

Walking Together By The Spirit

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Date: 15 April 2018

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[0:00] Amen. Amen. Well, good morning, everyone. If we have not met, my name is Mike Salvati, lead pastor here. Welcome. And we as a church have been going through a sermon series called 21st Century Disciple, what it means to be a follower of Jesus in April of 2018.

When Jesus says the words, follow me, those who respond to that, everything changes. Everything changes.

When you respond to the call to follow me by the living Christ, you go from being dead in your sin to being alive in Christ Jesus. Everything changes.

I just recently began a book, This Changes Everything. It's written by an 18-year-old, Jekyll Crowe, and this is how she talks about it.

The biggest, most crucial, most significant thing I want you to know is that my life's task is to follow Jesus. To obey Jesus.

[1:11] To look for joy and satisfaction and peace in Jesus. Jesus is the one who changed my life. And then she says, that's what this book is about. That's what her life is about.

That's what our lives are about. Our lives are about following Jesus. A 21st Century Disciple of Jesus lives every area of their life intentionally for Christ.

And this morning, we're going to be talking about what it means to walk by the Holy Spirit in light of that. So if you'd open up your Bibles to Galatians chapter 5. Galatians is right after Corinthians.

If you want to start in the back of your Bible in Revelation, just start going left and you'll eventually bump into Galatians. And we're going to jump into Galatians in chapter 5.

And I'm just going to read for you right now. Verses 13 through 26. But I'm going to start in verse 1. And then I'm going to skip ahead. Chapter 5, verse 1.

[2:17] Verse 13. Verse 13. for you were called to freedom brothers only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh but through love serve one another for the whole law is fulfilled in one word you shall love your neighbor as yourself but if you bite and devour one another watch out that you are not consumed by one another 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 you are free that's what he is saying right there 19 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 freedom and those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires if we live by the spirit let us keep in step with the spirit let us not become conceited provoking one another envying one another this morning I want to help you to see that what we must keep in step with the spirit in order to live out the freedom Christ has accomplished for us we're going to look at two sections Christ freed us and the spirit leads us but before we get there let me ask you this did you come into the building discouraged? are you discouraged by the presence of sin in your life and the effect it has on others? for example maybe you struggle with sexual lust whether you're single or you're married you can often struggle with sexual lust in a variety of different ways but it can wreak havoc internally on you and it can wreak havoc on your relationships spouses can feel betrayed and then what can happen if you're trying to cover over your sexual sin what ends up happening is in your hiding when you get found out you lose trust how do you go from struggling with sexual lust to living in purity?

or maybe you struggle with fits of anger people walk on eggshells around you because you have a pattern of blowing up exploding in anger how do you go from being controlled to some degree by anger to growing more and more and exercising patience with others maybe you are just very greedy you just want to bring in as much money as stuff as you can maybe because you think you're entitled to it you work hard for it maybe you think that there's security and safety in it but what ends up happening is your greed can blind you to the physical and spiritual needs of people immediately around you and around the world how do you go from being greedy to being generous?

maybe you drink too much you get drunk more often than you think than you want to admit and when you get drunk you get mean or you get flirty or you get arrested how do you go from being drunk to being self-controlled?

[6 : 25] you feeling powerless? you feeling hopeless? are you discouraged at the influence of sin in your life?

you feeling hollowed out and you see the effect on others? I've got good news for you Christ has set you free and the Holy Spirit is seeking to lead you brother and sister into that freedom so let's talk about what it means that Christ has freed us in Galatians chapter 5 verse 1 we read for freedom Christ has set us free and then Paul in 5.13 comes back to it and says for you were called to freedom brothers Christ freed us if you're a believer in the room if you put your faith in Jesus alone Christ has freed you and if you're not a Christian if you've yet to put your faith in Jesus you've not yet been freed what has Christ freed us from?

he's freed us from slavery to sin from trying to strive to meet all the righteous requirements of the law of Moses that slavery of trying to live up to what is impossible you know what that feels like? I used to live there man my high school years were just miserable here's why I was basically living to stay saved that's what I was doing I was just trying to stay saved keep Jesus in my heart and I just thought that the whole thing depended upon my obedience if I disobeyed Jesus couldn't be in me he left I gotta ask him back in and around and around we went for years I thought my salvation depended upon my obedience and I knew deep down inside there was no way on any given day I could bat a thousand in all that God is requiring of me have you ever felt that before?

