

1. Review – last time in Galatians - we looked at the works of the flesh

Look at: Ga 5:19–21 (ESV) Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ⁽²⁰⁾ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ⁽²¹⁾ 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.

A. That's not where we want to be camping out – instead – our passage today

Ga 5:22–23 (ESV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ⁽²³⁾ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

B. Don't give yourself to the flesh because it will produce works that are sinful

But give yourself to the Spirit so **He will produce** spiritual fruit = Christlike Character

Transition: So this is what we're going to start to look at today – Walking in the Spirit

A. That leads us to an important thought that we need to see right in the beginning

2. We now move from the **works of the flesh** – we're now into **fruit**

A. What's the difference? Works of the flesh is something we do – we produce those

Fruit of the Spirit is something God does - spiritual fruit grows naturally

1). Like a branch connected to the vine – it doesn't strive – strain to push a piece of fruit out

a). It remains connected and receives everything needed – that fruit is produced naturally

B. This is how Christianity is supposed to be lived out

1). We'll see Christ is the vine – we are the branches – the Spirit is like the sap

Bringing into our life everything we need to naturally produce fruit

Transition: So many Christians don't understand this – Results in great frustration and discouragement

A. They are working so hard in their own strength to produce what only the Spirit can produce

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Like the good old boy who bought a new **CHAINSAW**

Took it home - but brought it back a few days later - complaining

"This thing is useless...I'm cutting less wood with this than I was with that old hand saw"

Salesman replied: "That's odd...this is our best model" - pulls cord - fires it up - vroooooom

Good old boy said: "What's that sound!"

1). Many believers are like that – trying to live out their Christianity in their own power

a). They are straining and striving to produce fruit and they are frustrated and discouraged

b). They're sawing away in their own strength

3. God has a **MUCH** better plan for you

A. He's given you a helper to depend upon

To enable you to live out your spirituality in the way it was meant to be lived out

Listen to how Jesus put it: Jn 7:37–39 (ESV) On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ⁽³⁸⁾ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' " ⁽³⁹⁾ ***Now this he said about the Spirit...***

1). He's speaking to people who were used to well water – stagnant and unappealing

a). But stream water was pure, refreshing and appealing

Thought: What a picture of spiritual life lived in our own strength

A. It's like that well water – stagnant and unappealing

B. But life lived in the strength of the Spirit = is alive, fresh, and very appealing

1). A life characterized by victory – a life filled up with so much of God it overflows!

Transition: ***We're talking about walking in the Spirit!***

A. This is such an important subject – we'll be spending the next few weeks on it

- B. We are going to start with the idea of being filled with the Spirit
 - 1). To walk in the Spirit we must be filled with the Spirit

I. WHY WE NEED TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

TURN: Eph 5:18 (ESV) And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

- A. Let's start by asking an important question – why is this necessary? See 3 reasons

Why We Need to Be Filled with The Spirit

1. Because the standards of Christianity are beyond us

- A. True Christianity is impossible for us to live out in our own strength
 - 1). That ability to love when you've been abused
 - 2). To do good to those who have wronged you
 - 3). To forgive others as Christ has forgiven you
 - 4). To have peace in times of trouble - joy in times of trial
 - 5). Self-control in times of great temptation
 - 6). To consistently be patient, kind and gentle with others.....and on and on

Point: True Christianity is far beyond the reach of mere human strength

- A. Every point of it is beyond us – every command will take absolute dependence
 - 1). AND If we don't see that we will reduce Christianity down to what we can do
 - a). We end up with something that is weak, powerless and pathetic
- B. To live out a genuine Biblical Christianity is going to take God's power

Because the standards of Christianity are beyond us

2. Because the enemy that stands against us is too powerful

Eph 6:12 (ESV) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

- A. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the powers of hell
 - 1). We must not underestimate this – *on our own we are outmatched!*
- B. Therefore Ephesians continues on in the very next verse

Eph 6:13 (ESV) Therefore (because of who you're battling with) take up the *whole armor of God...*

