

Walk by the Holy Spirit

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[0 : 0 0] Father, we know because of Jesus and his death upon the cross for us to save us that you love us. And so, Father, we know that even when you warn us, you warn us because you love us.

And so, Father, we ask that you make us a people who believe your promises, the promise of the Holy Spirit, the promise of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives, but that you would also make us a people, Father, who hear your warnings, who take them to heed.

Father, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us deep within as we think about your word. And all this we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen. Please be seated.

Some people are just really miserable and like to humiliate you. I had one summer job a long time ago, obviously, when I still had summer jobs, where it was sort of a working class job.

And one of the guys who'd been there a long time, he just delighted in finding different ways to embarrass and humiliate the summer students. He would tell them to do absurd things or impossible things.

[1 : 1 4] And then when they tried to do it, he would laugh at them, laugh at us, and make fun of us for being so stupid to try to do something which was impossible.

And if you tried to call his bluff, he would harangue you that you weren't listening to him and he was your boss and your supervisor and you're supposed to do what he said.

He was just a really miserable person. For a lot of people in Canada, when they hear about the Bible, they think the Bible is like that boss.

That the Bible just likes to tell us to do impossible things. And when we just say to him, we can't do those impossible things, then the Bible will just tell us off and castigate us and put us down.

And a text like the text that we have today would be a perfect example how for many people in our culture, when they hear it, they begin to roll their eyes. And it's not just people in our culture.

[2 : 1 4] We live in our culture. Like we don't, I mean, every, I mean, I don't know, maybe there's a guest here from Kenya today, I don't know. But it's not as if we live in Kenya and fly in in our private jets to have Sunday morning service and then we, and here in Ottawa, and then we fly back.

We live in our culture. We breathe the cultural air. And for many of us, if we're honest, sometimes we read the Bible, we feel profoundly uncomfortable with it. In fact, just to give you a heads up and just to say this, this is not a party church, not in terms of we don't have parties, but in terms of it's, we're, this isn't, we're not some political movement.

We're not a group that's just trying to, you know, bring back Canada to where it used to be when it was great. I mean, if you want to do some of those things, that's fine. It's, you know, but that's not what this Sunday morning is all about.

We just want to, we want to hear what, we want to hear what God says to us through his word in light of what Jesus did for us on the cross. And we want to hear all of what God has to say.

And we want to be present as God speaks at the very command center of our lives, sometimes challenging us. So I just want to warn you, I'm going to talk about same-sex marriage and I'm going to talk about abortion.

[3 : 27] And I know that's going to be very painful for people. That's why I said this isn't a party church, but the Bible today talks about that in other things. And so we're going to look at it.

So if you could get out your Bibles and turn in them to Galatians chapter 5, Galatians chapter 5, we're going to be looking at verses 16 to 25.

And here's what it says in Galatians chapter 5, verse 16, which is in some ways a bit of a, it's one of those powerful statements that the Bible makes, which in a sense is to govern a lot of how we understand life and also is to help us understand actually the next, I don't know, about 20, 25 verses in the Bible in Galatians, although we're not going to look at all of that, just some of that today.

And in Galatians 5, verse 16, it says this, but I say, walk by the Spirit. And just as a pause here, the Spirit should be capitalized.

If you're reading a version of the Bible where the word Spirit isn't capitalized, it's going to be very misleading. It's very clearly referring to God. So one of the things I'm going to do is when I read, just to make it extra clear, I'm going to say the Holy Spirit.

[4 : 42] The word holy isn't there, but it helps to emphasize to us as we listen that it's referring to God, the Holy Spirit. We'll talk about this a little bit more. It's been a great source of confusion to many people to hear Spirit and not hear it that it's referring to God.

So I'll read it again. Verse 16, And we'll just sort of pause there.

We're going to camp on that. Actually, we'll read verse 17 as well. Sorry, verse 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. And we're just going to camp on that verse for a little bit. So here's the first thing.

In some ways, actually, for those of you who have dabbled in Buddhism a little bit, this actually sounds almost like it's a Buddhist text. Those of you who know anything about Buddhism is the great problem in Buddhism, of course, is desire.