but there's more when we come up short of what God requires it's not like there's no consequences when we fall short of God's glory there's hell to pay for the wages of sin is death what has Christ freed us from he's freed us from slavery to the law and all of the fallout of not being able to live up to it John Bunyan wrote a poem and he goes like this the first half run John run the law demands but gives us neither feet nor hands I try and try and try to live up to what God has called me to but I fall short again and again and again I can't do it so some people just keep on trying other people say I'm done done with that moving on

[10 : 03] God gave the law not that we would obey it in order to be saved but God gave the law to expose the utter sinfulness of our sin to show how great of a sinner we are so that we would cry out for the great grace and mercy that God freely gives so what did Jesus free us from slavery to sin and the just consequences of failing to measure up so how did he do it how does Christ free us from that he did what none of us could do Christ perfectly fulfilled all the requirements of the law of Moses every minute of every hour of every day he walked this planet Christ perfectly lived the law he fulfilled it in his life he alone did that there's no other human being that has walked the face of the earth or will walk the face of the earth that is able to say yeah

I bat a thousand I lived up to God's law perfectly today and yesterday and tomorrow no one just Jesus he fulfilled all the requirements of the law he lived the life none of us could live but that's just part of it is perfect righteousness he did something he didn't have to die on the cross for himself he was perfectly righteous in God's sight but he died on a cross willingly he willingly sacrificed his life he died the death our sin required on the cross the one of perfect righteousness died on the cross for those who were woefully unrighteous love oh

God here's how Paul talks about that in Galatians chapter 13 Christ redeemed us freed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us if If you want to flip in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 5.21, we read it this way.

This is the Apostle Paul again. We read this. For our sake, God made Jesus, who was not a sinner, to be sin, so that in Christ we might become the righteousness of God.

So here's how it works out. Here's how Christ redeems, how he frees us who are under the law and under sin. Jesus lived a perfect life, and they died in the place of sinners, and those who believe in

that, they are set free.

[13:22] Think about it this way. The moment Mike Salvati put his faith in Jesus, the moment he did that, God made a legal pronouncement.

He made it from his throne, and it's a forever and final declaration that will stand for eternity. Here's what happened. I saw what Jesus did for me.

I believed in that. And then God the Father, he reckoned something. He decided something. He reckoned my unrighteousness to be placed on Jesus, and all of his wrath for my unrighteousness was poured out on the head of Christ, so that there was no more wrath.

And at that moment, I was forgiven of all my sin, past, present, and future. It's amazing. But that's just half of it.

The moment I believed, not only did God consider my unrighteousness on Christ, and paid for in full through Christ's death, but he reckoned Christ's righteousness, his 33 years of perfect living, and he considered it to my account.

[14:48] And now I am clothed with the very righteousness of Christ before a holy God, so when he looks at me, not only am I forgiven of all my sin, I am completely accepted and welcomed into his presence because of the very righteousness of Christ.

It's not my doing. That's how Christ does it. He forgives us of all of our sins based upon his cross work, and he makes us acceptable to God because of his perfectly righteous life.

That is good news to you. It's the only way by which you can be freed from the slavery of sin. Christ did what none of us could do, and Christ paid the price all of us deserved.

Let me try to illustrate this one more way. Let's say you have a billionaire uncle, and you're \$20 million in debt.

This billionaire uncle of yours who loves you, doesn't wait for you to ask anything, but he comes to you and he says, hey, I'm sending my lawyers over to you, and they're going to make up these contracts, and I've already signed it.

[16:06] You just need to sign it. I am going to take on all your debt and pay it. But that's not it. There's more. I'm having my lawyers include you on all of my bank accounts so that now you have access to my billions as well.

So not only is your sin forgiven, your debt paid for, man, you have now inherited all of my billions. Christ paid our sin debt, and we inherited all of his righteousness.

He freed us. Run, John, run, the law demands, but gives us neither feet nor hands. Far better news the gospel brings. It bids us fly and gives us wings.

What did Jesus free us from? Slavery to sin. How did he do it? He died in our place. Perfect life. Substitutionary death. And what did Jesus free us for?

He didn't free us so that we would go back to living under the law. Galatians 5.1 says, For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

[17:26] Once you've become a Christian, you don't go back to trying to obey God so that you can stay in good right standing with him. It's done in Christ. Jesus didn't free us to go back to a life of slavery to the law.

Nor did Jesus save us so that we can go lawless. Look at verse 13. For you were called to freedom, brothers, only to not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh.