- 1). Armor that is fashioned by God and *empowered by the Spirit*
- 2). We see in v. 17 we are to take up the *Sword of the Spirit* = our Bible

This section ends with: Eph 6:18 (ESV) praying at all times *in the Spirit...*

- C. To walk in victory against a foe that is way too strong for us
 - 1). Will take the power of one that is stronger than he is = takes the power of the Spirit

Because the standards are too high - because the enemy that stands against us is too strong

3. Because the flesh that resides within us is too persistent

Rom 7:21 (NIV) So I find this law at work: *When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.*

- A. We carry around this unredeemed flesh that still loves sin and still hates God and anything that is holy
- B. And this internal enemy rises up within us to oppose any good we desire to do
 - 1). Whether that be good for our own growth - Bible study, prayer, fellowship
 - 2). Whether that be good in our service unto God

Summary: Here is our situation - why we need to be filled with the Spirit – living in His power not our own

- A. The standard I'm called to live out – Christlikeness – I will never attain that in my own strength
- B. Plus I have an external enemy that is too great for me – that wants to keep me from living like Christ

- C. Plus I have an internal enemy that rises up every time I try to live like Christ
 - 1). The only way I can live this out – obedient to God’s commands – Christ-like living
Is to tap into the power of the Spirit who will enable me with His power that is sufficient
 - 2). To learn how to depend upon the helper who has been sent to help me

Transition: So to walk in the Spirit – we must be filled with the Spirit – but what does that mean?

II. THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE DEFINED

Going to look at this more next week - just want to touch on it today - to get us thinking correctly

- A. Need to see this because the Spirit filled life has been defined in so many ways that it can be confusing
- B. From extremely practical to extremely mystical - and everything in-between
 - 1). Ephesians 5:18 gives us a great definition of what it is

Eph 5:18 (ESV) And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

1. The Spirit filled life is a Spirit dominated life

- A. Paul uses an interesting illustration to teach this = *drunkenness*
- B. Why? Because of the affect drunkenness has on a person
 - 1). When you’re drunk it is much more than just having a drink
You’re under the control and domination of alcohol - under its influence
- C. In the same way - to be filled with the Spirit is more than just having the Spirit in you
 - 1). It means to be under the influence of the Spirit

Point: So just as drunkard is dominated & controlled by wine

We are to be dominated & controlled by the Spirit

- A. Notice this is a command to every believer – be Spirit filled

The Spirit filled life is a Spirit dominated life

2. The Spirit filled life is an extremely practical life

- A. We need to see this to remove the mysticism that surrounds this subject
 - 1). I’ve heard - You’ll speak in tongues if you’re spirit-filled
I know I was spirit-filled because I had shivers
 - 2). You can manifest all kinds of gifts and not be filled with the Spirit
 - 1). Ex. The Corinthians - Paul called carnal - yet a gift explosion was going on
- B. The *primary purpose* of the Spirit filling your life is very practical. Not chills
 - 1). It is so you’ll live like Christ – so that you’ll walk to some degree like He did
Again: 1 Jn 2:6 (ESV) whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.
 - 2). What was He like? What are we aiming for – we see that in Galatians 5:22-23
 - a). The fruit of the Spirit is simply Christlike characteristics
 - 1a). Love, peace, joy, gentleness, patience, self-control...
 - b). The Spirit when He has control will produce Christlikeness in you
- C. Therefore the *primary place* this is going to happen is not in church - during worship - shivers
 - 1). You’re not in church 90% of the time
 - 2). This is something that happens just as much in the workplace, school, home etc.
 - a). When they see you’re not a complainer – griper – gossiper like others
 - 1a). They see something that looks to some degree like Christ
Loving – caring – gentle – joyful etc.

