

Walk in the Spirit

Galatians 5:16-18

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TRANSCRIPT:

I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

We pray, O God, that You would speak to us now through the power of the Holy Spirit, that You would press upon our hearts the blessed truths of Scripture, and also that You would enlighten the eyes of our understanding that we might know who You are, what You have done for us, and what You desire for us to do. And I ask, Lord God, that You would give us ears to hear what the Spirit says to the church. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Last week, we considered Galatians 5:13-15, which spoke of the relationship between the Christian's freedom, the law of love, and the Mosaic law, simply showing that if you misunderstand Christian freedom and do not live according to Christian love, your life will be characterized and described by the language used of animals in verse 15, where that is described as biting and devouring and consuming one another.

And Paul is helping the church to understand that true freedom doesn't look like you doing what you want to do. It looks like the freedom that comes from God, where you are released from your bondage to self and your bondage to the law, and you walk in harmony with the truths of the law by the power of the Holy Spirit through the principle and truth of Christian love.

Now, the opening words of verse 16 lead us to an answer to verse number 15. So we don't want to bite and devour one another. We do not want to have a life and relationships that are described as consuming one another. We want a life of peace and harmony in the Christian church. We want a life of godliness in the Christian church. We want good fruits in our life to strengthen relationships. And Paul is saying, well, if you want to avoid that, listen up carefully. Because in verse number 16, he says this:

"I say then," or "now this I say then, walk in the Spirit."

Now, we probably didn't expect the answer to be that. We probably thought that Paul would say if you don't want to bite and devour one another, that he would just give us a complete and full exposition of the law of love and instruct us further on the particular nature of how to treat one another nicely. Smile when you greet each other, you know, all these kinds of things. We were thinking maybe that he'd give us further education. Maybe he'd give us a 12-step program. "Read this much Bible and pray this much a day, and you will be fine." Maybe he'd come up with a new theory that no one had ever thought about yet and give us practical tips to recovery from biting and devouring.

But no, the answer of Paul to the flesh is the Spirit, who is mentioned seven times in verses 16 to 26. And Paul is ramping up his argument, showing that the way to deal with the flesh is through the power of the Spirit. He doesn't set a new law outside of us. That would be the same predicament that we were under the old covenant. But rather, he teaches us of the necessary power within us for the fulfillment of the law of love. He teaches them of walking in the Spirit as the answer to this flesh, as the answer to this vile conduct that is so commonly manifest in our lives.

The law could never secure our obedience. This is clear from many parts of Scripture. In Romans 7:8, Paul actually says that the law sort of accomplished the opposite because of the nature of our sinfulness. "But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire." So what he's saying is that when I was confronted with the law, it produced in me all manner of evil desire. And in 1 Corinthians 15:56, he goes on to say that "the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." Just a little lesson: that's why legislation will not make people holy. No matter how many laws the government introduces in the land, the people will not be holy until they meet with the God of holiness and receive from Him the grace of His Holy Spirit within their hearts, and that their old stony heart is taken out, and they're given a heart of flesh, until God writes the law on their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

The law, therefore, would not secure a man's obedience, and the whole Old Testament points to that, that this people that had all the law of God are found in apostasy at the very end of their days, worshipping idols and forsaking the Lord who called them out of Egypt. So God has given, in answer to the weakness of the covenant, the old covenant, He has given us the Holy Spirit to indwell us.

And then in verse number 16, we are met with these words: "This I say then, walk in the spirit, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." The

commandment here for us is a commandment with a promise, a command that we are to obey, but it's a command to walk in the spirit. And the meaning of walking in the spirit is simply something like this: we ought to make it a practice, a habitual practice of conducting our lives as people that are guided by the Holy Spirit. We ought to make it a practice of conducting our lives, the idea of walking as the idea of living or conducting oneself, conducting your life as guided by the Spirit. The believer is to be habitually engaged in this. We are to walk in the spirit, and the answer to that, the promise of that, is that we won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

So we're commanded to walk and to live our lives under the guidance of the Spirit, which we'll have a look at in just a moment in a bit more detail, but we are told that we are to walk in the spirit. So we need to walk in the spirit. What does that mean? Well, it means we need to walk in the sphere of the Spirit's operation. He operates in our hearts. He works and is sent forth by God into our lives, and therefore, He ministers, convicts, works in our lives, and we are to walk in step with Him. We are to be habitually engaged in this.

