

Sermon Title: **Living by the Spirit**

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Scripture Reference: **Galatians 5:13-25**Thesis: **Paul explains the difference between the characteristics of kingdom citizens and those living by their sinful nature;**Purpose: **We will learn how to live with the help of the Holy Spirit.**Key Word: **"The Holy Spirit and Christian Living"**Key Points: #1 **The Problem**  
#2 **The Solution**

## I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **Galatians 5:13-25**

## A) The Setting:

- 1) **We are back to our study of Paul's letter to the Galatian churches.**
  - (a) We would find these churches in central Turkey today.
  - (b) Where Paul is writing to encourage the churches to remain steadfast in the doctrine of salvation by faith.
- 2) **In the first two chapters Paul was personal in establishing his authority so that the churches would know Paul's personal experience with Christ.**
  - (a) Chapter's 3 and 4 dealt with the doctrinal where Paul explained that our justification before God only comes from putting our Faith in Jesus.
  - (b) This is done by God through no effort on our part whatsoever.
  - (c) Second, Paul wants to emphasize that there is only one gospel; one means of salvation and that is through our faith in Jesus alone.
- 3) **In chapter 5 Paul brings us to where the rubber meets the road as we might say in establishing the practical; the means by which we are sanctified by the spirit.**
  - (a) When something is "sanctified" it is dedicated; consecrated, made holy or set apart as holy;
  - (b) It is that act of being made free from sin; purified<sup>1</sup>.
- 4) Martin Luther said "*There is no justification without sanctification, no forgiveness without renewal of life, no real faith from which the fruits of new obedience do not grow.*"<sup>2</sup>
- 5) **Sanctification is the process by which we are justified by God, made holy, free from sin and set aside for a special purpose to serve our Holy Master.**
  - (a) When Jesus went to the cross and died in our place as the holy sacrificial Lamb of God HE earned the right to offer a way for us to be rescued from SIN'S penalty of DEATH.
  - (b) **The only part we play in this is that we must accept that gift of salvation**
    - (i) By believing that Jesus did this for us by asking Jesus to come and transform us from creatures of sin bound for an eternal hell; made into a new creation;
    - (ii) To be made holy and set apart to be used by God in special service.
  - (c) **The Holy Spirit is the means by which this process happens.**
- 6) **What we need to understand about this process is:**
  - (a) That while justification is by faith . . .
  - (b) Our sanctification is by the work of the Holy Spirit working in us!
- 7) **Let me illustrate this using something with which I think most of us are familiar . . . the art of refining sap into maple syrup.<sup>3</sup>**
  - (a) **Dr. David Osborn at Denver Seminary says,**
    - (i) "*Too often we try to use God to change our circumstances, while He is using our circumstances to change us.*" (Compass, April 2003)
    - (ii) You see, God is right now in the process of making us like Christ.
  - (b) **Think of the process of refining maple syrup.**
    - (i) Maple trees are tapped with buckets hung under the taps, and out drips a sap which is thin and clear, like water.
    - (ii) On a good day, 50 trees will yield 30-40 gallons of sap, but it is essentially useless at this point with only a hint of sweetness.

- (c) **Then as the buckets fill, they are emptied into large bins that sit over an open fire.**
  - (i) The sap comes to a slow boil; and as it boils, its water content is reduced and its sugars are concentrated.
  - (ii) Hours later, it has developed a rich flavor and golden-brown color, but it must be strained several times to remove impurities before being reheated, bottled, and graded for quality.
  - (iii) In the end, those 30-40 gallons of sap are reduced to one gallon of pure, delicious maple syrup, which is far better than the cheap, imitation, colored sugar-water that passes for maple syrup in the grocery store.
- (d) **So it is when we come to faith in Christ.**
  - (i) We start like raw, unfinished sap, which could have been tossed aside as worthless.
  - (ii) But God knew what he could make of us.
  - (iii) He sought and found us, and His skillful hands are transforming us into something precious, sweet and useful.
  - (iv) The long and often painful refining process is bringing forth a pure, genuine disciple easily distinguished from cheap imitations.
- 8) **This is what Paul is trying to get across to the Galatian churches.**
  - (a) They have a new found freedom in Christ;
  - (b) But with any freedom, there comes a responsibility to act in a way that is pleasing to God.
  - (c) To be righteous or right with God.
- 9) **So, that brings us to our scripture reading for today in Galatians 5:13-25.**

