

Date: 14 May 2023

Scripture Passage: Galatians 5:13-26

Title: Life In The Spirit

Introduction

- Paul says to Galatian Christians: “walk in the Spirit” (16); “led by the Spirit” (18); “live in the Spirit” & “walk in the Spirit” (25). So to walk in the spirit, Is to be led by the spirit, and It is to live in the spirit. Obviously about true Christian indwelt by Spirit (3:2 & 4:6).
- But what is the opposite of walking in Spirit? It is to walk in Flesh. What does Flesh mean? It means your sinful nature. Original sin. As we focus on life in the Spirit, but we will be contrasting it with life in the flesh. This passage is about the true Christian who is indwelt by the spirit of God. If you are not indwelt by the spirit of God, you are not a true Christian.
 - This is where we must be clear about doctrine. Not to be drawn away by the modern charismatic movement which teaches that you can be a Christian, but without the spirit. You have to loosen your tongue and allow the spirit to “fill you” before you become a better Christian.
 - Gal 4:6 Only those who have the spirit of God will truly call up to God father. it is important for us to ensure that we are converted. We have the spirit of God dwelling in us.
 - We must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And our life must reflect a change as well. We should be more and more like Christ as we walk in faith with the Spirit. a true Christian therefore lives a changed life in the power of the Holy Spirit. This passage is about the true Christian and how he lives.
- A true Christian lives a changed life, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I. What is true liberty (13-18)?

- A Christian cannot live as he likes (13-15). **Paul argued that salvation is by grace, through faith in Christ, not by law (3:26; 4:4-5).**
- Paul mentions two problems that the Galatian Christians are facing because of abuse of the doctrines of Grace. First in v13, and the second in v15. Long-term & immediate abuses. (i) licentiousness (lacking legal or moral restraints) (cf. Rom. 6:15, 20-23); (ii) dissension (15, 26).
 - Read V13. Abuse of the doctrines of Grace, ‘once saved you can live in sin’. **Rom. 6:15-18.** Once you have been set free from sin, you are slave to righteousness. Once you are saved, you want to keep the law for sanctification. Keeping the law is not for salvation, but for sanctification. We become a willing slave of righteousness, because we want to please God.
 - Read v15. Second problem the Galatians are facing is dissension. There were problems in the church. They were as though devouring one another, and envying one another. Arise from the different doctrines, “Judaizers vs Paul”. One party advocating law (2:12; 4:10; 5:3). Another advocacy liberty from law-keeping.
- **Paul deals with immediate problem first, viz. dissension (15).** Liberty from law keeping must be used to serve through love. Cf faith, hope, love (**5-6**).
 - **Read v14.** Agape love. Not romantic love, not brotherly love. It is sacrificial love. Self-less love. God becomes the center of your universe. The man-ward aspect of the law is spelled out in the second great command (Matt. 22:39; Lev. 19:18).
 - A true Christian will have God as the center of his universe. You will want to be serving people in church. You will love the brethren. Are you still self centered? When you are genuinely converted, God is first in your life, and you will love your neighbor as yourself. You love to the good of others.
 - If Galatians had understood this, wouldn’t have contended between themselves, like beasts (15). Dissension will not be there. It goes in inverse proportion. Less of self, more of Christ. When there is more of self, dissension will be high. When there is less of self, you will see more of love for others. Liberty in the Spirit is liberty to serve one another in love.

- **Paul deals with the second problem.** The second problem under this section is that a Christian does not live in sin. Paul warned in v 13 “do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh”. Once saved you cannot live in sin. A Christian does not live in sin (16-18). Indwelling Spirit (3:2; 4:6) does not wipe away sin, but breaks power of sin. Spirit is new master.
 - **Read v 16.** Just because we are indwelt by the spirit does not mean that sin is totally wiped away. It means basically is that the power of sin over our life is broken. To have the power of sin broken is different from wiping away sin so that no trace of it is found in our life. While we are living in a sinful world, we will always be contaminated by sin. But when the Spirit lives in us, sin still remain in us, but it has no power over us. The Holy Spirit come to lives in us, but sin remains and our body parts, our thinking, our habits.
 - “Walk” is imperative, present tense. A command, to be obeyed, as a habitual lifestyle. Struggle between lust of flesh and desires of the Spirit will always be there (17 cf. Rom. 7:21-25). **Read v17.** The flesh and the spirit are against each other. They are contrary to one another. You cannot have both, just as you cannot have two masters. If Christ is your savior, you will walk in the spirit. A true Christian will constantly struggle with sin in his life. You must not get the idea that once you repent and believe in Jesus Christ, you are free from temptation, free from sin.
 - But don’t be in despair. The Spirit in you will triumph. You are no longer under the power of sin. You will be given holy desires (17b cf 24). There are times when you may stumble, but that is not your wish. The Spirit is your new master, and He will give you the strength you need to overcome sin.
 - The desire to for Holy Living is given to us because the spirit now lives in us. And the ability to obey God is given to us because the spirit now lives in us. Liberty in the Spirit is liberty to serve one another in love. Liberty in the Spirit is therefore liberty from living habitually in sin.
- A Christian is led by the Spirit, he is not relying on law-keeping for salvation (18). In short, one who is led by the Spirit will walk in the Spirit, i.e. he will live righteously.

