

## Keep in step with the Spirit Galatians 5:16-26

Good morning to each and every one of you and a very special welcome to worship on this beautiful Lord's Day. As always, it is such a joy and privilege to be gathered together this morning in the presence of the Lord. We trust, hope, and pray that this time together will be truly blessed and that we would just draw nearer to the Lord in this moment. And with that, our call to worship is taken from **James 4:8 and then Jeremiah 29:12-14**. **James says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded."** and then from Jeremiah, **"Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and will bring you to the place from which I caused you to be carried away captive."**

Let us pray:

Opening Song: Have mercy on me O God - [Psalm 51 \(Have Mercy On Me, O God\) - Graham Kendrick - Lyric Video - YouTube](#)

Our scripture reading this morning is taken from Galatians 5:16-26: **<sup>16</sup> So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**

**<sup>19</sup> The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; <sup>20</sup> idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup> and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

**<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.**

Sin – one of the greatest challenges that we as human beings face on a daily basis. It is such a difficulty for us as people to try and overcome. We believe and we trust in the knowledge that we as believers have been cleansed from our sins, that we have been washed clean, that we have been set free – scripture testifies about this very thing. And yet, we also recognize that there is not a single person in the history of mankind, that has been completely free of it. It is like a plague that lives on even long after it has been conquered, even if it is just the aftereffects of the fact. And this is what our passage this morning is reminding us of.

What we read is that there are two ways of living out our lives – we can live by the **flesh**, or we can live by the **Spirit**, but we CANNOT live by both. What Paul reminds us of is the fact that the flesh and the Spirit are contrary to each other, and not simply contrary to each other but are in conflict with each other. They are constantly at battle within us as believers. They one desires nothing but earthly gain, meaning wealth, power, success, status, regardless of who or what it affects in trying to achieve these things. Living our lives by the flesh, as Paul states, are obvious. We don't just read about them here in Galatians, but we are warned about them throughout scripture – and more than that, we can clearly see them evident in the world today. Now of course, I am not saying that we are necessarily guilty of all of these offenses, but I'll be the first to admit that I have, at one time or another, been guilty of at least some of them. Who has not experienced within themselves, moments of **discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, envy**, to name a few? Such actions or desires are hard to deal with because we do not necessarily vie them in the same light or place them on the same scale as the other, "more serious" actions. What we must remember

though is that we do mess up and indulge these things from time to time but Paul is addressing such issues not as little mistakes, but as a lifestyle choice.

Likewise, living our lives by the Spirit results in good fruit being produced and evidenced within our lives. There are some that are easier for us to maintain, some that are easier for us to achieve while others may be somewhat more difficult. Just as we may not be guilty of all the offences, so to, we may not necessarily reflect every aspect of the fruit of the Spirit. And again, let me stress the fact that Paul is not talking about a person who reflects a momentary act of kindness, goodness, gentleness, or the like. Every single person is capable of showing, for example, joy, in a particular moment in time. Surely even the thief rejoices at attaining what does not belong to him. But when the fruit of Spirit becomes our lifestyle, then we are truly living a life by the Spirit. And so, we can clearly see that a life lived in the Spirit cannot co-exist in a life that is also lived by the flesh because they each desire different things.

We know and we understand that life is messy, and that we are bound to make mistakes because we are merely human beings. As scripture reminds, **“the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”** We often say and do things that we don't want to, things that we may well regret once we've done them. But there is forgiveness in Christ Jesus, and we are now, through faith, accepted into the family of God. So, I want to encourage you this morning, since the Spirit lives within you, to keep in step with Him, that is to say, just as when we were young walking in the footsteps left behind on the beach by a parent, or in the dirt of the ground, so too, walk in the very footsteps of the Spirit who goes before you. Nurture the fruit of the Spirit that has been planted within you, water it, tend to it, care for it. And pause every now and then to reflect upon where you are in faith to ensure that your life is lived by the Spirit.

Let us pray.

**Song of Praise:** [Our God is an Awesome God with Lyrics - YouTube](#)

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