

Date: Jan, 17th, 2016

Text: Galatians 5:16-18

Text: Follow my voice

Theme: The Christian life is a constant conflict between the eyes and the ears waged in the mind. The Holy Spirit is the invisible person speaking into our ears.

Response: Communion

Benediction: Gal 5:1

“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.”

(Galatians 5:16–18 NIV)

I. Intro

- a. Rational vs. Theological – whether or not we recognize or can describe our theology, we are not merely rational, but rational-theological beings.
 - i. We build arguments and rationals in our mind and then we live according to that rationale.
 - ii. As believers we know that we should be theological, but we often neglect to be – and we make a rationale to back us up
 1. I don't have a strong enough grasp of scripture or theology
 2. This is really the work of the Seminary prof. and pastor
 3. I just don't have the tools to tie lofty thoughts about God to my everyday life.
 - iii. Paul is dealing with this in Galatians – His example is timeless – Think and live Theologically!
- b. Context
 - i. The big issue in the Galatian church is over whether or not non-Jewish believers needed to be circumcised in keeping with the Mosaic Law
 1. Yet, the deeper theological issue at stake was whether or not faith in the Gospel of Christ was sufficient for salvation.
 - a. Don't mistake this as a merely historic issue. This is alive and well all around us.
 - b. The person who is “in Christ” is no longer under “law” – any Purity law of any kind.

II. The instruction

- a. “So I say”
 - i. This is an emphatic tool that Paul uses to indicate that he is making a conclusion to the preceding argument. Cf. 3:14, 4:1

- ii. This also connects vv. 16 – 18 with the ideas of love from vv. 13-14 (do not be self serving, but serve love – The golden rule.)
- b. “live by the Spirit and you will not fulfill the desires of the sinful nature”
 - i. Paul, more than any other NT writer focuses on the role of the Holy Spirit in the ethical and moral life of the believer
 - ii. This is his thesis statement to the Galatian believers answering the question “What should we do?”
 - iii. Meaning
 - 1. Live: on-going walk or lifestyle
 - 2. By: The Holy Spirit is both the origin and the present instrument of the walk
 - 3. Gratify: fulfill, make complete, fill up
 - 4. Desires: strong desires, lusts
 - 5. Sinful nature: flesh
 - a. The desires of the flesh should be understood as our carnal appetites
- c. “For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature.”
 - i. Here Paul gives the “why”
 - ii. Everything that the flesh desires is the direct opposite of what the Spirit desires.
 - 1. Calvin states that “All the thoughts of the flesh are acts of enmity against God.”
 - 2. This constant opposition is why Paul can state so emphatically that walking by the Spirit means not fulfilling the desires of the flesh.
 - iii. “They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.”
 - 1. Paul presses this point even more by reiterating the opposition between the flesh and the spirit.
 - 2. This opposition means that the believer cannot do what he desires to do
 - 3. This is the glorious point at which you and I do a double take “say what Paul?”
 - a. Because we feel our appetites and our lusts deeply. We know not only that we want them, but that we want them more than we want to please our Father in Heaven.

III. The Rub

- a. The “rub” is that when we are honest with ourselves, we have a real pickle
 - i. Either Paul is wrong about walking by the Spirit
 - ii. Or, we don’t really walk by the Spirit
- b. We are presented with a point of crisis as believers
 - i. I know that Paul isn’t wrong, otherwise, why am I even here?
 - ii. I know I’m a believer
 - iii. I must be doing something wrong
- c. So what are we doing wrong?
- d. And, how do I do it right?

- IV. Failure to hear the Holy Spirit
- a. We hear the Holy Spirit when our mind is filled with God's Words
 - b. Romans 12:2 tells us that the problem is that our mind is in constant need of being transformed through renewal.
 - c. There are several theological realities that we MUST constantly be reminded of
 - i. About the Holy Spirit:
 1. He is a Person, not a thing (Eph. 4:30)
 2. The Holy Spirit inspired all of scripture (2 Tim 3:16)
 3. The Holy Spirit leads us into truth (John 14:26)
 4. The Holy Spirit cannot be seen (John 14:17)
 5. The fruits of the Spirit are obvious (Gal 5:22-23)
 - ii. About our appetites:
 1. A force, not a person (Phl. 3:19)
 2. Are borne out of our flesh (Jam. 4:1-2)
 3. Declares good what God has forbidden (Rm. 7:23)
 4. Play to our senses of sight, smell, taste etc (Gen 3:6)
 5. The fruits of the flesh are obvious (Gal. 5:19-21)
 - iii. About the sinful nature
 1. It was crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6, Gal. 5:24)
 2. It was buried with Christ (Rom. 6:3)
 3. It was replaced by a new life IN Christ (Rom 6:4; Eph 2:24; Col. 3:10)
 - a. The concept of our "flesh" should be understood as that fallen part of us which is unable of being holy
 - i. This is not to say that our physical self is the problem
 - ii. This is not to say that we should seek to be rid of our physical bodies
 - iv. Our new life in Christ
 1. IS Righteous
 2. IS in the Spirit
 3. DOES walk by the Spirit
 4. DOES desire in accord with the Spirit
 - a. So that when Paul says in v. 17 "They are in opposition to each other so that you do not do what you desire" he is speaking of your "new life" not your old self
 - d. "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law."
 - i. The strength of this statement although it is made in the hypothetical, should be understood in the actual "SINCE you are led by the Spirit".
 - ii. This is the big game changer
 1. You have been made righteous
 2. You have a new nature
 3. The Holy Spirit is leading you
 4. You will continue to experience the conflict between your flesh and the Spirit as long as you live

5. You must think theologically, not simply rationally or you will be led astray by your flesh
 6. You must hear the Holy Spirit in order to think theologically
- iii. Not under law
 1. Either law of purity – legalism
 2. Or law of appetite – licentiousness’.
 - iv. Rather now Liberty to Love

V. Application

- a. Are you “In Christ?”
- b. Are you walking “In the Spirit?”
- c. Are you recognizing as true the words of the invisible God?
 - i. Are you being taken prisoner by your appetites and passions and desires
 - ii. Are you being set free by the voice and words of God
- d. Are you standing solely on the death of Christ for both your righteousness, and for your purity?