It's called licentiousness. It's this thinking that, okay, Jesus has freed me from everything. He's forgiven me. It's a blank check. I can go sin all I want now. We're not freed for that either.

What are we freed for? In verse 13, he goes on to tell us, Do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. So when it comes to the law, Jesus has freed us from its slavery, and he's freed us from lawlessness, and he's freed us to fulfill the law in love by serving one another.

[18:47] You might be thinking, Well, I thought you were going to talk about the Holy Spirit today, Mike. We're going to get there. What you need to be convinced of now is you were called to freedom.

Freedom to fulfill the law and to love one another. We're not to use our freedom as an opportunity for the flesh.

In verse 15, he links it. The flesh bites and devours one another. Watch out that you're not consumed by one another. That's not what we've been freed for.

We've been freed to love one another and fulfill the law of Christ. And so now the question becomes, How are we to do that? How can you do that?

How are we as a church going to love one another, not bite and devour one another? And Paul answers that question by saying, What I say in verse 16, Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

[20 : 01] So up to this point, I've tried to show you from Galatians that Christ has set us free, free from the slavery of sin by giving his perfect life as a ransom for us.

And he did that in order for us to live in the freedom of fulfilling God's law, something we could never do beforehand. And now we turn to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit leads us into the freedom Christ accomplished for us. In verses 16 through 26, Paul shows us how we are to depend upon the Holy Spirit moment by moment in order to fulfill the whole law.

Now I realize that not everybody in the room comes here this morning on the same page when it comes to the Holy Spirit. So let me just give you a crash course.

Jesus talks about the Holy Spirit a lot in John 16, and he talks about the Holy Spirit as not a what or an it, but a who and a him. The Holy Spirit is a person.

[21 : 13] The third person of the Trinity. He has eternally existed in the Godhead with the Father and Son. He was never created. He's always existed. And you can grieve him. You can lie against him.

You can hurt him. In the sense of grieving. He's a person. He's God. So I want, the first thing you need to know is the Holy Spirit's not an it.

He's a who. And the second thing that you need to know is that when Jesus, before he left, told his disciples, hey, it's to your advantage that I'm leaving so I can send to you the Holy Spirit.

Because he's going to guide you into all truth. He's going to indwell you. He's going to take up residence in each of you. 1 Corinthians 6, 9. It's to your advantage that I leave so that the Holy Spirit can come and reside in each of you and lead you into truth.

And the last thing I just want to note is Jesus says in John 16, 14, the Holy Spirit, when he comes, he will glorify me.

[22 : 25] He's going to spotlight Jesus. He's going to make much of Jesus. It's not the only thing he does, but it's the primary thing he does. So what I want you to know before we start talking about walking by the Spirit is that the Holy Spirit is a person, God himself, who's come to take up residence in each of us and he's seeking to glorify the risen Christ.

The Holy Spirit resides in us and is seeking to lead us into the freedom Christ accomplished for us. In light of that, let me just walk you through three things. The leading of the Spirit is marked by conflict. The leading of the Spirit results in contrast. In the leading of the Spirit, keeping in step, it's a command.

If you look at Galatians chapter 5, verse 16, 17, and 18, you're going to pick up on some conflict language. But I say walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

There's some conflict there. 17, for the desires of the Spirit, flesh are against the Spirit. Against is a conflict word. And the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh.

[23 : 57] Conflict. For those are opposed to each other. Conflict. To keep you from doing the things you want to do. Conflict. It's a conflict between the Spirit and our flesh.

We've already talked about the Spirit. Let me make sure you know what the flesh is. J.R. Stott said, the flesh is what we are by nature in inheritance from Adam and Eve.

Who we are apart from God's grace. Self-centered rebels against God. That's the flesh. And it's still alive in you.

There is this aspect of you that is still moved towards self-centeredness. Sin. I want it my way. I don't care about God. That is your flesh.

And what we see here is that this conflict is between the desires of the Spirit and the desires of the flesh. It's a conflict over what you want.

[24 : 59] What you live for. Ultimately, this is a conflict of control. What controls you? What governs your life?

You know, we've got an election coming up in November and there's a bunch of battleground states. Who are they going to vote for? Are they going to vote for Democrats? Are they going to vote for Republicans? What are these swing states?

Who are they going to get behind? When they make their choice, they are saying, we want this person to rule us. When it comes to walking by the Spirit or walking by the flesh, we have a choice of who we're going to get behind, who we're going to follow after, who we're going to live for and obey.