Now that assumes the following: If we are to walk in the spirit, it assumes first and foremost that you have the spirit. And that means it assumes that every believer has the spirit. As the Bible teaches us in Romans 8:9, "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." What Paul is basically saying is if you don't have the Holy Spirit, you are not of God; you do not belong to God, and therefore, in one sense, every believer is in the spirit, meaning that God has given the Holy Spirit to him, to her, as one who guides, as one who convicts, as one who shapes and informs and teaches that believer.

And therefore, this assumes that all believers have the spirit, and it also assumes that all believers are influenced by the spirit. So if we are to walk in the spirit, it assumes we have the spirit, but it also assumes that the spirit is working in our hearts so as to pave out a way of obedience for us and to be ministering to us in such a way that we are to respond to that by walking in that. So it assumes both. It assumes that we have the spirit, and it assumes that we, therefore, are influenced by the spirit. And this is very important.

Because you can walk all you like, but if you don't have the spirit, you walk in vain. You can conduct yourselves according to the law of God, according to the word of God, and you can try your best to keep all the commandments and even use some of the New Testament instructions and add them to your repertoire of commandments that you contain, but if you do not possess the spirit through faith in Jesus Christ alone, then you are

unconverted. And therefore, your efforts are in vain. You see, you cannot manufacture the "in the spirit" part of this portion of scripture. You can walk, but the "in the spirit" part is God's part. It is the part in which God has sent forth His spirit into your hearts. It is the part in which God has fulfilled His new covenant in your life, of which you are a recipient of, of which you are now living in the sphere of, so that the Spirit of God now dwells in you.

And as was read to us earlier, your body now is the temple of the Holy Spirit. And so what God is promising through the words of Paul here to these people is that the law could never give you this. But what Christ has accomplished in the gospel and in the fulfillment of the new covenant by shedding His blood on Calvary's mountain, He has purchased for us the spirit and has sent the spirit into our hearts so that we now have the promise of a life far better than what the law could secure for us and far better than even what licentiousness and living in your own antinomian lifestyle, where you do whatever you please, can secure for you.

So you see, both legalism and living a life where you just do whatever you want, both of them lead to bondage and are contrary to true freedom. The person who does whatever he pleases is a slave to his passions and finds himself doing things that ultimately hurt others in his life that he doesn't want to do, but his desire to do them supersedes his desire not to hurt them, for example. And therefore, he's a slave to his passions. This is what the unbeliever is: a slave to his passions. You speak to those that are addicted on any kind of substance or whatever kind of thing, and you will find that very thing. Many of them don't want to do it, but they're stuck. That is a good picture of what all of us are like under sin, under the law. And the law comes and accuses the conscience, saying, "You're guilty, you're guilty, you're guilty," and there is no sense of freedom, but all there is is this law that I cannot keep, this bondage and this addiction in my heart.

And then on the other side, you have people that are legalists. They deny the reality of the law's statements and the application of it to themselves. They reduce the law, or they deny even their own sinfulness, and they construct a kind of religion that is less than true holiness based upon the authority of Scripture, and they justify themselves in the sight of men. Both of those people are bound. Both of those people aren't free. Both of those people are in severe bondage and slavery, but the free children are those that have the Spirit. They're those that have been released from their bondage; they're those that God has freed, with their conscience has been freed but from the guilt of sin and the penalty that was weighing on their head—it fell on Christ instead of them. But also, they're free from the power of sin, or they're being free from the power of sin, as that God has now broken the chain so that they can say no to sin, and they don't have

to live any longer in it.

And Paul shows some of this confidence that the gospel presents to us through the very next statement. He shows the believers that if you walk in the Spirit, there's a promise attached to this very thing. He said, "You shall not fulfill the lust of your flesh." Paul's saying this is a promise that you ought to believe. Look, if you meet the condition, meaning if you walk in the Spirit, not if you just have the Spirit, if you walk in the Spirit, you can be assured that as you walk in the Spirit, you will not be fulfilling the lust of the flesh. You have a promise in God's word that is attached to the command that ultimately calls us to a life of faith.

And what Paul is simply saying here is that life in the Spirit, a life that is through faith in Christ Jesus as your Savior, as your Lord, is a life that has promises that you ought to believe, and you are to live in light of those promises. The first promise is the gospel, that there is a Savior who died for sinners, and that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. The promise that if you repent, you won't perish. The promise that if you come to Christ, He won't cast you out, but He will forgive you, He will wash you, He will make you clean, and He will bring you into the family of God. The very entrance into the life of the Spirit begins with a promise, the promise of the gospel. You believe it; you're saved.