[5 : 49] And often in that world, not necessarily in Buddhism in a strict sense, it's often a bit of a contrast between the Spirit or God and things like human desire.

And so some people might listen to this text and also just sort of wonder, okay, what's going on here in the Bible? Is the Bible saying that our bodies are bad, that it's bad to have desires?

And, George, that's just... And sorry, if you're here and you're seriously seeking Buddhism, and you've come to be with us, we're really glad you're here.

But I can tell you that most Canadians would say, George, if this text is telling us that the body is bad and desires are wrong, that's just nuts. But here's the...

If you could put up the first point. The flesh does not refer to the body. If you read through the book of Galatians and you read through the New Testament, the word flesh often has different things which it refers to.

[6 : 52] You have to be able to tell from the context what it's referring to. Sometimes it's just referring to the fact that human beings are frail. It will contrast... It's trying...

The Bible will be trying to contrast the fact that human beings are frail with how unchangeable and powerful and real God is. And occasionally, but a bit more rarely, the word flesh will be used to refer to something being earthly.

It's mainly used like that in the book of Revelation, where it's contrasting something which is earthly and just right now with what God is promising to do in the future when he brings in the new heaven and the new earth.

And occasionally, the word flesh does just mean body, but probably the major meaning, and the meaning which is right here, is if you could put up the next point.

Well, the main thing that it teaches is it teaches something about human nature now. And so the first thing is that the Bible teaches that some things come in twos, but it never teaches dualism.

[8 : 00] I've gotten mixed up in my notes here. Here's the thing to take up a little bit of a backward step. A very, very common way that people refer to the flesh and to the spirit, especially in many, many churches, is that spiritual things are higher things.

And what are higher things? Well, higher things are things like good poetry. Higher things are things like classical music or opera. Higher things are good works of art.

And that what we need to do is that we need to not be concerned with these lower, grubby, natural things, but we have to be concerned with the higher things. It's a very, very common view.

If you look at a lot of church signs, especially mainline churches, often they have this implicit type of idea that God calls us to higher things, and by higher things they mean, well, classical music and stuff like that.

And, you know, this is a real put-off for somebody like me because, frankly, I like football more than poetry. And if you were to invite me to a poetry reading this afternoon and another person was to invite me to go watch an NFL game with you and have some beer and potato chips, I would not think very long about that decision.

[9 : 24] I would very quickly choose the grubby lower things rather than the higher elevated things. Whatever on earth that means. Like, just be frank. That's just class consciousness.

That's just upper class people looking down their nose at lower class people and trying to make it look as if it's somehow divine and godly. It's religion.

And that's not what the Bible means. It's not, Bible isn't contrasting grubby things like people who go to Tim Hortons and their idea of great poetry is saying, I'll have a double Mac, please.

Which, for many people, that's the height of poetry. I'll have a double Mac, please. A side of fries and a Coke to go with it. Not Shakespeare. That's poetry. You know, the Bible isn't saying anything at all about higher things.

And because you see, when you hear talk about higher things, it's a type of dualism. And here's the thing. This is the point behind this point. The Bible teaches that some things come in twos.

[10 : 35] Male and female, for instance. Good and evil, for instance. But it never teaches dualism. Nowhere in the Bible is dualism taught.

And even now, as you're going through this text about the flesh and the spirit, it's not dualism. The fact of the matter is, is that the Holy Spirit is referring to the Holy Spirit. And the flesh is referring to something in rebellion against the Holy Spirit.

And the fact of the matter is, is that every human being in the world can shake their fist in God, at God. But there's no dualism. God is God. He just decides to stop upholding everything by his will, and everything would cease to exist.

And so the Bible, whether it's a dualism between male and female, or higher and lower things, or spiritual and bodily things, or anything like that, the Bible always rejects it.

It constantly slips itself back into Christianity as something spiritual, but the Bible will have none of it. It always rejects dualism. And whatever Paul is saying here, when he says, but I say walk by the spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh, it's not dualism.

[11 : 47] It's something that comes in two, but it's not dualism. And some of you might say, okay, George, well, no, sorry.

