

Galatians #17**November 24, 2024****Series: Galatians: Treasuring the Gospel of Grace****Today's Message: Keeping in step with the Spirit; Galatians; 5:24-26**

Last week we considered the necessity of walking in the Spirit for producing Christ-like characteristics in a believer's life, and then, we looked at the fruit of the Spirit with the understanding that the fruit of the Spirit is the expression of the character of our Lord Jesus Christ in and through the life of a believer.

We didn't really touch on it but the last part of 5:23 says, "Against such things there is no law." So, Paul is saying that the fruit of the Spirit is so rich and full in righteous perfection that there are absolutely no bounds, no fences, no regulations, no laws that stand against, or can ever stand accusing or condemning the expression of the righteous character of Christ in the life of a believer. In other words, as we live by the Spirit the fruit of that Spirit-led-life will need not be subservient to law. We may grieve the Holy Spirit and hinder the expression of the character of Christ in our lives by way of yielding to the flesh, or independently trying to work out "the fruit" through our own fleshy efforts, but the problem is not with the Spirit, the problem is with the flesh.

I think there is another helpful point to make concerning Galatians 5:23b, and that is, you will never find a prohibition against living out the fruit of the Spirit in your life. In fact, if you think about it, the law stands against sin and sinning people, not against righteousness and righteous people who carry out the spirit of the law by the power of the Holy Spirit. Here is what Paul wrote Timothy on the matter in 1 Timothy 1:8-11:

"We know that the law is good to the one who uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which He has entrusted to me."

So, it ought to delight our souls and energize our imaginations to think about the freedom we have when we walk in the Spirit and keep in step with the Spirit. For, as Paul says, "Against such things there is no law." We are never freer than when we practice keeping in step with the Spirit. And that will be our focus today!

Today we will learn how we can walk in the Spirit bearing fruit. First, by understanding something of the joy of crucifying the flesh; second by gaining wisdom in how to keep in step with the Spirit. And lastly we will learn what pitfalls to avoid if we are going to keep in step with the Spirit.

I) (5:24) The Crucified Life.

A) The crucified life is how we truly live.

- 1) Notice in 5:24 Paul describes the life abiding in Christ, which Jesus taught in John 15.
 - (a) Paul uses the word, "belong" in the NIV. Describing "abiding" or "connected" to Christ.
 - (i) Truly living; alive to God, as opposed to living under the sentence of the condemned.
 - (b) Paul uses the word "crucified" in the past tense.
 - (i) It is an allusion to the cross of Christ. If you want to pinpoint a moment when your flesh was dealt the death blow, look to the cross of Christ.
 - (c) At the cross the dominating power of the sinful nature was broken.
 - (i) He is saying that the once-ruling passions and desires of the flesh no longer rule.
 - (a) They are present, but do not dominate and imprison us anymore. We are free!
 - (d) Now, having been born again and made children of God, born of God, we are being reminded to tune in and turn on to the reality of living in the realm of Christ's reign over us by His Spirit.
 - (i) So, "walk in the Spirit" and "keep in step with the Spirit."

- B) A cross-bearing life. What does that mean?
- 1) Mark 8:34, Jesus said, "Take up your cross daily, deny yourself and follow Me."
 - (a) Have in mind the killing of sinful and self-centered desires. "Deny yourself."
 - (i) Rom. 6:13a Teaches us to **renounce and shun our sinful inclinations**: "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness."
 - (a) Rom. 6:13b teaches us what to do. Strengthen your minds: "But rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness."
 1. A life of repentance (renounce: No respect; no kindness, no compromise.
 - (b) As with any crucifixion, expect there to be pain and extreme discomfort at times. BUT TRUST!
 - (c) As with any war (5:17) expect a relentless enemy assault. Enemy wants to HURT YOU.

- C) Practical help: How to crucify the flesh daily:
- 1) Word and prayer and dependence on the Spirit.
 - 2) "Make no provision for the flesh" (Rom. 13:14) "...clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature."
 - (a) Negatively: Severe all alliances with things that comfort, soothe, feed or ignite the flesh.
 - (b) Negatively: Provide no shelter in your body or mind where temptations are restored.
 - (c) Positively: clothe yourselves with Christ; wrap your mind around Him; seek His provision.
 - (d) Positively: Strive to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit. (examine your "thoughts," "actions")

II) (5:25) Keeping in step with the Spirit.

- A) The Spirit always initiates our keeping in step with the Spirit.
- 1) The Spirit made us able to keep in step at "new birth" by indwelling each believer (Jn. 14:16-18).
 - 2) The Spirit prompts us to repent and turn from sin and temptation by convicting and warning.
 - 3) The Spirit delights to show the Father and the Son to us, revealing Him as we mature. (Jn. 14:23)
- B) How to keep in step with the Spirit:
- 1) Follow the desires of the Spirit (Gal. 5:17).
 - (a) You are not on your own to do this! **Philippians 2:13** says, "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good pleasure." Every power, strength, and desire are yours.
 - (i) When you are moved to do godly things, do them! (Philippians 2:13!!!) He will provide!
 - (ii) If you sin, the Spirit has convinced you. Respond by confessing and moving forward!
 - 2) Stay in the Scriptures
 - (a) As you diligently study the Scriptures you learn the very steps, or ways, of the Spirit.
 - (b) The Scripture renews/ refreshes our minds (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23-24).
 - (c) The Scripture reminds us of all that Jesus taught and commanded. (i.e. love one another)
 - 3) Examine the Fruit of your life. (Gal. 5:19-23; Eph. 4:29- 5:4; Col. 3:5-9; 12-14)
 - (a) Let the Word test your thoughts, test your words, test your actions, test your responses.
 - 4) Pursue love for one another.
 - (a) Fruit bearing is rooted in love. Spirit led fruit bearing is for building others up in Christ!
 - (b) Faith working through love is the expressed interest of the Spirit (See 1 Cor. 13:4-7; 14:1)
 - 5) Live in prayerful dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit to work in and through you!
 - (a) Living a cross-bearing, self-denying life will require dependence upon the Spirit!
 - (i) It will hurt to live and love like this. But it is evidence that Philippians 2:13 is happening!

III) (5:26) Pitfalls that hinder our walk in the Spirit.

- A) Vain-glory/ conceit: This is the selfish ambition to be better than others, or a sense of superiority.
- B) The daughters of Vain glory are provocation and envy.
- 1) The temptation to **provoke** others requires an effort to frustrate, agitate and tear others down with evil words in order to exalt yourself and your worth and value. (Expose weaknesses.)
 - 2) To **envy** others means to burn with disdain over someone's gifts and achievements. This includes bitter coveting of what someone has attained, obtained or earned. (see Gal. 5:15)