B) *Sermon Prayer*

C) (The Hook)

- 1) **In the first part of Galatians chapter 5 Paul has been explaining what it means to have a new found freedom in Christ.**
  - (a) The bondage of sin which held us captive has been broken.
  - (b) In other words, that which we were unable to do for ourselves by keeping all the Laws of God perfectly;
  - (c) Has been done for us by Jesus' act of love in dying in our place.
  - (d) Now God can take over if we will let Him and do for us what we could not do.
  - (e) Making us right with Him so we can live together forever.
- 2) **Paul makes the argument that if we have been freed from the heavy burden of trying to keep the Law . . .**
  - (a) Why would you want to put the burden back on and continue to try and keep it?
  - (b) The only purpose of that is again to try and earn something unattainable.
  - (c) God has a better way and a better plan that is guaranteed success because it all relies on HIM and HIM alone!
- 3) **When God called the Hebrews to be His Special people He required that they be circumcised as an outward sign that they were called to be His people.**
  - (a) The covenant which God made with them required that they keep the 10 commandments.
  - (b) Something that seemed simple enough; but not as easy as it appeared.
  - (c) In fact the Jews tried to enact laws to make sure they kept the commandments and in the process lost sight of the purpose for the laws in the first place.
- 4) **Then God sent Jesus to establish a new covenant; a new way because it was now obvious that they needed to be rescued and were incapable of doing it on their own.**
  - (a) The new covenant did not depend on what they did; they were now free from trying to keep that burden as it solely depended on what God did.
  - (b) With the new covenant we only had to believe and rely on God to do the rest;

- (c) Jesus said He would send His Holy Spirit to reside in the believer and begin the process of sanctification.
- 5) **What freedom had been granted as we are now called to live by the Spirit.**
- (a) We no longer have to struggle in the flesh, meaning our humanness,  
 (b) We now need to learn to follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit residing in us who will be our guide.
- 6) **But what did this mean?**
- (a) What does it look like?  
 (b) Are the Galatians now free to do anything they desired to do because they don't have to live by the law?  
 (c) This is what Paul is getting to in the passage we just read.

TS: **So, let's explore it together by first examining the . . .**

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **The Problem**

- 1) **When Paul tells them to live by the Spirit in verse 16, he immediately identifies the problem, telling them they are not to live to just gratify their fleshly desires.**
- (a) This is the number one principle in Christian living.  
 (b) Learning to live our lives listening to God's Spirit is the key to a walk with God.
- 2) **In fact Paul says that living by the desires of your flesh is in direct opposition to what the Spirit wants for them.**
- (a) In **verse 17**, Paul said, **"For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want."**  
 (b) This means they are at war, in conflict with each other;  
 (c) It is the new nature verses the old nature.
- 3) **Let me give you an example given by J. Vernon McGee.<sup>4</sup>**
- (a) Most of us these days have a TV in our homes.  
 (b) Now, please don't misunderstand me; a TV is not necessarily bad or evil.  
 (c) I watch TV and I am not breaking any law by watching it that says I can't do it.  
 (d) There are a few programs we can enjoy;  
 (e) But if the TV programs are taking you away from that which is spiritual then in this case it is wrong.
- 4) **Once the Spirit takes up residence there is a battle going on for who is in control.**
- (a) God gives us the freedom to decide so that we freely choose to let Him lead.  
 (b) The choices we make will not change our status of salvation; that is secured when we ask Jesus to be our Lord.  
 (c) But it will change how successful we are in our daily lives and effectiveness for God.  
 (d) It will determine our rewards at the end of this life.
- 5) **Beginning in **verse 19 thru 21** Paul gives the Galatians examples of what he calls the works of the flesh.**
- (a) When you work for something you are striving for it; you are trying to attain it.  
 (b) Or we are working to earn it because it is something we want.
- 6) **What is listed in these verses is what McGee calls an ugly brood of sensual sins, religious sins, social sins and personal sins.**
- (a) I am using the list from the Amplified Bible for clarity:  
 (b) **"Now the practices of the sinful nature are clearly evident: they are:**
- (i) **Sensual Sins**
- **sexual immorality,**
  - **impurity,**
  - **sensuality**
  - **(total irresponsibility, lack of self-control),**