Lost place in my notes here several times. One of the great prejudices that we have in our age, and it affects Christians all the time, because it's a very, very constant temptation.

I've felt it many, many times. I've succumbed to it many times, that the Bible needs improving, and that the Bible doesn't contain serious thinking.

But when we read the Bible, this is very, very serious thinking. In fact, part of the problem that the average Canadian has with the text is that most of us don't do any serious thinking whatsoever.

And when we come to the Bible, we don't actually know how to handle it, because we're actually coming face to face with very, very serious thinking. Like, just for instance, the average Canadian, without thinking about the consequences at all, would just assume that what's taught about naturalistic evolution is true.

[13 : 04] And they'll just think that that's true. And then with the very, you know, in a very next breath, they'll say something like, well, our loved one who died, they've gone to a better place.

Well, that doesn't fit together at all. Well, it's completely and utterly, like, how you understand how things came to be has really serious consequences for everything.

So in Hinduism, one of the things which is part of the Hindu stories about how things came to be is that in those very foundational texts, the way things came to be are divided into castes.

It's one of the reasons why it's very hard to eradicate the caste system in India because their creation stories tell them that. That it's just part of this tragedy, which is human existence, which we have to break out of so that we can become part with the one.

But part of this tragedy is, in a sense, part of the way that we know that we're getting out of the tragedy is that a lower caste person, when they die, maybe because they've been very good dealing with the issues in their lower caste, they'll come back as a higher caste.

[14 : 17] That in some ways, then, it's justified or right that some people are superior to other people and that superior people can treat lower people in a certain way. And, you know, one of the reasons it's within the caste, you know, another thing which has very, very serious consequences is like in Buddhism, that in Buddhism, part of how things came to be is a result of a sort of an unexplained cosmic tragedy where the one gets broken up into bits and pieces.

And this bits and pieces is why we have so much difference. And the fact that there's all these different things, different people, different objects, the world, that's not really the way it's supposed to be.

And we experience sorrow because we desire things, but we're treating those things as if they're real. And really what's to happen is that we're to die to all desire.

We're to practice these practices so that we die to all desires and so that we can eventually just lose all desire and merge to the one. But that, like that's just a bit crazy.

It's really anti-human, isn't it? Like it's anti-human to think that if I desire the good for my children, that there's somehow something wrong with that, that it just doesn't really make sense.

[15 : 53] But it's what you end up doing when your foundational stories tell you that. And I've told you many times, it's worth going on the Dig and Delve website, it's worth seeing the YouTube video of Aus Guinness discussing, having a conversation with an atheist philosophy professor from the University of Toronto who's a serious atheist.

He's a serious thinker. And it's on the discussion of the meaning of life. And he's very frank. Because he accepts the basic creation story that all Canadians accept, he's not sure if free will exists.

And he definitely doesn't really believe that meaning exists. And so, because the average Canadian doesn't, it's sort of this odd situation where the average Canadian doesn't think that what you find in the Bible is serious thinking, yet at the same time, the average Canadian actually rarely does any serious thinking themselves.

And so, when they actually read the Bible, not understanding that it's very serious thinking. I mean, yeah, they didn't have cell phones, they didn't have an Instagram account, they didn't have a Twitter account, they didn't know how to use the internet, they didn't have a webpage, yeah, they didn't have flush toilets, but that doesn't mean they don't do serious thinking.

And so, here, if you could put up the next point, please, that would be very, very good. What the Bible teaches is that God created everything that exists.

[17 : 36] And, it doesn't describe the mechanisms or how long it takes and all of that type of stuff, but that at the end of the day, he created everything, he created everything good. And that, he created human beings to be at home in this universe, and have a special role in this universe, only human beings were made in the image of God.

Only human beings. And as God's image bearers in his created order that he creates, he sustains, he made it for us, in a sense, he made us to be priests.

He made us to lead the praises of all creation to praise God. He made us to walk in the garden with him in the cool of the day that we would have fellowship with him and friendship with him.

He made us to have a role of caring for the garden and caring for this created order. And he made us to explore the entire created order. And he made us as the ones most like him, but still created.