But that is not the time then to throw away faith and say we don't need it anymore because it helped me get in. No. The Bible is full of promises, full of commandments, full of things that God wants us to know and to believe. And part of that also is that God has put His Spirit within us. Part of what forms Paul's argument against sexual immorality in 1 Corinthians 6, as was read to us this morning, is, "Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own?" Part of his argument about purity and holiness of life is that you need to believe this very truth that you are not a temple of pagan idols where wickedness is meant to lie and act and proceed in, to flourish in. You are a temple of God, a holy temple, and God's Holy Spirit lives in you. Therefore, live holy. Therefore, your body shouldn't be used for sexual immorality. It shouldn't be used for things that are contrary to God's ways. It ought to be submitted to the Holy Spirit and to the truth of God. And Paul wants them to believe that.

Not only believe that they're saved by grace through faith, but also to believe that they are the temple of God. And more than this, in this passage of Scripture, Paul wants them to believe not only that they've been saved by grace through faith, not only that the Christian life is a life of faith in believing that the Spirit of God dwells in us, but also to have faith in the promise of God's power to those who walk in the Spirit. "You shall not fulfill

the lust of your flesh." You meet the condition; your life won't be marked with biting, backbiting, and consuming one another. You meet the condition; you will find that the strength of sin in your life will be weakened, severely weakened, as you walk in the Spirit.

And Paul is showing us that the Spirit is a power sent from God, and by faith, we are to operate in that sphere of Christian living. This is what our union with Christ has promised us. In fact, this is what the New Covenant has promised us. If you read in your own time in Ezekiel 36:25-27, the New Covenant promises were this: that God promised the people cleansing. That's great, but He promised them more than cleansing. He promised them a new heart. That's wonderful, but He promised them more than a new heart. He promised them the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. He promised them more than this. He basically said, due to all this, "I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will keep my judgments and do them."

God promised cleansing, a new heart, the indwelling of the Spirit, and a new power that would secure their obedience so that they would be a people who truly live as temples unto God, who walk in His statutes and in His judgments and does them. And Paul continues on in his argument here in verse number 17 to explain why that is true. We don't often look at verse 17 in this way, but this is the way in which Paul wants us to view it. This is the way that it's set forth in the context. This is what it says here: "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."

Now, most of us look at this as a negative thing. We say, "See, that's why I can't obey God." True, but not what Paul's trying to show. He's saying this is why you can obey God. It's both. This is not a passage that encourages defeatist-type Christianity. It's actually encouraging Christian obedience and holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit. "Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of your flesh," and the reason for this newness of life that God has secured for us by giving us the Holy Spirit is so that we could live holy.

What God has done is He started a war in the hearts of the believer where before there was no war. All you had before was the lust of your flesh, your sinful nature, the principle of sin that dwells within you, just fed itself in all the ways that it so wished and pleased. You had lusts, you had desires, but when you came to Christ, God started a war. He said, "Here's My Spirit, here's a new heart, but I'm not going to take out the sinful nature. It is going to be a battle that you fight all your days until you see My face, and I change your body to be like My incorruptible body in heaven, and you'll be

free once and for all and finally from sin. But I'm starting a war."

And God says, "Here's My Spirit," and the Spirit will lust and desire things against the flesh, and the flesh will just be doing what it's always done, but now it's met with the resistance of the Spirit. The calm of death that once was in your life, where you just did whatever you want, where your soul was lifeless, where you lived bound in sin, where you lived singly for yourself and for your own pleasures, and all you desired was your own glory and your own satisfaction, all that's now been disrupted. God says, "Here's the Spirit, here's a new heart," and then a war started in your heart.

The flesh calls me to satisfy its desires day after day, telling me that the wisest course of action for you is to submit to my will. And we used to just do that without any troubles, but now things have changed. The Spirit also is in my heart, calling and crying out and resisting and stirring and planting contrary desires in my heart to the flesh, and so now I feel schizophrenic. And now it just feels like, "What's happened to me?" God is planting good desires, telling us the Spirit is telling us that the wisest course of action for your life is God's will, not your will. And the purpose of the war is positive. And so, in order that you do not do the things that you wish, because all the things that you ever wished to do were sinful and wrong and against God, and now you just can't do them and be comfortable doing them. Now you can't do them and live as though it doesn't matter. Now you can't sin and just run away from God without feeling like Jonah, where God's on your tail. Now you can't live as you please, watch what you want, go the places you want to do, fulfill all the lusts of your flesh, and feel like everything's okay because as soon as you try and do that, the Spirit of God's right there saying, "Are you sure you should do that?" And you cannot do the things that you wish.