II. What is true righteousness (19-26)?

- It is not indulging in the works of the flesh (19-21). If you are saved, and if you know what it means to be truly liberated from the need to keep the law for salvation, then you will avoid living in sin. But what is considered sin?
- Works of the flesh, **three sorts: sexual sins, religious sins, social sins.** List is not exhaustive, “and the like” (21). Breaking of any incurs guilt (cf. James 2:10). Note also “those who **practice** (do, KJ) such things”, i.e. habitually live like that, will not inherit kingdom of God.
 - A true Christian not only experience constant struggle with sin, wanting to live a holy life. But he also occasionally stumbles here and there and fall into sin. But we do not live habitually in sin. When you sin, you will want to come back to God in repentance if the spirit lives in you. Believing that Jesus Christ has died for even that sin we have committed.
 - The list is not exhaustive. We have to commit all of them to be guilty before God, the slightest breaking of this law shows to us that we are guilty. And to live habitually in any of these sins show that we are not true Christians. We do not have the Spirit dwelling in us. Those living habitually in sin are not true believers. They will perish in their sins (1 Cor. 6:9-11).
- It is showing the fruit of the Spirit in increasing measure (22-26). Fruit of Spirit of three sorts: wrt **God** (love, joy, peace), wrt **men** (longsuffering, kindness {the attitude}, goodness {the actions}), wrt **self** (faithfulness, gentleness/meekness, self-control).
- “Fruit” (22) is singular, i.e. they all belong together. One found, all potentially there as well. But does not mean all in equal measure, or equally well-developed.
 - We might wrongly think that all of them must be seen there. Or more must be seen there, and we get discouraged. When in fact, we must understand not all of them need to be equally developed at the same time. But rather, we take courage in the knowledge that because one or two or three are obviously there, we know the potential for developing the others are there. And that is why, when we realize when we are weak, we come to the Lord. When men cannot change us, the spirit of God can

change us. That is why our only hope for change in our unconverted friend/relative is in faith in Christ, where the spirit of God will change them from within. Again, the list not exhaustive “against such” (23).

- No law can be raised to accuse. The righteous requirement of law fulfilled (cf. Rom 8:4). Nobody can bring an accusation against you. The accusation sticks. You wouldn't. When you are truly converted, people will still criticize you. People will still find fault with you. But their accusations will never stick.
- Only true Christians live like that (24). Power of sin broken by Christ on cross. Ability given to put to death the flesh & passions & desires. **Read v24.** Earlier in the second part of v17, we learned the desire to live a holy life is given to us. Now In verse 24 we remind ourselves again not only the desire, but the ability to keep the law of God is given to us. Since Spirit is the new master, we are exhorted to walk in obedience to His wish (25). If we live in the spirit, let us walk in the spirit that is like summarizing. The spirit is in us. He leads us by giving us holy desires. Therefore, let us Walk in the spirit. It must be shown in our action. In our life. In our behavior.
- Paul brings it back in v26. He brings it back to the situation by saying don't envy one another. Don't provoke one another. Don't have that rivalry spirit. We would expect true believers to show true humility. By not having that sense of rivalry between fellow believers. The liberty that we have in Christ is being abused by dissension within the church. That is contrary to what the true Christian. Life is like. Faith leads to hope and love. Where is love shown in the church? Then there is the potential abuse of liberty. So he has covered that you don't do the works of the flesh, but you live a life that shows fruit of the spirit. True Christians will habitually live a righteous life, and increasingly so (2 Pet. 3:18).

Summary & Application

- Life in the Spirit not mystical experience belonging elite, but practical holiness in every Christian. We learn what is true liberty. We learn what? Is true righteousness. We are expected to live a changed life in the power of the Holy Spirit. And before we carry with us these applications. Firstly, life in the spirit is not a mystical experience belonging to some elite group of Christians, but it is practical holiness to be found in every Christian.
- Immediate result is death to self. Long-term is growth in holy living. Are you are true Christian? The immediate effect of being converted is we begin to die to self, and long term we should expect growth in holiness. And having understood all this, my question to us all is this. Are you a Christian? Are you?