And we human beings who have this role in a good creation, rather than choosing God, what do human beings do? Human beings doubt God. Human beings say, as it's told so brilliantly in the book of Genesis in chapter 3, when the serpent says, did God really say?

[18 : 57] Did God really say? And human beings begin to doubt what God says, doubt God's goodness, and not only do we begin to doubt those things, when doubt in and of itself isn't a sin, but that human beings and the person of Adam and Eve decide that they will be God themselves, that they will be like God.

And in that act of rebellion, culminating in their doubt of God, you know, that now all of a sudden their doubt of God, of who he is, of his goodness, of his provision, of his power, of his wisdom, of his grace, their doubting of God in all of these ways, and their desire to be God.

And if you see that in a sense, that when you doubt that God is good, when you doubt that he provides, when you doubt that he is full of grace, when you doubt that he is full of mercy, when you doubt that he knows what he's doing, when you doubt that he desires to have fellowship with you, and when you desire to be God yourself, what you're really saying is, God, you are a lower God, you've stood up, I'm going to do better.

I'm going to be greater than you because you're not, you don't provide enough, you aren't good enough, you aren't wise enough, and I'm going to do better. And in that primal decision of human beings to rebel against God and to be like God themselves, what happened is that everything in human being became bent.

This act of rebellion touches every single aspect of whatever makes a human being a human being. So I put it up here, the desire to be God has touched every aspect of what makes a human being a human being.

[20 : 45] And the flesh refers to human nature in rebellion against God. If scientists or philosophers or poets come up with some other aspects of what it means to be a human, then whatever those other new aspects are, our rebellion against God, our desire to be God has tainted it.

there will be nothing discovered by philosophers or theologians or scientists or poets or mystics about what it means to be a human being that has not been touched and bent by our desire to be God.

And so when the Bible says, but I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh, the Bible is very, very frank. It's very serious thinking.

It understands the importance of the creation story and what has happened to human beings and how it explains evil. And let me tell you, when you look at these creation stories, the creation story, first and second, Genesis 1, 2, and 3 and how the Bible unfolds it throughout the entire Bible as it develops the nuances of that story, there is no wiser account of existence.

than what is provided in the Bible. There is no wiser account of human existence than what is found in the Bible. No other account has such explanatory power of what it means to be human, of the complexities, the tragedies, the glories, the brokenness, the goodness, nothing compares to the richness of this biblical story, explanatory power.

[22 : 38] And so when you see the word flesh in the New Testament and when I, and it's not talking about the body, it's not talking about being frail and when it's not talking about being earthly as opposed to something that's coming in the new heaven and the new earth, it's talking about the fact that there is part of every aspect of what makes me a human being that is in rebellion against God and all of those different bits of me have desires.

And those, it's not that every human desire is wrong, it's not that everything about human beings are evil, but that this desire to be God has tainted, bent, twisted, hurt every aspect of what it means to be a human being.

And so what has happened? Jesus comes to redeem human beings because human beings that every single part of me that makes me me has been somehow bent slightly, in some cases not slightly wildly and spectacularly, but even the parts that aren't wildly and spectacularly bent are still slightly bent and I can never leave myself to save myself and so the constant message of the Bible is to tell us about who we are, to reveal to ourselves who we are so that we would come to the point where we would say only God can save me.

Unless God has grace and mercy, I am screwed. Sorry, but that's true. And so the Bible describes God's rescue mission in the sending of his Son and part of that sending of his Son, we're going to unfold this more in a moment, is the presence of the Holy Spirit in lives of believers and the Holy Spirit is always going to be moving in a different direction than those parts of us as human beings that are in rebellion against God.

Why? Because the Holy Spirit is God himself. And so it's a description of God in the person, the third person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit being present and active in the life of a Christian coming against those parts of us that want to be God.

[24 : 58] Think of it that way. The real God shows up in those parts of my life that desire to be God. The real God shows up. The real God shows up with power.

power. That's what this is describing. But some people might say, George, here, religious people are full of pride and greed.

Like, George, the way you've described the flesh, like you even sort of said, George, that in churches they've made all these mistakes as if it's somehow talking about higher things versus lower things.

