

Theme: The Spirit enables us to walk in the way of righteousness, enabling us to overcome the flesh in a way the law never could, so that we can become more like Christ.

I. Intro - No Power Steering

- A. Our truck lost power steering - hard to turn the steering wheel!
- B. Without the fluid and the power steering unit it is hard or impossible to do some things.
- C. Apart from the Spirit it is not hard for us to walk - it is impossible!
- D. Pentecost - the Spirit gives power to walk the way!

II. The Two Ways

- A. A description of the two ways

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery...²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness... Galatians 5:19, 22

- 1. The way of the wicked - evil practices of the flesh
- 2. The way of the righteous - good practices of the Spirit
- 3. These type of lists were very common in antiquity and appear a lot in the New Testament
- 4. They describe two different ways of life, as characterized by very different character traits and actions
- 5. These lists are not exhaustive, but rather representative
- 6. A description of two different ways of life - like Psalm 1 and Psalm 2

- B. The source of the two ways: flesh and Spirit

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ 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. Gal 5:16–17

- 1. The Spirit and the flesh have opposite desires
- 2. The flesh and the Spirit are in conflict - and we must choose by which we will walk
- 3. The flesh and the Spirit lead to two different patterns of life
The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery...²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, Galatians 5:19, 22
 - a. The works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are completely different
 - b. This is the same as the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked in Psalm 1 and 2

III. Two Ways, Two Sources of Power

- A. The way of the flesh - wickedness and death

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:19–21

- 1. A litany of evil actions and attitudes
- 2. This is not merely cultural - Paul's culture approved of many of these things!

- a. His culture actively approved of sexual sins - like ours!
 - b. Moral sin and righteousness are not culturally determined but are rather constant across culture and time
3. These are things that violate God's character/Law
 4. These are expressions of human rebellion against God and His Torah/instruction
 5. The source of these evil actions is the flesh
 - a. The 'flesh' does not refer to our body - that is Gnostic, not Christian
 - b. This is our fallen humanity in league with Satan, fomenting rebellion against God
 6. The outcome of this way is death - will not inherit the kingdom of God
 - a. This is really unpopular today, for it contains many lifestyles of which our culture approves
 - b. But Paul is clear, this is the way of death
 - c. To claim to be a Christian and to have a life characterized (πρόσω) by these behaviors is to be a liar. Christians may NOT embrace this type of life.
 - d. Paul makes the same point in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:3-7; Colossians 3:5-7

B. The way of the Spirit - righteousness and life

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23

1. A litany of righteous dispositions and actions

2. Once again this is not cultural - Paul's culture viewed some of these as weak and bad
3. These are expressions of humans living as the image of God in line with God's character and Torah/instruction/Law.
4. These are a description of human life and character as it was meant to be!

C. What does not provide power - the Law!

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law... ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:18, 23

1. Paul surprisingly mentions the Law!
2. In Galatia they were trying to be sanctified by their own power, thinking the Law not only pointed to the Way but gave the power to walk in it.
3. Paul tells them the Spirit will form their character to be in accord with the Law - which the Law itself can not do!

For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Rom 8:3-4

- a. The 'flesh' short circuits the Law, with the result that we are powerless to overcome sin and walk in the way of righteousness
- b. But in the New Covenant Christ broke the power of sin so that we can walk in the way of righteousness - not by our own power but by the Spirit!

- c. The difference between Romans 7 (the struggle with sin) and Romans 8 (victory over sin)

	Romans 7	Romans 8
Law	23	5
Spirit	1	21

- d. The Law points the way but can not empower us to walk in it!

D. The source of power - the Spirit!

So I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under the law... ²² But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness... ²⁵ **Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.**

Galatians 5:16–18, 22

1. Note the emphasis on the Holy Spirit throughout
2. Note that the flesh is not contrasted with the Law but rather with the Spirit - for flesh and Spirit are the source of power for each way.
3. The Law shows believers the way, but only the Spirit can empower us to say “No” to sin and to walk in the way of righteousness.
4. The Christian life - we live by the Spirit, we keep in step with the Spirit (v25)
 - a. We are brought to life by the Spirit, begin walking the way by the Spirit, and grow in holiness as we walk with the Spirit!
 - b. What a Gift we have been given in the Spirit of God!

IV. Applying the Word: Walking By & With the Spirit

- A. Have I been brought to life by the Spirit of God?
 1. We can not walk the way unless we are born again!
 2. We were born stone-cold dead, and walking the way of wickedness and death!
 3. We need a spiritual rebirth by the power of the Holy Spirit
 4. Have you directly heard the Spirit’s call and responded?
 5. Cry out for salvation today!
- B. Am I keeping in step with the Spirit?
 1. The Spirit is working to free me from the power of sin - don’t believe the lies of our culture!
 2. The Spirit is working to conform me to the image and character of Jesus Christ
 3. We must cooperate with Him in this endeavor - we walk, we are led/follow; we keep in step
 4. Am I walking with the Spirit each day?
 5. Do I seek His guidance as I go through life?
 6. Do I ask Him for power to live in holiness?
 7. Do I consciously draw upon His power to change me?
 8. Walk by and with the Spirit this week!

C. The Table of Grace

1. In this life, we are in a fight with sin!
2. The Spirit works through the means of grace to strengthen us for the struggle
3. The Table is a KEY means of grace
4. Come to the Table to receive grace and strength through the ministry of the Spirit to grow in holiness

The Way: Walking By the Spirit

Galatians 5:16-26

May 23, 2021

Communion

Romans 8:16-17 paraphrase

Teaching keywords: Blessing; grace; mercy and mercy ministry; peace and comfort

Now may the Spirit of God testify to your spirit that you are a child of God, and that because you are a child, you are an heir of God and a co-heir with Jesus Christ of all God's covenant blessings. God forth blessed - and be a blessing! (Romans 8:16-17 paraphrase)

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Galatians 5:16–26 NIV2011