

XXIV. The Holy Spirit in Biblical Perspective

Led by the Spirit

“The Fruit of the Spirit”

Galatians 5:16–26

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October 2, 2016 – Morning sermon

This is God’s Word. God’s Word is the truth. Galatians 5:16–26 says [16] *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. [17] 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. [18] But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. [19] Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, [20] idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, [21] envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. [22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. [24] And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

[25] If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. [26] Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

So this is one of the texts that contain the phrase that has been our theme for the year. It is the believer who is led by the Spirit. It is also found in Romans 8 where we spent some time looking at the work of the Holy Spirit followed up with the sermon on the Holy Spirit preached by Jesus in John 13 through 16. For those who belong to Christ it says in Romans 8 that those who are led by the Spirit of God then you belong to Christ and it has the negative which says that those who are not led by the Spirit of God do not belong to Christ. So we have been trying to understand who the Holy Spirit is, what He is doing and how He is at work in our life not only from Romans 8 and John but now going to a key text.

In this text I just read it says if you live by the Spirit, in other words, if God’s Spirit has taken you from the death of sin and its dominion to Christ for life and liberty, (from death unto life, from self and sin to the Christ the Savior), now walk by the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, keep in step with the Spirit who is in you. To put it pointedly, right now Christ is in you if you are a believer and you have the Spirit which is how you have life. Christ is in you right now by His Spirit who dwells in you who is growing you, changing you, striving with you, holding you, keeping you, forming you and framing you. Right now Christ is also at the throne of God interceding for you. He ever lives to intercede for you. So He is you by His Spirit working in you by His Word. What does that mean?

That has led us to address some things step by step in our journey to know what it means to be led by the Spirit. We have addressed blasphemy of the Holy Spirit which is the unpardonable sin and that means that sin can never be committed by a believer by definition. Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is the settled rejection of the Spirit of God’s work which is to bring men and women from sin to Christ. If anyone says to the Spirit of God that what He does is useless, wrong, profane and evil and they reject it out of hand then it becomes the unpardonable sin because when you reject the call of the Holy Spirit who has come to bring sinners to Christ,

then you are rejecting the only One who can take you to the only One by which any and all of your sins are forgiven. So by definition it becomes an unpardonable sin and it is the sin of unbelief.

Further added to that the Scriptures reveals to us that some are so settled in that unbelief that God closes the door of grace not only in death but even while they live and their last state is worse than their first. Their first state was being born dead in their sins but the last state is being born dead in their sins with no hope and the door has already been shut. Today is the day of salvation. God does something at times that is most frightening when this unpardonable sin has settled into the unbeliever. To me these are the most frightening words in the Bible to some degree and that is '*God gives them over to the desires of their heart.*' This is hardening of the heart that takes place. That is not what happens to a believer.

Here is what happens to a believer. When the Spirit brings you from death unto life that is called being born again by the Spirit and then the promised blessing of the Father, secured by Jesus is poured out from Jesus upon you. That is called the baptism with the Holy Spirit. This is not a second blessing. It is the promised blessing of the Father, secured by Christ for any and all believers. There are multiple fillings of the Spirit which we will look at in the next study but there is one baptism with the Spirit and every believer has it. The believer has this for two reasons. One is that the baptism with the Spirit seals you into Christ and secondly, it puts Christ in you where He starts growing you in grace so that the power of God now resides in you.

That is why the text now says to you that when you walk by the Spirit you will not gratify the desires of the flesh because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. He is working in your life. So blasphemy of the Spirit is only committed by those with a settled unbelief against Christ and the call of the Holy Spirit. Notice that it is not baptism *of* the Holy Spirit for that is not a Biblical phrase for the Holy Spirit baptizes no body. Christ baptizes His people with the Spirit as promised by the Father because of His victorious work of redemption. When He is poured out upon you He is in you sealing you and empowering you to now follow Christ. That leads us to what we studied in the last study.

Here is a sin that believers can do. Believers can and do grieve and quench the Spirit. Clearly, that means the Holy Spirit is not an 'it' so we don't need to pray that way, like 'Lord, can I have more of it?' The Spirit is a 'He' and you can't grieve a power either. You can only grieve a person. So the Person of the Holy Spirit is within you. The phrase quench the Spirit literally means to throw water on or dampen the fire of His presence in your life.