- 2a). Peter says we should live our lives in a way that advertise Him
We do it by acting like Christ in our daily living

Point: So the Spirit filled life enables you to live Christianity out at street level - day-to-day stuff

- A. To be the kind of husband, wife, parent, worker, student that brings glory to God

Internal Summary:

- A. We've seen why we need to be filled with the Spirit
- 1). Because the standards of Christianity are too high for us to live out in our own strength
 - 2). Because the enemy without and within are too strong and too persistent
- B. We've seen that the Spirit-filled life is not mystical – it is practical
- 1). It is being dominated by Him – controlled by Him
- C. We've seen what the primary purpose of the Spirit-filled life is
- 1). To enable us to live a Christ like life here on earth

Transition: Next thing – we need to see our part in this – Do I have a part to play? If so, what?

III. OUR RESPONSIBILITY IN THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

You've Got to Yield Yourself to Him

1. We've seen to be Spirit filled is to be controlled & dominated by Him

- A. Therefore you need to yield yourself to that control

Paul put it this way: Rom 12:1 (NIV) Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, *to offer your bodies as living sacrifices*, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

- 1). Picture of the OT sacrifice - totally consumed by the flames
- B. We offer our lives in a full surrender – this is primarily seen in how we respond to His word
- 1). But this will influence and affect every area of our life

Transition: This will affect every day of our life – next point

2. The command to be Spirit filled is in the present tense = repeated event

- A. It's a choice to yield to His control continuously – now - the next moment - Day-by-day
- B. And each choice will determine whether you remain Spirit-filled or not
- 1). Ex. Your reading Bible - Spirit points out an area of sin - NOW you have a choice
 - a). To respond correctly - confessing, repenting and forsaking
 - 1a). You will remain Spirit filled = *under His control*
 - b). Reject that conviction and cling to that sin
 - 1a). You become filled with self - under self's control instead of the Spirit
 - 2a). You will begin to walk in your own power - and suffer failure
 - 3a). This will continue until you repent & yield to Him once again

Point: The Spirit AND you can't be in control at the same time - it's one or the other

- A. The believer is one who has handed over the ownership of their life – to follow Him

3. Tragic thing – many Christians don't want this

- A. They want the benefits of the Spirit filled life without surrendering to Him
- 1). Want to author a guaranteed best seller?
“How to walk in the Spirit while fulfilling the lusts of the flesh”
 - 2). So many want easy - just lay hands on me and pray a prayer to receive the Spirit
But yield my life to Him...uh...no thanks!
- B. When we refuse to do this - We trade in a life likened to "streams of living water"
- 1). Appealing, exhilarating, fresh and exciting –

A life with God in it! So filling us we can't contain Him

- 2). We settle for a life that is stagnant, unappealing, lifeless and cold
 - a). A life that has so little of God in it - so little of His touch upon it

Thought: How foolish not to yield to Him!

- A. Who loves you more than God?
- B. Who knows better than Him what is truly best for you?
- C. Who desires more than Him to bring about what is best for you in your life?
 - 1). You are surrendering to LOVE - love great enough to go to a cross - you can trust Him

Yield to Him completely

You've Got to Depend Upon Him Daily - (Faith)

1. Three things we can depend upon when it comes to the Spirit

- A. That the Holy Spirit lives within me - whether I feel Him or not
- B. That the Holy Spirit has brought the life of Christ to me
- C. Here's the one we want to see

That the Holy Spirit is willing to produce the life of Christ through me

- 1). Regardless of what situation I find myself facing
 - a). Whether I need patience and gentleness with someone I'm dealing with
 - b). Whether I need Christ's peace in a storm that has come into my life
Or His power in a temptation that I'm facing

ILLUSTRATED IN THE WALK OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

Turn: Ga 2:20 (ESV) 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.

- A. He says "I don't live my spirituality out in my own power any longer" He did under the law
But Christ has come to live in me (that is by the Spirit)
AND it is now Him who is living His life through me (that is by the Spirit)
- B. He adds - the way he became the beneficiary of all this was by faith
 - 1). By depending upon Him on a moment-by-moment basis to be able to live out His Christianity

Point: The whole Christian life is one of faith – from faith to faith Scripture says

- A. It starts by depending upon God to save me
- B. It continues by trusting Him to enable me to live that saved life out on a daily basis
- C. As I enter my day at work, at home, at school, at church
As I interact with co-workers, friend, family, neighbors
As I face trouble, trial, success or failure
 - 1). **I have this confidence:** No matter what comes into my life I have this HELPER residing within me
Who is willing at that moment to live the life of Christ through me
 - a). And that life is sufficient to successfully meet anything I'm facing

Question: What are you facing right now? What is tyrannizing you? Defeating you?

