

Walking In the Spirit

Text: Galatians 5.16–18

Theme: Living in the power of the Holy Spirit brings glory to God and keeps you far from sin

Introduction — Pastor Kevin, why do I still struggle with sin?

- a great question I've been asked from time to time
- my counsel has to come from the Word of God
- I have no other counsel to give that would prove helpful or effective
- man's therapies will never assist us in this
- the counsel we need comes from God in His revealed and inspired Word
- and so it is to His Word we go...

Turn to Galatians 5.16–18, page 1158 in your pew Bibles

Galatians 5:16-18 ESV

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.

Let's pray as we take in what God has for us this morning

Blessed Lord, who has caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, allow us to hear them, read them, mark them, learn them, and inwardly digest them in such a way that, by the patience and comfort of Your holy word, we may embrace and ever hold on to the blessed hope of everlasting life that You have given to us in our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556)

The counsel Paul gave these Christians so long ago is as pertinent to us as ever was

- it is counsel that needs to be heard far more often
- Christians, the church, and those around us would benefit greatly

So let's consider...

I. THE COUNSEL ABOUT OUR WALK, v. 16

- Paul has shown how the law is powerless to help us, as Christians, overcome sin
- no matter how badly we want to please God, the old nature still pulls at us
- this was Paul's battle expressed in Romans 7
- here, in his letter to the Galatian churches, he gives the not-so-secret secret to this battle

- it is found in the inward ministry of the Holy Spirit
- in order to experience this, we must live—or walk—by the Spirit
- this is the counsel we receive

1. The walk in the counsel

- **“But I say, walk by the Spirit”**

- the analogy of walking is frequently connected with living the Christian life
- it is fitting, especially since it is such an ordinary picture
- walking is not spectacular; everybody walks that are able to walk
- and is this not where our Christian life is most often tempted?
- in the ordinary matters of life?
- special circumstances come our way—but as we recognize them as such, we act accordingly
- we rise up, seeking God’s face and strengthening power
- our cry is to Jesus to help us thru
- but in the mundane, everyday, routines of life: this is where rubber hits road
- the real test is: how will you act in the ordinary?
- will you stand in Christ and walk by the Spirit?

- or will you follow your fleshly, sinful desires where they lead you?
- so brothers and sisters, walk...and keep on walking
- live day to day by relying upon Spirit's presence, strength, and guidance
- take in the things of the Spirit: Scripture, most prominently

2. The way in the counsel

- **“walk by the Spirit”**
- the path we are to follow is that of the Holy Spirit
- follow His leading
- but how am I to know if I am doing this, you ask
- you take in the Word of God, the teachings of Christ
- you ask God for His grace to enable you to remain obedient, to resist temptation, flee from sin
- this is the way, this is how the Spirit guides us
- don't go running around seeking ecstatic experiences to tell you
- you'll miss nearly every time, for your flesh loves the exciting, even if it is off by miles
- neither must we allow the culture of our day to shape and influence us

- oh, this is so very difficult because, while not of this world, we still live in this world
- this is why the fellowship of saints is so vital: advice, counsel, prayers, and holding on to you
- we all need each other and must have each other, or we stray from the way

3. The why in the counsel

- **“and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh”**
- the desires of the flesh may have had the head cut off in Christ’s death & resurrection
- but these desires still thrive in the dark and want you to give in to them
- these desires are so harmful
- **James 4:1-7 ESV**

1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?

Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2

You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet

and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not

have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not

receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your

passions. 4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that