

Galatians 5:16-26: Fruit of the Spirit vs. Works of the Flesh

Prayer

Introduction: Last week Tony shared a story of adoption by Russell Moore about his kids returning to the orphanage...

- **CS Lewis Quote from the Weight of Glory:** *'Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.'*

Further Intro: **This passage is all about our adoption in Christ**... we have been saved to a new life, a life in the Spirit and yet **we still want to play in the slums, we still want the orphanage**, we still return to a bondage of the desires of the flesh, we still want those weak affections – Lets look at these two incompatible lives!

Main Point: **Live by the Spirit through your adoption (not for adoption)!**

1) Do this by making war (crucify) on the old desires of the flesh that still threaten us and living as an adopted Child!

- **And really, as we have said throughout this is just becoming what you already are** – you are already an adopted son so live like it, don't reach back for the orphanage, for the mud pies

Live in Freedom from Law (a yoke you cant bear) and desires of flesh (that are destructive)

I. The Desires of the Flesh and Life in the Spirit are Incompatible, so Yield to the Spirit

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 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. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

(16) In order to wage war on the flesh you must pursue yielding to the Spirit

- **"Walk"** here implies the patter of conduct in one's life - so seek direction and empowerment and guidance from the Spirit - which you have by the Gospel and which you know through the Scriptures and community
 - o **A tension between Divine Empowerment and our choice to walk by Spirit** – we have been clear throughout Galatians we are not saved by works, but there is a tension that we are also responsible for examining ourselves (living out spiritual disciplines)
 - o *There is a tension in the verse between divine enablement and human choice. ON the one hand, believers must chose to live by the Spirit, while on the other hand, the Spirit empowers believers to live a life pleasing to God – Schreiner*
- **"Desires of Flesh"** would be more than just lusts but all desires of fallen humanity (*things such as self-righteousness, pride, self-justification, and lust etc*)
- **Explanation:** The Spirit is verse the flesh... if you have been adopted (you have the Spirit) you will make war on the flesh! But in order to do this you must rest in your adoption **How does this happen?** We talked about that earlier in Galatians - **by faith (the gospel!)** which is also how you grow in the Christian life, the same way, but faith which the Spirit uses to cultivate Fruit

(17) Spirit and Flesh are opposed to each other and so they cannot and should not co-exist

- **The text is pointing out we still have both natures at play within us (Rom. 7)** – a picture of the **already/not yet state** of the believer, we are already justified but not yet fully (awaiting final consummation) and there still lingers the old man – and these desires will be strong, so don't indulge them or downplay them!
 - o GOD MAKES WAR ON THESE SINS! MAKE WAR! THIS IS A WAR!
 - o THE FIGHT – *a true Christian is known not only for his inner peace but his inner warfare* – JC RYLE
- **We miss understand the Spirit**... not false spirituality (Wal-Mart smiley face lowering prices)... flannel graph... no in OT whenever Spirit shows up someone is going to get killed – HE BRINGS FRICTION
 - Just try reading for 30 mins a day and you will see struggle – Satan and Self warring against you!

Illustration: D-Day – WE have victory but they still war for us...

We will talk in a min about how you can fight them...

18) Life by Spirit through the Gospel gives us victory over flesh and also the Law

- **We see here that both a legalist cannot inherit the kingdom because cannot fulfill the law, but also a licentious person (those that indulge the flesh – both are rebellion) cannot as well** - Though Paul is clear we will struggle, he is certain gospel triumphs over both a life of legalism and life of licentious living
- **Justification by faith does not result in license, but the producing of Christian virtue by the Vine** – we are free not live a life of rebellion or legalism, but a life of Sacrificial love to the Father that adopted us!
 - o **Legalism is also a work of the flesh, it is the idea that you can earn your own salvation, that you can build your life on what you accomplish...** this is a work of the flesh – You are free! Live in what He has done for you.

So the answer to the flesh is the Spirit Filled Life as well – Lady Gaga on Liberating People (homosexuals or drunks) – *If you think about it true Slavery=giving in to the desires of the flesh but true freedom is being led by the Spirit into abundant life!*

Final Word: *The answer to sin (both legalism and wild living) is not the law but the cross and the gift of the Spirit*

GOING TO SKIP AHEAD TO SEE HOW WE FIGHT THIS, THEN LOOK AT SPECIFICS

- II. **(24-26) How do I Kill the Flesh and Live by the Spirit?**
 - a. **By Crucifying the Flesh – Making War (24)**
 - b. **By Believing the Gospel – Replacing Weak Affections for Greater Ones (reminding yourself that you are a son, so don't go back to the orphanage (25)**

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

2 Things Necessary to Grow in Grace – Make War and Set your mind on something greater:

1) (24) Crucify Sinful nature – The misplaced things you lust after

- **Gal. 2:20, we have been crucified with Christ, so old is passing, new is coming** – this is pictured in baptism, raised to new life which bears fruit because of Vine working in us – *The Gospel and the cross*

did what the Law could not do, destroy the flesh – so we don't need law to curb wild living, we need the Gospel!