So the bad news is that believers can grieve and quench the Holy Spirit. Worse news is that they not only can but they do and they will. The good news is that when the believer does grieve the Spirit, He will grieve the believer and that is called conviction. It is as the hymn says, Prone to wander, Lord I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. Then He calls you, pulls you and draws you back to Himself. These weeds of the flesh I don't want in my life. I want the fruit of the Spirit. The even greater news is that He wins. Philippians 1:6 says [6] *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.* Our grieving and quenching does not supplant Him or diminish Him but He will then come into our lives so that He supplants us and we diminish that He might be preeminent. That is what is going on in our life therefore I want to keep in step and walk in the Spirit.

The text for our study here sits in the book called the Epistle to the Galatians. To give some context here, when Paul was on his missionary journeys he planted many churches in Galatia and they got on fire with the Gospel of Jesus Christ who had come to save sinners. What the blood of bulls and goats could not do, the Lamb of God has done. What our resolve cannot

do the Spirit of God does where we are not saved by works but by grace through Christ. The works we do is a result of His power and grace. We don't have a religion to get right with Him but we have a Savior who makes us right with Him and a religion that is a result of that not the cause of it.

Then Paul left and some other preachers came in behind him but they were preaching a false gospel. They would say Jesus was good but you couldn't really have Jesus unless you went back to the Old Testament to circumcision, the Passover, and the ceremonial sacrifices and do all that for that would make you worthy of Jesus and salvation. Paul says to them 'who has bewitched you, for that was all there in the Old Testament to show you that you need a Savior for you can't save yourself and to prepare you for what God did to save you in His Son who fulfilled it. So Paul lays out a whole epistle extolling the Gospel, the Good News of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone and for the glory of God alone.

The first part of Galatians is Paul's Gospel testimony. The next part is his Gospel defense when Peter fell prey to this and he confronts Peter. Then he does a Gospel exposition and now he gets to the Gospel lifestyle which he calls 'walking in the Spirit, producing the fruit of the Spirit.' He tells us there is a war going on for if you're a believer then you're at war. There is a war outside against you and don't fight it with the weapons of the flesh but fight it with the weapons of the Spirit. Arm yourself, not with the armor of the world but with the armor of Christ. Stand firm while you take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ but the key to the war outside is the war inside. The flesh wages war against the Spirit who is within you.

When you are born again sin's dominion is broken, sin's penalties are forgiven but you still have within you an old man. Now you have a new life that you want to live but you have an old man that Paul calls the flesh. The flesh is a technical term in the Bible meaning a lifestyle of self-reliance, self-absorption and self-promotion where it's all about 'me.' That is what these false preachers are teaching you, where God can't do it until you do it for Him. When you start relying on the flesh even in the name of religion, it will produce the weeds of the flesh. If that is your way of life then you don't inherit the Kingdom for you are outside of the Kingdom but even if you're in the Kingdom you still have to fight that old man that keeps wanting to come back every day and tell you it's all about you.

Every day when we open our eyes there is a default program within us that wants to come up on the screen of life saying 'it's all about me.' So when that comes up hit, control shift delete or do something to get rid of that default program. You put on the screen of life by the power of the Spirit of God, the preeminence of Christ that will replace self. Galatians 2:20 says [20] *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* Every day that war has to take place and that war is what sets you up for the war outside. Kill the old man every day. Flee temptation and pursue Jesus in the power of the Spirit of God, keeping in step with the Spirit who is within you.

How do I keep step with the Spirit of God? The Spirit of God always works with the Word of God so if I want to keep in step with the Spirit of God I need to be saturated with the Word of God. I need to read it, meditate on it, and I need to hear it preached. If you are in gathered worship you will hear the Word, confess the Word, sing the Word, read the Word and affirm the Word. I need to meet the Lord every day in His Word, praying for His Spirit because the Spirit and the Word work together. The Word won't profit without the Spirit and the Spirit always works with the Word. Put no confidence in the flesh for My Words are Spirit and life. So my heart and life needs to be saturated with the Word of God privately and publically, to keep

in step with the Spirit. Solitude without community is destructive – community without solitude is devastating. Both are to work together.

In our text it says those who live in the flesh will experience the lifestyle Paul describes in Galatians 5:19–21 but those in the Kingdom will periodically let the flesh rear its ugly head and instead of killing it you give it a seat at the table. When you give it a seat at the table then those things of the flesh Paul describes will start showing up in your life but we don't want it to. You will be doing what you don't want to do, why? It is because God has changed your wanters for you are born again. The very things you once wanted to do now you don't want to do but find yourself doing them so what do you do? You start rooting out the weeds of the flesh.