Both ways, of course, in one sense, you want to obey God, and the very same thing happens on the flesh side of things. But remember, the change here is that God's put His Spirit within you so that we don't do the things that we wish. He's changed us. He's freed us so that the possibilities of obedience are before us so that walking in the Spirit is a reality for us, that we can actually accomplish this because the Spirit is in us, and He's speaking to us, and He's guiding us, and He's leading us, and He's convicting us. And therefore, the possibilities of obedience before God and fulfilling the law of Christian love are there for the believer.

So we don't have to live a life of biting and devouring one another. This is not a passage of defeatism, telling us that, "Oh, you know, it's always just this fight, and it's a losing battle." This is not the point of the passage. The point of the passage is to speak hope to us, not hopelessness. It's to speak hope to us, to tell us that there's a real work of God taking place

in the believer's heart, and there's this real war going on that God started because He wants His people to be holy temples to Him, and He will cause them to walk in His way. This is hope. This is a fight for our Christlikeness. It's not just me and the law anymore. It's not just me and the commandments, trying to build myself up to be all that God wants me to be. No, God's put His Spirit within me to make me all that He wants me to be, and He's not going to let me go until I submit to Him and yield to Him because I'm His child, and He's given me His Spirit.

And my friend, if there is no war in your life, there is no life in your heart. If what I'm saying to you makes no sense to you about this warfare that goes on in your soul, then you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, and you're not a temple of the Holy Spirit. A new principle of life and power in you keeps you from living a sinful life without being challenged. You can't go on comfortably.

And so, Paul says in verse number 18, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." See, this is his point. Are you being led by the Spirit? Now, this is not talking about whether or not you hear His voice in an audible fashion or as for specific guidance outside of the revealed will of God. That is another ministration of the Spirit that we can look at at another time, but this right here is talking very specifically about our sanctification. This is about the works of the flesh, and this is about the fruit of the Spirit. This is about what the law couldn't do for us, and this is about what God does do for us through the new covenant, through His Spirit. And the question here that comes to us is, are we being led by the Spirit?

And there are two ways that we can discern this. We can look back on our lives and see that my life used to be like this, and now I find myself like this. God has changed me. God has done this. Where did these desires come from? These are good signs that the Spirit of God is working in your heart and leading you. Also, you can look in and ask yourself the question, am I challenged? Listen to this, not because of what people think of me if I sinned, not because my wife will catch me out if I sin, not because my children—you know, the parents will catch you out, kids, if you sin. Am I concerned about my sin because it robs God of His glory and belittles His holy name? Don't be deceived. So many people feel guilty because they're scared of the law. They're scared that if they do drugs, the government will catch them and put them behind bars, or if they end up in a situation, it's bad, and so their desires are curbed by motives less than godly motives and less than the work of the Holy Spirit. But this is not what Paul is talking about. Are you being led by the Spirit? Is it the Spirit Himself that is bearing witness in your heart, guiding you to lead you in a life of holiness? Does His warring work bring you to obedience, to yielded submission, to walk in

His ways? Does the Spirit of God kind of function as your new internal law, a principle of life and power within you, witnessing to you, assuring you, guiding you, granting you faith, and influencing your life so that you live a life that is marked by love, which serves one another? This is what he's saying in this passage. That you live a life that is in fulfillment of the law because you have been taken up by the grace of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit is causing you to walk in Christian love. Does He warn you? Does He convict you? Does the Holy Spirit caution you, stir you against all things that are towards self-love and self-gratification? Of course, He does this in certain measures. Of course, our consciences must be sensitive to His influences, and that varies in our lives accordingly. But my question to you is, do you know anything of what I'm speaking of this morning? Do you know anything of the positive motivating work of the Holy Spirit to make you more like Christ, and do you know anything of the restraining work of the Spirit in keeping you away from being living a life that is anti-Christ and against Christ?

If so, and if you are yielded to that life, you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. In fact, beyond that, you are living above the law. You are living and fulfilling the law through the Spirit. Faith is working in you through love. You're not under the law's guilt and condemnation and curse and ungracious rule. You have the Spirit of God that is motivating and guiding you in a way that is consistent to the law and Christian love.