And so George doesn't, isn't this just one of those things where the Bible describes it but it's not any help? Like, religion seems to be helpless against all of that.

Doesn't this sort of disprove the Bible? Not at all. Why does it not disprove the Bible? Well, because that's what the Bible tells us. Look again at verse 16.

[26 : 00] But I say, walk by the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. Now just skip down to verse 18 and you'll notice it even has the same structure.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. And the law is a bit of a symbol here for religion. All the way through the book of Galatians, the law is a bit of a symbol of religion, of spirituality.

And so if you could put up the next point, what the Bible itself is saying is that the flesh, that is human nature in rebellion against God, exists very comfortably under religion.

And it exists very comfortably under no religion. Last Sunday, some of you, you know, with the bad weather, not as, you know, some of you who are here who survived the rude winds wild lament last Sunday, I said how for many people in our culture, when they leave religion behind, they leave higher things behind, for instance, and they just become ordinary people who just like to wear, you know, just like to do ordinary things and completely and utterly leave God and the gods behind and spiritual things behind, for many people they find it as a relief, as a release.

No more pretending. But, and I think, I still think that's true. It's a very, very common thing for people to describe. But when I talk to people in coffee shops, it's a very common thing to say how freeing and releasing it was to no longer bother with having to go to that church and do those things and it's like a release.

[27 : 40] But here's the thing. The flesh exists very comfortably under religion and under no religion. To leave religion behind might feel a little bit liberating, but it actually doesn't liberate you at all.

Both in under religion and under no religion, you are still trapped in self-justification. And under religion and under no religion, you're still trapped under self-salvation.

Under religion and under no religion, you're still looking for created things that are going to give you meaning in your life and they will always not satisfy you. Both under religion and under no religion, you will still be caught up in your own particular God project for all of the different pains and sufferings that it happens.

And it feels like it's a release, but it actually doesn't deal with the problem. You see, here's the thing about the Bible text is the Bible text is not like, when it's talking about the flesh and the spirit, it's not like that boss that I began my sermon with who loved to find ways to humiliate the summer students.

And if he couldn't humiliate them, then he would give them a bit of a tongue-lashing about the fact that they wouldn't obey him. And the Bible isn't like this at all. The Bible here is like when you go to the doctor because your wife or your sister or your friend finally cajoles you into going and you have some pains in your body and maybe you have some rashes and the doctor says, I have some very bad news for you.

[29 : 22] You have cancer. But the good news is because you came in, we think we can cure it. And that's what's going on here in the Bible.

It's not God trying to belittle us. It's God trying to catch our attention so he can save us. so he can save us. So, George, I'm still a little bit confused, you might say.

Like, okay, so what is it that the Holy Spirit puts new desires in us and takes away old desires? Like, like I don't quite understand what's going on.

Well, here's where it's a little bit helpful to know the original language. Look at verses 16 again. But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

[30 : 32] And in verse 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.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. So here's the thing. The word desires, if you could put it up the next point, what actually the text is saying here is that the flesh, it's by the nature of the flesh to over-desire.

It's of the nature of the flesh to over-desire. And the translators, when they're translating the text, the word desires connected to the Holy Spirit isn't there. But there's a translation issue.

In the original language, it says that the desires of the flesh, the over-desires of the flesh are against the Spirit. And the Spirit comes against them. But it comes against them with power and it's a translation problem.

So desires catches it for all of us. But it's of the very nature of a God project to over-desire. And this is all where Genesis 1, 2, and 3 is so wise.

[31 : 39] So is it right for me to desire my wife? Yes, it is right for me to desire my wife. If I lost desire for my wife, that would be a problem. She would experience it as a problem.

And if I was to share it with you, you'd say that's a problem. So the text is in here saying that I should lose my desire for my wife or my desire to see my kids thrive or my desire, I mean, other types of things or my desire to have some money so I can pay my bills or to have some control in my life so my life is in chaos.

Those aren't bad desires. But what happens is that our God project leads us to over-desire. That all of a sudden in my life, no matter how much money I'm making, I always think within myself, if I only was making an extra 10 grand, my life would be so much better.