In order to crucify flesh we must examine our hearts and see idols underneath – Keller calls it our Flesh Operating System

- **What are the desires of your heart that you must have to not be considered a bum...** this FOS may take good things like money, career, family and make them God thing – *If I lose it I will die, and I will do whatever I can to gain it*
 - o **Lose it, Approval:** For example when approval is at center, when you are criticized you wont just be hurt, you will be devastated
 - o **Or have to have it, Career success:** You will be unethical to get ahead, or a workaholic that sacrifices family

And these cravings of the flesh you can never satisfy, they are terrible Lords and masters because they cannot fulfill, you will always need more career success (Rockefeller – one more dollar)

So Identify them and put them to death!

Is that it just put them to death? No this is not about trying harder... V. 24 is clear that only those who “belong” to Jesus have put them to death

- **The Flesh tells you do them so you will be saved, a way of being your own God – Gospel says the opposite** – “*only when you recognize that you are unconditionally loved can you do this... only a deep of understanding of already belonging (adoption – Ezell) can you without fear put to death*”
- **In every other religion it is I do so I belong, Christianity is opposite, I Belong so I do!**
 - o **Example – one would say I love so I will be loved...** the other says I am loved so I will love! That is freeing! Only then can pursue life in the Spirit and greater affections

2) (25) Keep in step with the Sprit – Now we don't just play defense, we play offense, or the Spirit does

- *The Spirit also yearns like the Flesh by yearns to glorify Christ, He draws us to Christ to see how beautiful He is – This is Spirit enabled – to Rejoice in your Adoption!*

Thomas Chalmers – “*The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*” says: *A Moralist Will be Unsuccessful in Trying to Displace His Love of the World by Reviewing the Ills of the World. Misplaced Affections Need to be Replaced by the Far Greater Power of the Affection of the Gospel... A New Affection is More Successful in Replacing an Old Affection than Simply Trying to End it Without Supplanting it With Something Better... Even the Strongest Resolve is Not Enough to Dislodge an Affection by Leaving a Void... It is Not Enough to Understand the Worthlessness of the World; One Must Value the Worth of the Things of God*

III. Evidences of the Flesh vs. Evidences of the Spirit

19 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. 22 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.

We now see in this section how radically opposed these two lives are... one evidences a life under reign of this present darkness that will be cut off, the other evidences life of a coming Kingdom!

- **We need to realize that we probably exhibit these more than we think, but we redefine them** – so we may say well I don't lust as much as him, I don't cheat on my wife (I am a red-blooded American

man, of course I notice a pretty woman) or we might say he deserved for me to throw that penny at his car because he cut me off!

- **But Scriptures say these works will not inherit the Kingdom, we must not redefine, we must repent** – Be careful you are not creating a Jesus in your mind who you call “Lord” who is comfortable with you just the way you are!

We will see here basically four categories of sins produced by idols and functional saviors (list is not exhaustive)

1) Sexual – *Sexual Immorality, Impurity, sensuality...*

- Focus in on defilement brought on by sexual sin – **Examples:** fornication, pornography, adultery, or could just be wondering affections to a mate that is not yours... this could come through romance novels!

2) Improper Worship of the one true God – *Idolatry, Sorcery*

- This is trying to manipulate the Spiritual to bring about own desires (Babel)
- We have to be extremely careful here – how often do we try and manipulate the Spiritual

Illustration: Christian guy saying God told me... or gal saying God told me... **be very careful in speaking for God or using the Spiritual for your gain**

3) Social Sins that Disrupt Community Life – bring discord in the church – *Enmity (or hatred), Strife, Jealousy (being consumed with our own self-glorification, be careful in ministry), fits of anger (or uncontrolled temper), rivalries (or selfish ambition in RSV – Phil. 2?), Dissensions and Divisions, and Envy (not being content with what God has given you)*

4) Uncontrolled Appetites – *Drunkenness and Orgies*

- **Here we see Appetites out of control** – how people take good gifts and use them as their satisfaction and for their own destruction – food (gluttony, drink (drunkenness), sex (all manners of sexual perversion) – this is what we do in the flesh, take good things and abuse them, feeding our appetites to destroy ourselves
- **So contrary to the fruit of the Spirit which is self control!**

And things like these... so this is not comprehensive

Those who do such things – will not inherit the kingdom – **WHY? Because this is picture of trying to be one's own God... I do not need you God!**

- **We must war on these things...**

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – comes by the Gospel!

