, because when I read choose self-forgetfulness over self-focus, you went, well, hold on a second, you didn't go, oh, that's right. I love self-forgetfulness. And you said was like, hold on a second. I mean, there's some things I gotta do to take care of myself. Immediately we fought around and said, well, hold on, self-focus can also be a good thing. I mean, there's a lot of good ways we can take care of ourselves, and I'm in therapy and blah, blah. And we start going through this whole process about why self-focus is important and you just skirted over the self-forgetfulness piece. Why is that? Why is that challenging? Well, I have a guess. I think it's because, and the obvious thing is that our society is literally built upon the foundation that you, my friend, are the center of your own existence. It's built on that. And by the way, that's only been true for the last 250 years in all of human history. So let's just, it's a risk to put all your chips in that basket. Our jobs placate to us. I mean, you work at Google, you can sleep all day in pods, I mean there's all sorts of bizarre, there's table tennis and backgammon and there's video games. It's like, what do they even do? Just like, it's just a search engine. Guys like figure it out, right?

Grocery stores, I'm just kidding. Come on. Grocery stores are built to entice you. Like their marketing strategies treat you like you're the center of the world. You wanna drive a Dodge Ram truck and they just build this whole thing, this demeanor. You're like, yeah, I'm a ram guy now. And you just start like getting all into it. It's like they're manipulating you because they know something about you. Even good things, churches, psychotherapists, counseling, universities, their strategies for enrollment and or membership are starting to evolve around what? Your needs. Why? Because they know that people are thinking about themselves and that's how they'll increase their membership or enrollment, right? What makes you happy? What makes you sad? What is traumatizing about the world to you? What do you need to be

cozy and comfy and docile, pacified and insulated from all of life's pain? What do you need? You and I live as if the primary objective of the world and everyone in our lives is to make us happy. And we love to do that. And when anything gets in the way, we spill out our bitterness. We spill out our passive aggression, our active aggression. Why? Because they violated the sacred covenant of me getting my needs met in 2023 in America. When we used to be at the Danz building in downtown Bellevue, many of you were there I know, but when we first moved here a couple years ago, I was pulling out, and as you remember, there's a lot of construction going on down there, like both ways. You were kind of stuck. And so I was pulling out one morning and going to grab something and I'm pulling out, and there's a construction guy with his, you know, slow stop sign as they're so common around Redmond these days. And it's like the, that's the Redmond flag is that slow stop sign because there's so much construction. And so as I'm pulling out, a guy gives me the, the slow and you know, I'm following a bunch of cars and they're, they're driving out and he's giving me the slow, but another construction worker jumps in front of me. He's like, stop, stop. And he starts giving me the hand, you know how they get a real aggressive if you're in here, I'm sorry, but this is aggressive and they're pushing their hand at you. And I'm like, oh, sorry. You know? And then he starts going back up, back up. So I start, you know, putting my old truck in reverse. I have this big old brown truck and I'm reversing back, and he keeps going, I'm like, how far is this guy gonna push me back? And he's going five feet, 10 feet, 15 feet. Like, he's like walking towards me and he's looking this way, you know, pushing me back, I guess, you know, something's coming. And all of a sudden I hear <honk honk honk>. I'm like, what was that? Like a car? So I slam on my brakes and I look outta my mirror, all my mirrors, I see nothing. I'm like, who's honking? You know? So I started to back up a little bit more. <honk honk honk> I'm like, okay, some somebody's here. And all of a sudden I look out of my side mirror and I see this little really low to the ground white door fly open, and I could see it outta my rear view mirror and out stomps a couple, in a nice set of Gucci boots, <laugh>, and, and all I see this lady starts stomping towards me. I'm like, oh no, sorry. She didn't look threatening. She was crazy, but she didn't look threatening. So I rolled the window down, <laugh> and I'm, you know, like, you know, good morning ma'am. How are you? She goes, what's the matter with you, you idiot. Why are you backing up? Can't you see there's a car behind you? And I'm thinking, I have backup sensors. Like, what car are you driving that it's so low to the ground that my backup sensor don't even, and she starts yelling. She's like, what's the ma? Are, are you such an idiot? Don't you see that car? That's \$150,000 Porsche and it's brand new. And she sort of waits for my response, like as if I was gonna go, oh my, I'm so sorry. Lord, forgive me. And so then I paused for a second and I'm thinking, and she's yelling at me and I go, wow, man, your husband is a lucky man. I didn't know. No, I'm just kidding. I didn't say <laugh>. That would've been awesome. That would've been awesome. So I just let her berate me for a bit and I go, oh, okay, well you have a great day. I'm so sorry I didn't see you, or whatever. And she gets back in her Porsche sort of speeds off and she's, she's out of there. And I'm thinking, what could make somebody so mad that you could skirt around in a brand new Porsche in downtown Bellevue and be that angry all of the time? Like, how could that happen? It's only possible if your life is built around you. And in Bellevue, it often is, that is an absolute rub where you're like, you don't know me. You don't know if my mom just died, or this is my first day driving. You have no clue who's in that car. I could be a nutcase and instead I must have this person atone for the sin that's been committed against me. I need to attack. And