There is one part of Spring I do not like and that is my backyard. In the Spring up comes the most ugly collection of weeds you've ever seen in all of your life. They come back every year and I feel like I can just hear them whispering every morning when I'm sitting out there reading my Bible. 'Thought you got rid of us, didn't you? Thought you'd knocked us down. Thought you'd cut us away but no we're still here.' Why? It is because I didn't get rid of the roots. I love the phrase 'root out the weeds of the flesh.' To root it out is the objective for that is the victory. Don't just cut them down but you want to get rid of them.

So how do you root out the flesh? You rely on the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. How do you walk in the Spirit? You get saturated in the Word and when you do those things your life gets all about Jesus and not about the idolatries of this age. The Spirit of God has come to bear witness of Christ and the Word of God bears witness of Christ so when we're in the Word and the Spirit then it becomes about Christ. When I'm not in the Word and the Spirit then it becomes all about me. That is the default program that keeps rising to the top.

When you're keeping step with the Spirit, there is this wonderful thing called the fruit of the Spirit that will happen in your life. Fruit isn't something that just appears in Galatians. It is all over the New Testament and the Old Testament. We see this in Psalms 1 which is one of my favorite passages. Psalms 1:1–6 says *[1] 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; [2] but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

[3] He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. [4] The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

[5] Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; [6] for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. The prosperity of the Kingdom, not the world, is manifested in his life.

Paul now takes that concept that the believer, when properly fed roots out weeds and roots in with Living water, will become a tree bearing fruit, like an evergreen tree whose leaf does not wither, and what does that fruit look like? Here is what that fruit looks like where the old man is being killed, rooting out weeds of the flesh and engaging in walking with the Spirit while being saturated with the Word. In strong contrast to the list we just heard about the flesh here is another list of what is produced when walking in the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22–23 says *[22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. [24] And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.* If we live by the Spirit now let's keep in step with the Spirit. What happens when we do this? The fruit of the Spirit is produced. How many items are listed here? Nine, but notice it

doesn't say fruits, plural. It is singular – fruit. The example is when you are served a bowl of fruit. There may be all kinds of fruit in that bowl but it is (one) bowl of fruit.

Interestingly when I pastored a church in Miami there was a lady who made me a paper weight after hearing my series on the fruit of the Spirit where I preached a sermon on each one. She was a new Christian and was so excited about hearing about the fruit of the Spirit. The only problem was that inside the paper weight she had put in the needlepoint 'the fruits of the Spirit' and it is not the fruits of the Spirit but the fruit of the Spirit. I didn't have the heart to tell her that it wasn't fruits but it's in my office to this day. In other words, this is not an a la carte menu where you pick and choose which ones you want. It all comes together for it's connected.

By the way, self-control isn't looking at where the source of control is but it's telling you what is being controlled, who is being controlled. If I am controlling myself then we are back to the weeds of the flesh. Self-control is saying that the Spirit is controlling me. Instead of me being in control, Jesus is in control by the Spirit. We believe in verbal plenary explanation where the Bible is the product of the Holy Spirit working through forty plus human authors and that means we not only believe every word of the Bible is true but we believe the order is true. There is a reason the Ten Commandments are written in the order they are in. There is a reason that words are in the order that they are in the original languages of Hebrew and Greek.

So what is the reason behind the order of the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control? There are five possibilities. One is it is a stair-step list. Love leads to joy, joy leads to peace, peace leads to patience and you just keep building one on the other. The top floor is self-control and Jesus is in control. So it's a stair step.

Possibility number two, is that it is a sandwich. The two outside slices are love and self-control and look at what you get to enjoy inside of the two slices where it's sandwiched together. With the work of God's love in your life and the work of self-control with Christ in charge, then this is the result in-between. What a tasty sandwich!

The third possibility is that it is just one. The fruit of the Spirit is love and love expresses itself in joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. This has something to say for it for the Bible and the Spirit work together. I Timothy 1:5 says [5] *The aim of our charge (preaching) is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.* If the aim of the Bible is love then the aim of the Spirit is love for the two work together. Then love is seen with joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The fourth possibility is that it is one unit with three categories that in sets of three. There is love, joy, peace – patience, kindness, goodness – faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Love, joy, peace is derived upward from God. Then love, joy, peace is expressed outward in patience, kindness and goodness with others. Then internally you have faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. So you have upward, outward and inward in how the fruit is expressed.

The fifth possibility is all of the above. I can't multi-task but God can. God's Word can multi-task. God's Word can bring together multiple implications to us in a proper interpretation of it. So here is your takeaway which is what I think.