IN CONTRAST NOW – Those who are justified by faith through God's amazing grace are now empowered by the Spirit and the new birth to live a new way of life...

- **Fruit of the Spirit should remind us that we are grafted into the true Vine** – that is how produce fruit – **we really don't produce fruit before then** (even good works are filthy) – so Christian Character is produced by the Spirit, not mere moral discipline (trying harder to live out the law) but by becoming who you are and warring against the old flesh!

Something to Note - Singular: We have treated fruit of the Spirit like you can have some of it, but lack others – there is a problem with that – **this is singular, it says “fruit” not “fruits”** – and this fruit should characterize all those that are in Christ... though in an already not yet state!

Fruits go together – Edwards says i.e. Gentleness and Faithfulness have to go together – You might for instance think you really have gentleness down, but you are a coward who can't stand up for truth and be faithful!

- So if not growing in all of them, may not be in any of them
 - o **But take heart this starts small and grows, just like physical fruit** – and you will see evidences along the way

Illustration: In GG shared that when I used to be criticized I would seethe... and try and either verbally respond or in my mind tear that person down, now I have seen growth in humility and avoiding self-justification

Now we have seen what to crucify, lets see how the gospel will enable us to live the Spirit filled life

1) Love – the greatest of these is love!

- **Why love first?** Reflects clearly the character of God. What a gracious God?
- **GOSPEL APPLICATION:** We love others because of how we have been loved – not for what we can get out of them (that's not loving if you serve someone for what you get) but instead because you understand in the gospel Christ loved us when we could do nothing for Him, now we love the same way.

2) Joy

- *A delight that goes beyond happiness, because it is a delight regardless of circumstances*
- **Gospel Application:** Only comes when knowing in the Gospel God is for us, even in trials... and so you delight in God
 - o **Struggle here:** if you are lacking joy because of struggles (marriage, or cant get a date, or harsh things like Cancer) **it is not that Spirit is working within us to say these things are joyful**, but causes us to rejoice in the midst of these things by forgetting our circumstances and understanding that Jesus has triumphed over all things, and **I have joy because I know that all obstacle to joy are ultimately done away with, especially the casket – so have Joy!**
 - **Cancer will not beat us because Immanuel (God is with us!)** – that produces joy! A joy only found in the gospel

3) Peace

- **This is a rest... notably in the Gospel it is a rest that comes because we have been reconciled to God and no longer are under condemnation** – We know our greatest enemy has been defeated and so we have Peace!
 - o **Before we waged war on God** (like Adam in the garden, I must be equal with him, I must be Lord) and we were under a curse, but only by surrendering our desire to be Lord to Him as Lord can we be at peace!.
 - o **This doesn't mean being a sissy, passive, or surrendering** – but instead it is understanding I have been shown grace and peace in the gospel and I now extend that to others – even if at times being faithful means speaking truth in love!
- **Gospel Application:** Let the Gospel sink in... understand the grace shown you in the cross, Christ has brought peace in the War by crushing Satan under His feet – we have no enemies left!

4) Patience

- **Enduring without losing it**, shows we understand God is in control and is allowing anything we are going through – we understand God has a purpose for allowing us to go through whatever we go through
 - o **Like slow drivers** (Sonic, ChickFila, McD's then they were slow)
- **Impatience shows we are under flesh**, we want things like we want them right then
- **Gospel Application:** *And so we endure all things because we know that God has been eternally patient with us in not casting us out, now we can be patient with others and we know His purposes work for our good!*

5) Kindness, Goodness, and Gentleness

- *Makes me think of Titus, courteous to all people*
- **Gospel Application:** The Gospel is a picture of God's kindness to us in our salvation – a kindness displayed again in serving those who can't do anything for you!