You see, what the Bible is teaching us here is that we are to be people that walk in the Spirit, and therefore we need to be engaged in this war. And as we are confronted with this war day after day, we need to be choosing sides every single moment of every single day. We need to be a kind of people that are trained like that horse that can ride through a crowd of people and not be shaken because it hears the voice of its master saying, "Go forward, go forward, go forward." And if people in the crowd call out to the horse, whatever it may be, it says, "Go forward, go forward," and it keeps going forward because it's tuned to the voice of its master who rides the horse. In the same way, there are voices within us, voices against God, voices for God. And the voice of the Holy Spirit within us is saying, "This is the way, walk in it. You know you shouldn't be doing that." And we ought to be people like the horse that hears the voice of its master and yields and submits. And when we do that, we are those that walk in the Spirit.

This means we must fight this battle. It's not a matter of you just letting go and letting God carry on this cloud all the way to glory. God says, "Pick up the sword, hear the call of your commander, and kill sin and fight." This is warfare. If it wasn't warfare, He would have just finished the whole thing immediately when we got saved, and we would have been in heaven already by now. But there's work to be done, and He wants us to learn to trust in

Him moment by moment. Not to live lives of defeat, but to recognize that He has put His Spirit within me, so I don't have to do the things which I wish and want. I can listen to God. I can obey the Lord.

So when you're confronted by slothfulness, for example, and it calls you to avoid your duty—you know you need to be spending time with God this morning. You know that it is good to eat from the Word of God and to study His Word. You know that it is good to pray, and you know that it is right to worship Him. And the voice of slothfulness comes. Usually comes to me about 5:30 a.m. I felt really tired this morning, and I don't know why. I thought I slept really well. You have to resist it. Because at that very time that the voice of slothfulness comes in, you need to yield to the voice of God that says, "Get up, My son. Come away and meet Me in the place of worship." And I'm not saying it's this time in the morning, whatever it may be, but the point is those things that the flesh will rob you, and if you give voice to the flesh, he will lead you away from the presence of God. He will lead you away from the worship of God, away from the Word of God, and you must resist that. And the beautiful thing is there is this warfare so that when the slothfulness cries out, "Don't worry, snooze," there also is this voice saying, "Arise, My son." Isn't that beautiful? So I can choose to get up and go.

The Bible teaches us that the slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich, and a rich spiritual life is for the diligent, not for the slothful. Those that have come to spiritual poverty are those that don't tend to their spiritual garden, as it were, and care for their keep. Therefore, we have that voice of the Spirit that speaks truth to us in times of slothfulness. The same is true of sexual immorality. When you are tempted to perhaps pursue a relationship with the opposite sex, and it is contrary to God's order and plan, and it is outside of marriage, or you are tempted to watch pornography when you should not be watching pornography and setting your eyes on such filth, you will hear the flesh saying, "It's okay, just a little bit. It's okay, you need this." It just will—whatever—make you feel good. You know what it even says? It doesn't just say, "Sorry afterward, and it will be fine." It tricks you. It makes you feel like you just click on, watch, there is forgiveness there. It always reminds you of forgiveness before you sin. Isn't that amazing? As if it's just speeding up the process there. But the same voice that tells you there is forgiveness is that same voice on the other end that accuses you and says, "God won't forgive you."

It's the voice of the flesh, steering you away from obedience to God, steering you away from the truth of God. But the beautiful thing is, as a believer, when I am confronted with that, there is now a war in my heart so that I cannot do the things that I wish so easily. But when I want to click on, there is like this malfunction in your heart saying, "Don't do it, don't do it, don't

do it." Flee sexual immorality, says the Spirit, as you are tempted towards sexual immorality. It tells you that Jesus will satisfy you. It will tell you that sin will take you further than you want to go. It will lead you on paths that you don't want to go to, and it will keep you there and destroy your life.

When the flesh entices you to anger and says you have a right to be angry, you have a right to hurt these people, you hear the Spirit say to you, "You are not king. God is Lord, and anger rests in the bosom of fools." And so, by your anger, you feel like you secure your own way, but all you've done is not trusted in the Lord, who will heap coals of fire upon those that do you wrong. You have said that justice belongs to you, not to God, and that you are lawgiver and judge, and not God. But as we come to get angry, the Spirit of God doesn't let us go on in anger. We may burst, and before we know it, we're already there, but you know what's happening. You know exactly what's happening, you who believe in Jesus. Because when you see the collateral damage that it causes in the life of those around you and in your own heart, and you know now how you don't even want to come and pray to God anymore, you know the damage that it does in your heart, and you hear the Spirit warning you and convicting you and saying to you, "Don't take that path."