that's what happens. We're, we can do that, too. And it's not always as aggressive, okay? But it's, it's absolutely possible. But for many of us that are Christians, because culture and society is so focused on you getting your needs met, the interesting is you can take that mentality right into your faith, and you can look at God and you say, well, the point of Jesus must be that I should be happy or that I'm living a fulfilling life, or that I'm, there's meaning and purpose. And this shocking revelation is that we, my contemporaries and myself can often at this very pulpit tell you that the most important thing in your life around your Christianity is that your purpose and meaning are found. And it's all about you. And lemme just tell you, you get purpose and meaning from Christ, but you get it as a byproduct of getting Jesus. The most important thing is not that you find your purpose and you get to be happy on this planet. It's not, I just wanna be straight with you. And I know that's like, I'm like a small fish going up against an infinite, an infinite tide. I understand that. But the point of the gospel and the point of this passage isn't that you're the center of the universe. The point of this passage is that if you press into Jesus, who is the Holy Spirit, Jesus, who is the son of God and the Holy Spirit who is the third person of the Trinity, and you press into that, then you can have the byproduct of meaning and purpose. But it's first comes by you walking by the Spirit and getting more of him, not more of yourself. But that's what oftentimes we're taught.

This happens in the Christian context too. Religious context, self-focus also doesn't lead to our flourishing. And we begin to focus in on our lives and how they can be changed by God instead of getting God himself. And we'll even read passages like die to yourself, and we go, I gotta die to myself. And instead of going, instead of thinking about who I'm alive too, I'm thinking about how all the ways I'm dying, oh, I've died this way, I've died that way, I've died that way, I've died that way, and I'm doing a really good job. It's like you haven't even thought about who you're alive to. The passage is count yourselves as dead to sin, dot, dot, dot and alive to Christ. Don't forget that it's not just about how you're behaving, it's about who you get to worship, who we get to sit before. The question isn't how do I die to myself? The question is, how do I forget about myself more? Self-forgetfulness is the idea that we become so fixated on Jesus, that the other things in our life become so much less important. That we're so enamored with Jesus and his ways that he calls us to, the things he calls us to, and how we can get more outta him, that we sort of have a lessened need to sort of fix and change our own lives and the things about us, unless they interfere, of course, with getting more of him, which works out nicely for you, doesn't it? You see, we've been swimming in a world with systems and processes for so long that the world has become about systems and processes. The life it becomes about the systems and processes. And we forget why we do what we do and we then rarely get to enjoy the reason we started working hard in the first place. So forgetfulness, friends, is what happens when you walk by the Spirit. It's what happens. And I'm not talking about the fact how you neglect yourself. We're not talking about self-neglect where you don't get any of your needs met. What I'm saying is you walk with Jesus and other things become less important. For instance, if you start dating someone for the first time, let's say you're in the end of high school, college or something, and I mean remember like if you were staying out late, let's say, and your uncles are in town and you're hanging out with your uncles and you had to work the next day or a friend, and it got to be like 10:30 and you had to get up at six in the morning, you might look at your watch and go, well, guys, it's been fun, it's getting late. I gotta go to sleep. I gotta maybe