## (ii) Religious Sins

- **idolatry,**
- **sorcery,**
- **hostility,** (Hatred)

## (iii) Social Sins

- **strife,**
- **jealousy,**
- **fits of anger,**
- **disputes,**
- **dissensions,**
- **factions [that promote heresies],**
- **envy,**

## (iv) Personal Sins

- **drunkenness,**
- **riotous behavior, and other things like these.** (meaning that there are more things which could be listed)

(v) Finally ending with a warning that **"those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."**

7) **Can you say with certainty that you never have a problem with anything on this list?**

- (a) I think if we are all honest we can find one or more things on this list that are a problem for us at some time or another.
- (b) So, does that mean none of us can ever get into the Kingdom of God?

TS: **This is what leads us to . . .**

B) Key Point #2: **The Solution**

1) **Beginning in verse 22 Paul gives us a list of the "Fruit of the Spirit."**

- (a) While we have to work to do the deeds of our flesh.
- (b) When we receive the Holy Spirit we will begin to see new growth, fruit appearing in our lives as a result.

2) **Every believer who invites Jesus to live in their heart receives this fruit and you will begin to notice its appearance the more you walk with God.**

- (a) Things like **"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."**
- (b) Nine fruit of the Spirit will begin manifesting itself in your life.
- (c) **More love, more joy, more peace, more patience, more kindness, more generosity, more faithfulness, more gentleness, and more self-control.**

3) You see the Holy Spirit is giving you a new tool box to combat the desires of the flesh.

4) **There is a hymn we sing entitled "Come Thou Fount" that McGee again uses as an illustration in his book, "Thru the Bible."**

*Come, Thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.*

(a) **It is a wonderful hymn and in the last stanza are these words:**

***Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; Prone to leave the God I love;***

(b) After this song was written, someone looked at it and said, "That is not my experience . . . I'll change that." So in some hymnbooks we find the words

***Prone to worship, Lord, I feel it, Prone to love the God I serve.***

(c) **Which of these is true?**

(i) Well, both are true,

(ii) **We have a nature that is prone to wander, prone to leave the God I love;**

- There are times when this old nature of mine wants to wander away from the Lord!
- Have you ever had this experience?

(iii) **There are times when I am riding along alone in my car, and I just cry out to Him, "Oh, Lord, how wonderful you are! I love You and worship You."**

- This is the expression of my new nature;
  - My old nature never gets around to praising God or loving Him.
- (iv) **Every Believer has both an old and a new nature at work in them.**
- 5) **The difference is that when a believer gives in to the old nature; the new nature will not let you feel comfortable with that.**
- (a) The new nature is creating a new you and there isn't room for the old nature too.
  - (b) If you are a true believer you cannot help but feel the tug of the new nature urging you to change.
  - (c) You want to feel right with God and the new nature calls for you to confess your mistake to God and ask His forgiveness.
- 6) **It is not that we can never sin to get left out of heaven;**
- (a) But that if we can do these things without any remorse leading to repentance,
  - (b) Then we are in danger of not ever have been in the kingdom at all . . .
  - (c) One must surrendered their life to Jesus in the first place in order to have the sign of His fruit at work in your life.
  - (d) Jesus said, we are known by our fruit. (**Matthew 7:16**)
- 7) **When we repent we can also ask for God's help us to not give in to that old nature again.**
- (a) The old nature has been around a long while and won't give up easily in most cases.
  - (b) Someone asked "*which one wins?*" and someone wisely said, "*The one you feed the most.*"