And then you make the extra 10 grand and what's still going on in your heart? If I only made an extra 10 grand, my life would be so much better. Or you over-desire over-desire your wife and all of a sudden you're putting too much on your wife in terms of your happiness, your satisfaction, in terms of getting meaning, of you become suffocating.

You know, we all understand how you can over-desire. And that's just what the Bible is saying is that what happens is when the Holy Spirit comes in and opposes, it doesn't oppose proper desires, it opposes over-desires.

[33 : 11] It seeks to heal the Holy Spirit. He heals and restores our desires. And if you could wrap up the next point, this is really important for you to understand, is that when I put my faith in Jesus Christ, I put the word I there so that if you write it down, you're writing it down for yourself.

When I put my faith in Jesus Christ to save me, he does save me. This is very important language. Jesus always is the one who saves.

I contribute nothing to him saving. My spirit, my flesh, will always want to make it think that I've contributed some little thing about it.

my winsomeness, my ability to seek after God, my ability to know the Bible, my, you know, whatever it is, my ability to sort of be open to the Holy, like, I'll always want to keep slipping in something, but I never add anything.

Jesus does it all. And you know what? The more you grow in Christ, praise God that he does it all. Why? Because I am weak and frail. I am weak and frail.

[34 : 31] And sometimes I do absolutely horrible things. And even when I don't do horrible things, I think horrible things. And sometimes everything within me wants to turn my back away from God.

And if I had to contribute something to my salvation, woe is me! Woe is me! Woe is me! Praise God that I don't add anything to what he does. He does it all.

He saves me. I put my hand out to receive what only he can give and only he can do and he has done in the person of God has done in the person of his son dying upon the cross for me.

When I put my faith in Jesus Christ to save me, he does save me. And what else happens? The whole book of Galatians is always telling us other things. Well, we become adopted as his child. We've been made free.

We've been guaranteed heaven. There tells us a whole pile of things. And in Galatians chapter 3, if you go back and look at it earlier, chapter 3 verse 2, I think it is, or 1 and 2, one of the things that happens is I put my hand out.

[35 : 35] In fact, really, God helps me put my hand out and I receive what only he can give in the person and the work of his son and God saves me and at the same time the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon me to indwell me.

The Holy Spirit indwells the Christian. And that's why if you look at this text, the Bible here, I'm starting to run out of time, the Bible here really wants to emphasize the focus on the Holy Spirit in this text in light of Jesus.

Jesus. And it does it by using four similar verbs, but they're not identical verbs.

If you could put up the next point, look at chapter 6, verse 16. It says, but I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

This verse is really important. Like, I recommend you memorize it. Notice it doesn't say walk by the Spirit and don't gratify the desires of the flesh as if they're equal.

[36 : 54] It says the focus is on thinking about Jesus and what he did first upon the cross and the gift of the Holy Spirit and the focus is on the Holy Spirit.

And the more we focus on walking by the Spirit, a consequence is not walking, is not gratifying the desires of the flesh.

And so here in verse 16, what does it say? Walk by the Spirit. Jump down to verse 18. But if you are led by the Spirit, jump down to verse 24.

And those who belong to Jesus Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Verse 25, if we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

Four times in a small number verses, it keeps saying the Holy Spirit, he is in you. He's not tame. He's not just like somebody that you can just snap your fingers at your beck and call.

[37 : 56] He's God, you're not. But he dwells within you. And he is a person. And he has a heart. And he has a will. And his will within you is to constantly bring you back to Jesus to constantly restore you to the way that God desired to make you in all of your uniqueness, in all of the ways that you are special and irreplaceable.

And he's going to heal your desires. He's going to reorder your desires. For your desires that are weak, he's going to inflame them. For your desires that are over desires, he's going to tame them.

He's going to bring them to their proper place. And so, because the Holy Spirit's presence in your life is so important, because his work is so important, think about Jesus. Think about the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And every day say, Father, help me to walk by the Holy Spirit today. As I go into this meeting, Father, help me to walk by the Holy Spirit. Help me to be led by the Holy Spirit. Help me to live by the Holy Spirit so that I understand my life comes from the Holy Spirit, not my success in this meeting.