- A. God has provided all you need to face that successfully as a Christian
Php 4:13 (ESV) I can do all things **through him who strengthens me.**
 - 1). Not – I can do all things if I pull myself up by my own bootstraps
 - 2). I can do all things **through His strength – that strength the Spirit gives to me**
- B. You can't do it in your own strength but in His strength you can

Like David with Goliath: 1 Sa 17:45–46 (ESV) Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but *I come to you in the name of the LORD* of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁽⁴⁶⁾ *This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand...*

“You may be too big for me...but you’re not too big for God! I come against you in His strength”

- C. You have giants in your life - Giants of emotions - circumstances - that have been defeating you
 - 1). They’re too big for you – you can’t drive them back on your own – accept that!
 - 2). But God has sent a helper – an enabler – an empowerer
 - a). *But you must start depending upon Him to enable you*

Transition: Let’s see how we do that – how we live this out on a daily basis

4. Practically - Walking by faith day-by-day

- A. Begin your day with a fresh surrender to Him
"Lord I yield my life to you. Today I'm going to depend upon you at every point for your empowering to live out my spirituality."
- B. Then enter your day by faith - Knowing that the Holy Spirit is in you
And depend upon His willingness to live the life of Christ through you
 - 1). *We will see more on this next week – be here!*
- C. When you face trouble, trial, temptation, face it by faith - turn quickly to the Spirit
"Holy Spirit I can't handle this situation in my own strength but you never expected me to. I thank you right now that you are in me and are willing to produce the life of Christ through me. So I depend upon you right now to help! Give me His love towards others...His patience and kindness...His peace in times of trouble... His self-control in times of temptation. I thank you for your power right now..."

Thought: We need to establish the habit of immediately trusting in the Spirit for help

- A. Example – Something comes into our life that causes anxiety
We immediately turn to the Spirit – “Jesus wasn’t anxious. Holy Spirit live out His peace in my life right now. You’ve commanded me not to be anxious about anything. Enable me to live that scripture out. I **DEPEND UPON YOU.**”
 - 1). I choose to live like Jesus – I choose to obey the scriptures
I depend upon you by faith to make that possible
- B. This is when Christianity becomes rich - alive – Christianity with God in it!
 - 1). As the Spirit on a daily basis brings Christ to us and lives Christ through us
 - a). Producing His character and living out His victory
 - 2). A fresh touch of Christ on our life - not this stagnant experience
- C. We’re going to see more about this next week

CONCLUSION

1. Are you tired of the mediocrity that living in your own strength produces

- A. You **NEED** to be filled with the Spirit to live out the life you were designed to live
You can’t do it – WHY?
 - 1). Because the Standards of true Christianity are too high for you to reach
 - 2). And the enemies that are arrayed against you are too strong for you to defeat

2. Therefore we are commanded to be Spirit filled

- A. He has all the power you need – to live like you should and to defeat all the enemy throws at you

3. Our responsibility in the Spirit filled life

- A. To yield to the Spirit's Control
- B. To depend daily upon the Spirit's willingness to live the life of Christ out through us

4. The results of the Spirit filled life

- A. Living and responding like Christ in the various things we face day-to-day
- B. This means we will experience an open channel with God - Him pouring Himself through us!!!
 - 1). Living with a fresh touch of God upon our life - like Christianity was meant to be
- C. The alternative is for you to remain in control of your life
 - 1). That can only lead to a stagnant, stale life - filled with far to much defeat
 - a). A life that lacks joy, peace and victory – NO THANKS

NEXT WEEK: Life as a branch – read ahead in John 15