Living under the Law will never know this kind of kindness: *This is where living under law can be so corrosive, if you are still living under the law you see yourself as an employee, who is earning wages – its hard to show kindness when you don't understand true Kindness*

- **Illustration:** David's kindness to Mephibosheth – a grandson of Saul – he shows kindness to him by adoption.... Meph. Thinks he will be an employee, but David brings him in and treats him like a son! All at the table belongs to you!
 - o This is the kind of kindness we are to show, **the kindness Jesus showed to us when we were crippled by sin!**
 - o So how do you treat waitresses? Others? Those that cant do anything for you? Do you understand the gospel?

6) Faithfulness

- *This is being loyal and dependable, consistent in doing what one says*
- God is faithful, in fact the sun coming up every morning is a sign of his faithfulness, and will he not be faithful in keeping His promises? ... **if Evil men give good gifts, how much more so for our Father? Do We believe this? That's the gospel!**

7) Self- Control

- *Resisting our appetites (or power of the Flesh) by the power of the Spirit* – placed last because all of the works of the flesh show a lack of self-control.
 - o **We all struggle to control something** – anger, tongue, pride, lust, etc

This is a Lordship Issue (A gospel Issue), will you be Lord or will Christ? Who Governs You?

- Our flesh wants to make us ultimate, that is what happens in the Garden (what always happens apart from the Spirit) **wanting to make the 6th day ultimate (man) 666**
 - o **We want to be served, so we don't need to control ourselves, everything should be done to serve me**
- **Jesus gives a different picture, he is not controlled by His appetites**, he came to serve (Wash feet) Christ did not let his wants control him – look at temptations – He is driven by the Spirit (and the Word) and not His desires
 - o He was offered bread, rule, vindication... but was able to look at the snake God and say, "**Man does not live by bread alone.. but by every word from the Mouth of God**"
- **Gospel:** What is the greatest desire and affection of our heart? The glory of God and Christ? Or our Flesh – **We will never be self-controlled people until our greatest desire is Christ! Our greatest Lust is Christ!**

Against such things there is no Law – those who manifest these things are really manifesting the Beatitudes, which is deeper than external conformity to morality – it is evidencing the heart change brought by the Spirit through the gospel

- *And the change is inevitable if you have the Spirit, you will worry less... So Ask others to look for evidences of grace in you (cant be done without community)... but be humble and willing to accept the answer* – Ask them if you are harder fool now than you were a couple of years ago?

Application: The Fruit of the Spirit is really living out our adoption, becoming who we are...

RECAP: So play defense (make War, root out) and play Offense (replace with greater affections – pray for this) – meditate on His goodness, faithfulness, and live out of love as an Adopted Son! Get near Him, Commune with Him by the Word and Community

- **Seek a kingdom that is greater than all the silly things we clamor for and worry about...**

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

(26) **Has a community component – If we have fruits we will not be a Darwinian society** where strongest survive, instead we will crucify self interest for the good of others (**we wont bicker over songs, dress codes, etc**)

- *But this is only made possible by the gospel, receiving others as we have been received*

Conclusion:

Dont hear this as a call to try harder to be a good person, this is a call to believe the gospel and commune with the Spirit... And you will have victory if you have the Spirit

However, This is Only Possible in Christ, who is the Epitome of the Fruit of the Spirit:

- **Love** – He is the one who showed amazing love in *dying for those that would kill him*
- **Joy** – who *counted it all joy to suffer for the sake* of God’s purposes
- **Peace** – He is the *true peacemaker* who brings peace between God and Man in his crucifixion
- **Patience** – He is a man of patience, as he willingly **takes on flesh and 33 years** to accomplish his mission
- **Kindness, Goodness, and Gentleness** – He showed *kindness to the beggars, and blind*, and to us spiritual beggars and blind
- **Faithfulness** – And He was **faithful, dependable, even as He wept** and sweat drops of blood in a garden prepared to stand under the weight of God’s wrath due or sin not his... he was there, he could be counted on
- **Self-control** – **And He is the only man who’s appetites didn’t control him** – who is able to look at a cross and say not “my will” but yours be done!

So today whether you need to war with license or legalism, the answer for both is Christ – be found in Him (Lived the life, Died the Death) ... and put to death works of flesh and walk by the Spirit

Don’t long for the orphanage, don’t long for mud pies... *Brothers and Sisters in His arms there are 10,000 charms, and more importantly, there’s Him... long for that, put away weak desires and Walk by the Spirit*

- *He is saying He is for you in the Gospel and I have proven it by raising your brother from the dead – don’t return the life of death*

Prayer: Take some time to pray and ask God what do I need to put to death, and what are the greater affections in Christ I need to pursue!