Today, Ronald Fong says, to walk by the Spirit means to be under the constant, moment by moment, direct control and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

To walk by the Spirit means to be controlled by the Spirit. To be led by the Spirit. In verse 16, Paul talks about this choice.

[26 : 24] He commands it. But I say, walk. It's a command by the Spirit and you'll not gratify the desires of the flesh. It's a conditional promise. If we walk by the power under the direction, surrender to the Holy Spirit, we will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

We're not going to give in to them. We're not going to let them complete themselves. The Holy Spirit will lead us into the freedom that Christ has accomplished for us.

In verse 18, we read this, but if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. If you're walking by the Spirit, you are walking in the freedom that Christ accomplished for you.

You're not under law. You're not living under legalism. It's not lawlessness. You will be fulfilling God's will for your life.

When you choose to be led by the Holy Spirit, He will lead you into the freedom that Christ has already accomplished.

[27 : 40] you will be loving people. The leading of the Holy Spirit is marked by conflict.

So I'm not sure if you realize this. The moment you became a Christian, it was like a declaration of civil war within you. God indwelt you by His Spirit and all of a sudden there was opposition to the desires of your flesh.

the Holy Spirit wants to lead you into Christ's freedom and fullness and away from the captivity of the flesh. The leading of the Holy Spirit is marked by contrast.

We see this in verses 19 through 24. Now the works of the flesh are evident and He talks about 15 works of the flesh. You can break them into four categories.

The flesh unleashed sexually, sexual immorality and purity sensuality. The flesh unleashed religiously, idolatry and sorcery.

[28 : 48] That word sorcery by the way is, we get the word pharmacology from it. It's the use of drugs in the worship of false gods. At the end we read about the flesh unleashed in the drinking sphere, drunkenness, orgies, that orgy is probably more like a drinking party where it just goes out of control, animal house.

But right in the middle in verses 20 and 21 we see these works of the flesh, these manifestations of the flesh of that self-centered rebellion manifested relationally.

We read enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy.

When you are walking by the flesh this is what gets produced. it's helpful because it helps you to see when you are living by the flesh.

And Paul is setting up a contrast here of the works of the flesh contrasted to the fruit of the spirit but before we get to the fruit of the spirit there is a warning that you need to see in verse 21.

[30 : 19] I warn you as I warned you before that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Now if you're in the room and you profess Christ and you're like okay man I just I lost it with my kids this morning on the way over here I raged against them. Does that mean I am not going to inherit the kingdom of God?

The key to this verse is understanding I warn you as I warned you that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. That word do in the original language means to practice.

It's a habitual way of life. If this is your habitual way of life Paul is saying be warned you don't belong to Jesus. What you need right now is to be set free from sin.

So if this is normal course that's one thing. That's a character marked by the flesh but if you're a believer and there's these occasional lapses where you're like oh yeah I was once controlled by this but now it's just less and less.

[31 : 34] I was hanging out with a brother this week and he was talking about how there was a time of his life where he was just governed by a particularly self-centered approach to life. He wanted to gain things.

He became a Christian and what God by the Spirit did is he slowly changed him. He made him less and less governed by this particularly fleshly desire.

It became more and more laps than way of life. That's what the Spirit does in us but the warning stands. If this is what characterizes your life, be warned, you need to be set free by Jesus.

So on the one side we have the works of the flesh and on the other the fruit of the Spirit. This is what the Spirit does in us. If you would look at verse 22, but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, works of the flesh, 15 things with a, and there's more at the end.

Through the Spirit he lays out nine different manifestations of the Spirit's working in the life of a Christian, all having to do with our character. I'm not going to go into detail, I just want to show you three things.

[33 : 03] They're highly, first is they're highly relational. Love for one another, joy together, peace between us, patience, long suffering with one another, showing kindness in goodness, faithfulness, bearing up with each other, gentleness, a tenderness towards one another.

We're told to be gentle in Galatians 6 too, when we find a brother or sister caught in sin, we're to be gentle with them. And then he says self-control, reigning in your passions and desires, so they don't adversely affect those around you.

All of this is the fulfillment of the law. All of this is what the Spirit does in us so that we can love our neighbor as ourself.

The aim of it is to exalt Christ and to bless others. God delivers us from living for ourselves and he delivers us to being a blessing to others.

Against such things there is no law, Paul says in verse 23, because it's the fulfillment of the law.

This is the freedom that Christ purchased for us to live in.