The same is true of every sin, even issues like anxiety. The flesh makes room for anxiety. It fosters anxiety. It makes us feel like we're really understanding what's going on, and we're thinking about this issue. You know, and I don't want to be like these naive people that just let things go. I'm going to be on to it and get all this, and through all that temptation, you are actually not trusting in God. Justifying the reasons for why you should take control of a matter that God hasn't put in your hands. We need to drive it out with the Word of God and remind ourselves if it's financial needs or any other need in our life, we should remind ourselves that "my God will supply all my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Perhaps it's fear. You should remind yourself the Spirit of God will be saying to you, "Don't be afraid. I'm your God. I will strengthen you. I will uphold you with my right hand of righteousness." The Spirit of God will be telling you in your times of anxiety, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." He'll be working against that which the flesh is trying to work in you.

And so, a passage like this should really help us. It should really help us from having wrong views of the Christian life because many Christians, and perhaps you're like this this morning, you struggle with understanding what the Christian life is like, and because of that, you make wrong conclusions. For example, it happens often. People think they're not saved

because they feel a war going on in their hearts. In fact, this passage is telling us quite the opposite of that. But they have this view that salvation means no more flesh life. That when God saves me, it's all done in the sense that I'm never going to struggle with sin again. And like, why am I struggling with sin? Maybe I'm not saved, they say. Or this internal warfare suggests that something's wrong. No, it actually suggests something is right. It actually suggests that something is right, that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and God has started a war in your heart.

And so many people get stuck at this point and begin to doubt their salvation because there's warfare going on in their heart when anything, it should encourage them that I belong to God, and God won't let me do the things that I wish. Also, it teaches us that we should not trust our hearts. Because this passage teaches us that there's not only the Spirit that is lusting and desiring for us to do good, but there's also the flesh that is lusting and desiring us to do good. So we really need to be attuned with what the Spirit is saying by understanding the word of God and how God works in our lives. Need to be careful. We shouldn't ignore what happens in our hearts. We should prove all things and hold fast that which is good.

Some people look at this passage and don't understand the Christian life and think it's one of defeat, but this passage is telling you the power and the possibilities that are before you this morning to not fulfill the lust of the flesh. And God is saying to you, people of God, you can believe this promise. Will you believe it? Stop scrambling for new strategies. Stop thinking about all the ways in which you can do this and do that. Yes, apply yourself to all the means that God has given us, but understand this: if I do not walk in the Spirit, I will fulfill the lust of the flesh. Understand this, that what's more important than me just strategizing is understanding what's going on in my heart and the war that's going on. Because a lot of Christians fail at this point. We do not have a proper sensitivity to the work of the Spirit in our lives. We think the Spirit is just out there or with God in heaven. And yes, in that sense, God's Spirit is everywhere, but do you understand this very truth? That God's Spirit lives in you. That God's Holy Spirit dwells in you. This is a very important truth that most Christians don't give much time to. When was the last time you meditated on that thought? I mean, when was the last time you sat in prayer before God and said, "Thank you, God, that Your Spirit dwells in me"? When was the last time that we even realized and understood that God lives in me by the Spirit? That's a powerful thought. That's a thought that is true. And that is a promise that we need to believe and ought to walk in light of that. And if we don't think that way, we're going to forget this very reality that we are people that are in the Spirit. And therefore, this warfare is indicative of that. And the voice that I'm listening to is the voice of truth, which is the voice of the Spirit that speaks to me in harmony with the word of God. And I need to be sensitive

to that.

And so, Christian, you should be encouraged that God has not left you by yourself. That you can walk in the Spirit because you're in the Spirit because the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if you're not a believer, you ought to be warned by a passage like this. Warned that if you do not know the conflict, you will go on thinking that all is well and be found at the judgment without God, without hope, without Christ, without His Spirit, doomed to a lost eternity in hell. Because you went on and on and on in the lusts of the flesh, did not recognize that there was a Savior who died to deliver you from your flesh, and that you ought to have submitted to His lordship and believed on Him who can save you to the uttermost. But you went on in your own sin.

The answer to the flesh is the Spirit, so let us walk in the Spirit. Let's pray.