Help me to keep in step with the Holy Spirit because he is going to go before me. And it's just like, I don't know, if there was really deep snow and I had a two-year-old with me and I'd say, listen, I'm going to go through the snow first and I'm going to walk like this in a shuffling way so that I'm going to make a big ridge and you come behind me.

[39 : 23] And that's what the Holy Spirit desires to do in our lives. You know what?

Let's look at sin because now that the Bible has set this, it wants to say, okay, what does the flesh look like? Verse 19.

Remember I said the Bible's very serious and if the Bible wounds us by talking about things in our life that aren't right, it only does it in the context of this constant reminder to remember Jesus and remember the Holy Spirit that instead of giving ourselves to these things that we walk by the Holy Spirit, live by the Holy Spirit or led by the Holy Spirit and are keeping in step with the Holy Spirit.

And so look at verse 19. Now the works of the flesh are evident. Sexual immorality. Now I just have a, okay, sexual immorality in the original language, here's the other thing.

If you want to look at the end of the list, look at the list, verse 19. Now the works of the flesh are evident. It's going to give a list of 15. Look, skip down to verse 21. I warn you as I warned you before that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

[41 : 05] Could you put the next point up? The Bible wants us to have an assurance that God saves and it wants to warn us about the danger of complacency.

And it also wants to warn us about the danger of presumption and self-serving faith. And the Bible here isn't saying that if we do any of these sins, it means, or if we're still doing any of these sins, that it means that we're not a Christian.

This latter part of the verse, here's a simple way to understand it. Just because you have to dash for the bus doesn't mean you're training for a marathon. Just because sometimes you dash to catch the bus doesn't mean you're training for a marathon.

And the Bible text here isn't talking about the fact that Christians do these things, it's talking about those who begin to train in them, that begin to make it a way of life.

And the Bible is warning us that if, in fact, it's becoming a way of life, maybe it's a sign that we've never given our lives to Jesus, or maybe it's just a sign that we are going very, very far from God, far from fruitfulness, and we need to call out to Him in repentance.

[42 : 23] So this word about porneia, what this word sexual immorality means, is it means that God designed sex to be between a man and a woman in the context of holy matrimony.

And that any sexual gratification, sexual gratification, sexual gratifying yourself, or sexually inflaming yourself outside of marriage is a sin.

outside of heterosexual marriage. And that's what the Bible teaches. This church originally owned the building just up the street.

And we used to be called St. Albans. And one of the reasons that we left the Anglican Church of Canada is that the Anglican Church of Canada believes that there is a way for a man to sexually know a man or a woman to sexually know a woman that is not, that is actually holy and blessed by God and should be upheld and blessed and called holy by the church.

But the Bible here says that those who train in sexual immorality will not inherit will not inherit the kingdom of God. This becomes a salvation issue.

[44 : 01] And because it's a salvation issue as well as an issue as to whether or not the Bible is actually true, we as a congregation had to leave at great cost the Anglican Church of Canada and become Church of the Messiah.

Now if you're here and you struggle with those things, you struggle with, like, the Bible is, it's a hard teaching, but it's a wise teaching because God designed us that if we are called to holy matrimony, that we are called for that season to, for a man to be with a woman, just one woman, and for a woman to be with a man, just one man, and that that's God's intention.

The others, very, very briefly, sexual immorality is sort of the general term. Impurity is actually, it would actually characterize the transgender movement.

It would refer to outside of the perspective of one man to one woman in holy matrimony, odd types of sexuality, and that's what it's referring to, and sensuality refers to sexualizing everything.

It would condemn a lot of the advertising that happens on our televisions where everything is sexualized, and then the Bible here talks about religion in particular, idolatry, which is the actual worshiping of idols, if you take a yoga class, and in the yoga class you are encouraged to use a mantra, you are in the mantra calling out to a Hindu god, and you would be violating idolatry.

[45 : 56] Sorcery is engaging in witchcraft or dabbling in spiritual things. sorcery. If you use words, you are violating this command.