grab a bite to eat, but I'm gonna go to sleep. I'm gonna wake up, I'm gonna grab my coffee, I'm gonna go to work. Fair enough. But if you're far first starting to date somebody and you start hanging out with 'em and it's 10:30, one, you don't know it's 10:30, do you because then 10:30 comes 11:30 and 12:30, and 1:30 and all of a sudden it's four o'clock in the morning and you've been spending time with the person that you care about the most. And then one of you looks at the watch and you go, oh, it's 4:00 AM. Yeah, it doesn't matter, does it? Because you don't really, your needs become less important when you're spending so much time with someone you care about. And that's what we're getting at with Jesus, that you would press in him in such a way that the worries and stresses and anxieties in your life become less important because you're with him. It's not that you don't care about those things, it's that they become less important. Okay? All right. There's one last thing we need to think about here as it talks about walking into the spirit. And we're gonna find it in these passages, verse 12 or verse 22, rather, let's look at it.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. And if we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."

Now, from a performance culture, as we read those fruit of the Spirit, even after hearing about self-forgetfulness, my flinch is, okay, how do I do all that stuff? Like, how do I be more patient and more kind and more gentle? Like I want those things, like how do I start doing them, right? That's, that's where I went first. And we might look at our lives and I'll say like, God, you know, wants me to be this way and that way, so I've gotta make some changes. And we start doing it that way again. And then what? And then for me personally, I start keeping a scorecard. I know some of you, I've talked to you, you know exactly where you're at in the fruit of the Spirit. You're like, self-control is way down here. But like, my patience is way up here. And my joy is through the roof. And you know where you're at on all these things and you're like, how do I grow in this way or that way? And you're, you're assessing it. I'm this much patient, I need to be this much more self-controlled. I'm doing well in the joy department. Things are going well. And what's funny enough is that we know we need to be close to Jesus, but we also need to grow in these areas too. And so that takes the priority. So we start grinding away and working at the fruit of the Spirit, trying to get really good at it as if we can go back to God after we're done growing and go see God, what do you think? How'd it go? How'd I do? And that's backwards, isn't it? It's totally backwards. And here is our last way we need to walk by the Spirit and it's this, abide to grow. Don't grow to abide. Many of us think we need to grow so that we can abide. We need to get better at some things and then bring those good things back to God. This is the mechanical way of life. Build the machine grind and then hopefully we will have enough wonderful finished fruit on the tree to present to God and say, God, look what we did. We're really patient now. I read that book you gave me a long time ago, and I got really good at it. And I know we don't know each other, but here I am back and I look pretty good, don't I? That's not God's purpose. But again, walking by the Spirit is abiding so that we would grow. It's organic, it's organic. He grows you when you abide in him. As a tree doesn't, a tree doesn't look at the sunlight and the nutrient in the soil and the wind and rain and go, you know what? Those things

would be really great. You know what I need to do? I need to grow really big and produce some fruit. And if I do, then I can have all the sunlight and nutrient and soil I can get my hands on. Does it work like that? No. A tree gets the resources and then grows and produces the fruit. Jesus said it himself, John 15:4,

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me."