The takeaway is the fruit of the Spirit is the imperfect yet intentional lifestyle of a Christ-redeemed, Word-saturated, Spirit-filled, Great Commandment Christian. Remember that we all fall into grieving and quenching the Spirit but the overall lifestyle of those who have inherited the Kingdom of God is a pattern of growth in the Lord. I don't need to pray 'God, give me more of Your Spirit.' There is nothing wrong with the Power plant that is in me. It is not

God give me more of Your Spirit but it's God allow me to give more of me to the Spirit. I need to surrender. Spirit-filled doesn't mean getting more of the Spirit. We will look more closely at what it means to be filled with the Spirit in the next study.

When I give the Spirit more of me and I'm saturated with the Word, keeping step with the Spirit and Christ has redeemed me and purchased me, then that is then leading me to a great commandment lifestyle. The Great Commandment is that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and you will love your neighbor as you love yourself. There is a Christ-honoring love of God, love of others and love of self and I believe that is pictured right here in this text. When you are redeemed by Christ, nurturing and cultivating the work of the Spirit, rooting out the deeds of the flesh daily, walking in the Spirit, keeping step with the Spirit and being led by the Spirit then as you go on the Great Commission to make disciples you begin to live the Great Commandment which is the love of God filling your heart, the joy of the Lord filling your soul and the peace that passes all understanding establishes you. Then that sets you free to love others.

As this is done through love, joy and peace but then there is patience, kindness, goodness outwardly in a broken world with other broken people. They don't march to my drumbeat but I'm pointing them to Christ and His trumpet. Then when I lay down, stand up and walk by the wayside inside of me is gentleness, faithfulness and self-control where Christ is reigning and not self gone wild. That is what begins to happen in our lives in glorious, specific and pronounced ways when the war on weeds and the nurture and cultivation of the Spirit is happening.

I believe we need to cut loose with Gospel words because people can't come to Christ without the Gospel. Faith comes from hearing and hearing from the Word of God. This Spirit-filled life will open up a lot of doors for Gospel words. I'd like to give you an illustration of this from something I heard from Chuck Colson and it's never really left me.

There was a woman named Sherry riding down an interstate in her car listening to hymns and psalms. She crested a ridge and a man was on her side of the interstate out of control. He was drunk and under the influence of drugs. He hardly knew where he was and as she crested the ridge he hit her head on. She was barely alive. They got her to the hospital. They finally got her to stabilize a little bit. People filled her room reading the Word and singing hymns of the faith. The man was arrested not simply for drunk driving but also for vehicular manslaughter. Somehow she was able to get out of bed and get discharged on the day of his trial. She went to the trial still not back to herself by any means but she went there with a purpose.

There is an opportunity at the trials in Colorado for victims to give their declaration of what they think a just sentence would be. She stood and told the judge 'I want you to know that I forgive him and in a minute I am going to pray for him and with him if allowed. Mr. Judge I ask that you not pardon him for I will pardon him. The state has its business but I would ask that his sentence be one of probation under supervision and that he has to give 1296 hours to the hospital where I just came from, for community service.' Why did she say 1,296? That is how many hours she had spent in the hospital.

The judge was obviously moved and granted her request. Steve was the man's name who hit her with his car. When he heard that he collapsed and began to weep. She came over and put her arms around him and prayed with him. With all of her energy drained they took her away. Steve fulfilled his probation and his community service and he found out where she was. He went to her and she led him from the weeds of the flesh to Christ and a new life in the Spirit.

If we live by the Spirit for Christ, let us walk by the Spirit, keeping in step with the Spirit that others would see Christ in us. He is right here, right now with you and He is right there praying for you.

Today, if you don't know Christ my call to you is not to surrender more of yourself to Christ but I want to invite you to surrender yourself to Christ by the Spirit as Lord and Savior and know what it means to live by the Spirit in Christ, our Redeemer. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart. Father, for those whom You are calling from death unto life in Christ by Your Spirit, may they come to Him who gives life and say 'Lord, here I am just as I am without one plea but Your blood was shed for me. Jesus I come.' Spirit of the Living God usher them from death unto life. If you'd like to pray with me please contact me here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200. Father, for these Your people who have been brought from death unto life, who live by the Spirit and want to walk in the Spirit, root out the deeds of the flesh, not grieve the Spirit but keep in step with the Spirit that the fruit of the Spirit would increasingly, imperfectly yes, but increasingly be seen in us. Take our life, let it be consecrated Lord to Thee, for I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

A MOMENT FOR REVIEW

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit

Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Grieving or Quenching of the Holy Spirit

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Context of Galatians

Context of Fruit

LIFE TAKEAWAY

The Fruit of the Spirit is the imperfect yet intentional lifestyle of a Christ-redeemed, Word-saturated, Spirit-filled, Great Commandment Christian.

Nurturing–Cultivating–Harvesting