If you are going to a naturopath, not just because you have to have some herbs or something, but if they are giving you these herbs because there are spiritual forces in your body that have to be balanced, then you are claiming to be able to manipulate these spiritual forces, and that would be sorcery.

in the ancient world as well, one of the primary uses of potions was to create abortions. So this text is in fact also warning you against anything that you would do, any drug that you would take to artificially cause an abortion.

If you are here today and you have had an abortion, I know this is a very painful thing to find in the Bible, but the Bible confronts us with our sin so that we would, with broken hearts, come to God for healing and restoration, not for condemnation forever.

Enmity is to inflame anger between groups. Strife is actually also connected to it, actually being involved, not just in trying to stir up people being angry with each other, but to actually cause there to be conflict.

[47 : 39] Jealousy is sort of just what it says. It's desiring too much what somebody else has, feeling angry at what they have, desiring to take it away from them.

Fits of anger isn't a type of holy anger, but it's especially true of those who nurture anger and allow it to have a great simmering or even boiling role in our lives.

Rivalries is going into organizations, especially churches, and trying to create parties. And rivalry dissensions is a similar type of idea as is divisions. It's just an escalating of going from having we're all one group and there's other groups to creating arguments between them to actually splitting and causing breakdowns in human relations and families and churches and unions and government over matters which don't really at the end of the day matter.

Envy is feeling sorrow of a blessing that somebody else has. Drunkenness is obvious. It would also include most drug use. And orgies, there's no good word in English for the word orgies, but it's not referring to sex.

It's referring to gathering together with other people to take drugs and get completely hammered. 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.

[49 : 05] But the fruit of the Spirit, remember this all begins by the fact that the Holy Spirit is moving in our lives. And notice that the word works is plural, fruit is singular.

Works implies things that we do, fruit implies that it's something God does. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience.

Love, by the way, here, all of these words, some of them sound like they're emotions. These aren't emotions, but all of these things have emotional consequences for our lives. Love means self-giving love.

Joy means that you are drawing close to God who is the source of all joy. peace means that you're having a type of balance in your life that comes from having your desires properly ordered and having Jesus as the Lord of your life.

Patience is the ability to put up with people, to not flare up with them in anger. Kindness is not just putting up with them, but actually looking at them and desiring to do them good.

[50 : 15] Goodness just means being good. Faithfulness means that you're learning how to keep your word. Gentleness means that when you're dealing with people who otherwise would inflame you and make you angry, that you have habits and practices to deal with them well just gently.

And self-control means just the Holy Spirit is bringing healing into your life so that your passions and desires come under some type of control. people. Just a couple of things in closing because I've gone maybe a bit too long.

If you could put up the next point, the three points just very quickly in closing. The works of the flesh are radically different than the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Fruit is definitely telling us that it's God who's doing it.

Next one. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not assigned to the sanctification becoming more like Jesus. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is the sign of sanctification.

Next point. Sanctification is slow. It is measured in years, not in seconds. One of the things that the devil likes to do to beat us up is make us very, very aware of our failures of the day and blind us to the changes that have come in us over a year.

[51 : 50] I invite you all to stand. You've been very patient. And I'm going to pray in a moment, but I just, I think I'd like to just do, um, yeah, we're just going to, we're going to pray.

And then, uh, then I'm going to invite you all to sit down after I've just prayed over you. And I'm going to give you an opportunity to pray out loud, uh, to be audible and brief and clear, uh, around the different things that the Holy Spirit might have put on your hearts as the sermon has been preached.

Maybe just a calling out to God for the Holy Spirit to work in our lives more, uh, calling out to God for the fruit of the Spirit more, just in whatever way. If it's just comparative silence because there's kids in the room, then that's fine as well.

And I'll, I'll, I'll bring it to a close by, uh, having us go into one of the colics that will be up on the screen. But let's just bow our heads in prayer.

Father, uh, we thank you for Jesus. We thank you for what he did for us on the cross. We ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel.

[53 : 12] And as we are gripped by the gospel, that we would be a people who are walking by the Holy Spirit, who are led by the Holy Spirit, who are living by the Holy Spirit, and are keeping in step with the Holy Spirit, as we crucify the flesh, and live for your glory.

Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would do that in our lives, and that we're doing our lives as individuals, and as a congregation. And we ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.