TS: **What have we learn here?**

### III) Conclusion (Life Application)

#### A) **Text Illustration:** The Goal and Person Of Change<sup>5</sup>

- 1) **Many have found themselves overcome by sins that have brought heartache, turmoil and even isolation.**
  - (a) These sinful bondages are playing havoc across all social and economic layers of our nation's families.
  - (b) Therapists, physicians, scientists and sadly, even some Christian counselors, are scrambling to find some medical or genetic cause to explain these sinful bondages.
- 2) **However, when a correct Biblical diagnosis is made, the real solution can then be applied.**
  - (a) Jesus teaches that sin is first found in the heart of a man long before that sin makes its outward manifestation. (**Mark 7:21-23**)
  - (b) The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ . . . is God's provision to help people make lasting Biblical change.
  - (c) The only goal that counts for eternity which is capable of overcoming debilitating sin is sanctification.
  - (d) This application of God's great Salvation is available to all who will accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord.
- 3) **Sanctification is our goal;**
  - (a) It is the process that a repentant sinner, now saved, undergoes in becoming more like Christ.
  - (b) Your greatest goal in life should be to have a heart that hungers for the righteousness of Christ. (**Matthew 5:6**)
- 4) **Jesus Christ exemplified the characteristics of a man fully controlled by the Holy Spirit and in perfect fellowship with the Father.**
  - (a) He points all to the Person of Change.
  - (b) Our Lord said for those who love Him and obey His commands, He will ask the Father to give another Counselor (**the Holy Spirit**) to be with them.
  - (c) Jesus clearly teaches that those "*in the world*" will not accept the Spirit of truth, because they neither see Him nor know Him.

- (d) However, born-again believers in Christ will know Him and He will be in them.  
(John 14:15-17)
- 5) **The Holy Spirit is the Agent willing to help any person to be transformed.**
- He first shows people their need for Christ. (John 16:8)
  - He then imparts Christ's life into repentant sinners at the minute of salvation.
  - From there He begins the sanctification process through illumination of the Scriptures and He empowers them for service to Christ.
- 6) **Achieving sanctification is not a do-it-yourself project.**
- You can no more make Biblical change on your own than a farmer can hook himself to a large farm implement and pull it around the field.
  - The farmer must first hook the implement to a tractor (*his source of power*) before he can do field work.
  - We must first have Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and be surrendered to the Holy Spirit's leading.
  - The Holy Spirit will give you a spiritual appetite for God's Word within your heart.
  - And Jesus is faithful; He will complete His good work in you (Philippians 1:6).
- 7) **Paul taught that the Holy Spirit's leading in a person's life is one of the evidences of a person's salvation.**
- He wrote, "*Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*" (Romans 8:14)
  - Paul also warns "*...And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.*" (Romans 8: 9)
- 8) **Only through the indwelling and empowering of the Holy Spirit, can a person be truly transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ;**
- This is the only way that leads to the abundant life found in Christ alone.
  - You can achieve God's goal set for you by inviting Jesus into your heart today!
  - Then allow His Holy Spirit to fully sanctify your heart and life to the Lord.
- B) **Paul said we are called to use our freedom in Christ to love one another.**
- It isn't easy to love one another with the love of Christ.
  - We can only do it when we let the Spirit of God do the work in us that produces His fruit.
  - Are you living by the Spirit?

IV) Invitation: **Let us Pray!**

V) **Bibliography**

<sup>1</sup> Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, 2nd College Edition, William Collins Publishers, INC, 1980

<sup>2</sup> Quote from Bishop Lalachan Abraham, sermoncentral.com, March 2013

<sup>3</sup> Michele Straubel, sermoncentral.com, From a sermon by C. Philip Green, Our Living Hope, 4/26/2011

<sup>4</sup> Thru the Bible Books, J. Vernon McGee, *Galatians*, Chapter 5, Pasadena, California, 1977, Pg. 97

<sup>5</sup> Terry Laughlin, *The Goal and Person Of Change*, sermoncentral.com, August 2008