[34 : 22] And the Holy Spirit leads us into it. one more thing I want to point out is if you were to say that love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control was a profile of someone, if that described someone that you know, who would be a description of?

Jesus. So the Holy Spirit leads us forming Christ's character in us to bless one another and the Holy Spirit is spotlighting Jesus through our very characters.

This stands in stark contrast to the works of the flesh. And then in verse 24, there's another contrast. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If you're bearing this fruit, do you know what it evidences? It evidences that you've been converted, that you've become a Christian. J.I.

Packer says that our past conversion is evidenced by present convertedness. And if you are bearing the fruit of the Spirit and growing measure, it demonstrates that you've been converted.

[35 : 47] That you went from life to death. That you crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. When we are led by the Spirit, the result is a contrast with the works of this flesh.

We stand out. We bear, it bears witness to the freedom Christ accomplished for us. the Spirit really wants to change us.

And he wants to change us in a way that makes us more loving to one another and unites a church for the glory of Christ's name.

Conflict, contrast, and finally, a command. If we live by the Spirit, verse 25, we must keep in step with the Spirit.

It's a command. In 518, we're to be led by the Spirit. It's a different Greek verb than keep in step with the Spirit.

[36 : 59] In 516, we're commanded to walk by the Spirit. It's a different verb here. The verb here, to keep in step with the Spirit, literally means to line up behind your leader and follow Him.

Every one of us has been freed by Christ, who has been freed by us. We must keep in step with the Spirit to live out that freedom.

We must follow Him as He leads us into becoming more like Jesus and loving of one another, fulfilling the whole law. If we keep in step with the Spirit, verse 26, we're not going to become conceited.

We're not going to be thinking too highly of ourselves, provoking one another, envying another, biting and devouring one another. The Spirit will not let that happen. He will unite us together in loving one another, bearing this fruit that glorifies Jesus.

If we get behind the Holy Spirit, we don't need to fear that He's going to lead us outside of what the Scriptures have laid down. The Spirit who inspired the Scriptures will lead us into the ways of God, walk along the path of life.

[38 : 29] life. You know what the bottom line is? We must keep in step with the Spirit to live in the freedom Christ accomplished.

What Christ accomplished in 33 AD, the Spirit brings to fruition in our lives in 2018. 13. So I'm guessing you're wondering how do I walk by the Spirit?

How do I do that? How do I keep in step with the Spirit? Let me give you three suggestions. Three prayers to the Spirit in order to be led by the Spirit.

Three ways to depend. first is this. Ask God by His Spirit to preach Christ to you.

To bring to your mind that Christ has set me free. Could you imagine waking up every morning and you move to this point where you're like, oh Spirit of God, would you again remind me that Christ has set me free?

[39 : 42] would you spotlight that in my soul today? That's where it starts. Remind me of what God has done for me in Christ. Second, Spirit, slay my flesh.

Kill my sin. If you struggle with sexual lust, oh Spirit of God, would you kill that today? Help me to nail it to the cross.

It was crucified the moment I believed it was done. Help me to live that way. Kill it in me. Romans 8, 13, we are to mortify sin by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, Spirit, lead me. Empower me to love others. You can start praying prayers like this.

Lord Jesus, because you called me to be free, I confess my hatred towards my brother, and I nail it to the cross. It's done, and Spirit, would you empower me now to love him?

[40 : 55] Jesus, because you called me to be free, I confess my fits of fleshly anger. I nail it to the cross. I will not live for that now. Would you lead me into long suffering with those around me?

Spirit of God, would you, you've set me free. Jesus, you've set me free. I confess my insecurities. I confess my envy of the way my sister looks, and of my brother's family, of my friend's house, and of this guy's car.

I confess it. would you, Spirit, now empower me to stop wanting what others have, and help me to start wanting your good for others.

Jesus, because you called me to free, I confess my harshness to my children. I nail that desire of the flesh to the cross, and Spirit, would you now empower me to be gentle and tender, selflessly loving my children?

these are ways in which we walk by the Spirit. I just thought to show you two things this morning.

Christ has freed us from sin, and the Spirit empowers us moment by moment to live out that freedom that Christ accomplished.

[42 : 21] Christ has set you free, and the Spirit indwells us to experience that freedom. freedom. And so, brothers and sisters, keep in step with the Spirit.

Go forth today in power. Let's pray. God in heaven, would you use these words, these words of you from Galatians, and would you set us free, and would you help us to live in that freedom?

In the name of Jesus, for the glory of God, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.