

Walk By The Spirit | Galatians 5:16-26

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 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. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 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. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

The Tension

- * The tension that exists is our desire to pursue sin and our desire to grow in Christ;
 - "Only the Spirit of God who has made us free from sin and given us new life in regeneration can keep us truly free as we experience through walking in him the power of sanctification." (Timothy George)
 - a. The flesh:
 - i. "The Flesh: any human action or achievement without dependence on the Holy Spirit and without trusting in Jesus Christ..."
 - b. "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me." (Romans 7:18-20)
- * One of the greatest dangers of the Christian life is complacency;
 - a. "No Christians are so spiritually strong or mature that they need not heed his warning, but neither are any so weak that they cannot be free from the tyranny of the flesh through the power of the Spirit." (Timothy George)
 - b. "O how often I imagined that I was in the midst of the pleasures of Rome when I was stationed in the desert, in that solitary wasteland which is so burned up by the heat of the sun that it provides a dreadful habitation for the monks! I, who because of the fear of hell had condemned myself to such a hell and who had nothing but scorpions and wild animals for company, often thought that I was dancing in chorus with girls. My face was pale from fasting, but my mind burned with passionate desires within my freezing body; and the fires of sex seethed, even though the flesh had already died in me as a man." (Jerome)

The Works of the Flesh

It is at this point that Paul provides a list of sins – calling them the works of the flesh – but before we dive into them, we need to note three things about this list:

- a. The first: this is not an exhaustive list (“and things like these”) nor is it selective. Therefore, Christian, you must guard yourself against legalism (not me, not me) and licensing (is it that bad? God is love).
- b. Second: The “works of the flesh” is plural while the “fruit of the Spirit” is singular;
- c. Third: Only those redeemed by grace through faith in Jesus can bear the fruit of the Spirit and are under no condemnation
 - i. And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” (Mark 7:20-23)
 - ii. “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:7-8)

The Fruit of the Spirit

* The fruit of the Spirit is the grace of God in the Christian and poured out through the Christian –

The Crucifixion

* Because the Spirit resides in the Christian:

- a. Obedience is a visible response to His work;
- b. Our flesh is crucified daily;
 - i. “Be killing sin or sin will be killing you.” (John Owen)
- c. Our image is conformed to Christ daily;
- d. Repentance is a grace to be embraced
 - i. “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said ‘Repent,’ He willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.” (Martin Luther)
- e. We live through our adoption and not for adoption;

Benediction | Galatians 2:20

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.