If you abide in Jesus, know him as you're covering, man, this is the thing right here in American evangelicalism, this is the thing, like the thing that like we gotta snap out of, like right here, abide in Jesus and make your home with him and know him and spend time with him more than anyone else. What's funny is he's gonna correct you. He's gonna rub off on you, and you're gonna begin to more look more like him organically. You'll become more of all of the fruit of the Spirit that you long to produce anyway. Speaking of the fruit, the key in this verse is understanding that the fruit of the Spirit is not plural. It's not fruits of the Spirit. Patience is not one of many of the fruits that grow. And joy is not one of many of fruits that grow. No, the term fruit in the Greek language here in the New Testament is singular, which means that there is one large piece of fruit that produces all of these things. So when we look at a phrase like fruit of the Spirit, our first, our eyeballs always go fruit. What are they? Our eyeballs, might I submit to you, should go to the word Spirit instead of focusing on the fruit. You focus in on the Spirit, the fruit are gonna come. Most people think if I focus in on the fruit, the Spirit will come. It's totally opposite. You've gotta focus in on the Spirit. He is the one that produces these things. He produces them in us. And I think this is such a huge challenge for all of us. And I'll just say as we're getting ready to wrap up here, the challenge for me is because this is such a huge burden, my temptation is I want to give you a list of these are the ways you get what you're seeking. This is how you follow the Spirit well, this is how you walk with the Spirit really well. My fear is that if I give you this list, you'll run home and you'll make a bunch of check boxes and you'll check 'em off. And then the next week you'll come back and we'll be back where we started. So we're in the same spot. So instead, let me share a few observations of walking by the Spirit and abiding in Jesus with you in the hopes that most importantly, that would inspire you to press into him more because this is a qualitative process. Okay? Few observations, mind blowing ones.

First one, abide. Yeah, I just said it, but I'm gonna say it again because it's so important. Abide. Abide means abode or home, right? A, home is where you spend most of your time. It's a place of rest, recovery and nourishment and fun, isn't it? And we oftentimes go home at the end of the day and we rest and we recover and we have a little fun and we get recharged, right? That's what we do. What if in your spiritual life, at the end of your day, you went home to be with Jesus? And you rested and recharged and recovered and you had fun and you experienced the nourishment that your own home produces you? How many of you feel better when you get eight hours of sleep? Some of you need 12 hours of sleep and maybe you're lazy. I don't know. That's another sermon. The point is, when you recharge at home, you feel better, isn't it? It's better to eat dinner, to relax, to spend some time with your family. Abide. Rest with Jesus. To abide means to rest with Jesus. Sabbath and glory, Sabbath to His glory rather, and your joy.

Recover with Jesus when things get hard, you go to him. You sit in his shade, you breathe him in. And just, man, Lord, I need recovery. Have fun in the glory of Jesus at home. Love your friends to the glory of God, your kids, your church, your community, and delight in his goodness, and receive nourishment. Then as the psalmist does, you delight in the law and you strive to know more of God through reading and teaching his word. And you go to the scriptures and you devour them and you let them feed you and you let them embrace you and change you, and you abide in prayer and meditation and solitude and Sabbath and scripture reading. Not so that God will love you, but so that you can cut out the noise of the world that longs for you to be all about your own self focus, that wants to make you anxious and depressed and stressed out. God wants none of that. Jesus says, come all to me who are heavy laden and I will give you stress and anxiety and depression? Rest. The world wants you self-focused, which means you'll end up anxious, depressed, stressed out chronically cortisol through the roof. Or you can press into Jesus where you can receive legitimate rest, abide.

Second, another observation. Abiding means you will produce fruit. If you're nervous that you haven't grown in a specific area, I wanna tell you that if you place your faith in Jesus honestly, deeply, and believe he died for you and resurrected on your behalf, the fruit of the Spirit will grow in your life. It may not happen on your own timing, it may not happen as fast as you want it to, but it certainly won't happen with you trying to manufacture it in a factory, your own heart. It will be produced organically as you spend time with Jesus. If you've been figuring out why you can't be more self-controlled and there's a sin that's owned your heart, the reason is that you haven't walked with the Spirit. Jesus or Paul says, if you walk by the Spirit, you will not gratify desires of the flesh, not maybe or per chance. The moment we sin is the moment we've stepped out of the covering. Abiding means you will produce fruit, friends, it will come. Don't be discouraged.

And lastly, stay connected to the Spirit as he maneuvers in your life. Guys, I don't know. I feel like at Doxa we have to say this many times. This is not, this is not about rule following or managing your life with a list. It's just not. It's about knowing that you're not finished. It's about allowing the spirit to weed unholiness out of your heart one day at a time and then repenting and turning your back on it. The trouble in America and the trouble with churches, the trouble with people like us is that we, so many people think we're finished. We think we're finished products, or we think we're almost finished. And we think in terms of start line and finish line, I start, I grow, I finish. And so some of us think we're finished and life's good and I don't need to change anymore. Some of us think we're finished and it's too late. I'm already failed. Look at me, I'm a finished product. No, no, no, no, no, no. So many of us think in terms of start and finishing in our lives. And so we wonder if the spirit's worked on us enough and how would this finish line's coming? I better hurry up. And that's just not true. Instead, rather than thinking in terms of starting and finishing, think about your life in terms of rhythms and seasons. Just like a tree has to adjust to the seasons. There may be seasons in your life where it's fall and your tree is withering away and you, it's raining and you're losing your leaves and cold winters and seasons of doubt and brokenness and lostness. But there's also gonna be seasons of wonderful new life in the spring. And you're gonna grow and flourish and communicate the gospel in a clear way and you're gonna see the fruit of the Spirit. And then all of a sudden there's gonna be

seasons of the summer where you're just thriving and everything is perfect. And you know, I can't imagine not having a life without, without God. If you think in terms of rhythms and seasons, you can begin to expect what's gonna happen and know that the Spirit is sort of weaving in and out of your life, working, doing things that you have no clue what he's doing. You don't have to be finished right now. You don't have to be done. So if you're a seasoned Christian, you've been here a long time, or you've been a Christian for a long time, lemme ask you a question. Have you been to the secret place any time recently? Have you abided in Jesus? Have you walked in the Spirit? Have you experienced his presence in a way that was restful and recovering and nourishing to you?

Friends again, journey and walking in the Spirit is not an intellectual exercise. It's so much more qualitative. It's purely a spiritual one. It's purely about hunger for more of what God has to offer you. So please consider, stop grinding your machinery so hard, white knuckling with willpower, hoping you're going to be good enough whether you're a Christian or not. Fighting your drinking problem, fighting your lack of consistency in school or fighting the conflict you've been walking through, holding on so tightly hoping that one day it's gonna solve itself through all your hard work. It can't. Let the Spirit grow you like a tree, and you will produce the fruit you seek. And when you go sideways, you let the great vine dresser Jesus Christ himself prune you and remove sin and give you a new heart with more godly desires that longs for him. Let's pray.

Father, thank you so much for another opportunity to open your scriptures to my friends. I so desire to just be able to just open the Bible and teach some things that I just feel like are so fascinating and interesting and I miss so easily your request, your desire, your push towards a deeper relationship with you. And some of these words just sound so wishy washy or culturally neutral, but it's not true. Lord God, you long for us to sit in the shade of you in the shelter when the storms come and rejuvenate and rest. I pray for my friends that are far from you today. Maybe they don't know you. Maybe they think they know you and they don't. I pray that you would be kind to them, that you would reveal by grace where they've missed you. And would you gently, would they have the easiest conversion story that's ever been had, that you would walk them into a loving relationship and they would know nothing but love and kindness and goodness all of their days with you. And for my friends in the dark, the dark days, they feel like they're in that winter right now, Lord God, I pray that you would remove the dark cloud over them, that they would experience the freedom they have in Christ, and they would embrace the good news that they are no longer a broken lost sinner, but they're a new creation in Christ filled with the Holy Spirit to do what you've called them to do. We love you and we praise you, and thank you for a wonderful holiday we get to celebrate together. In Jesus' name, amen.