

Trinity Lutheran Church

Norman, Oklahoma –

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The Book of Galatians

Theme: “The True Gospel You Have Received”

Date: 10-16-22

Lesson: 29 - Chapter 5:15-26



TEXT AND STUDY

(15) But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. (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.

(Rom 2:12; 6:14; 7:15-23; 8:2-14; 2 Cor 5:17; 1 Tim 1:9; 1 Pet 2:11)

(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**.

(Mt 15:19; 25:34; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 6:9,10,18; Eph 5:5; Rev 22:15)

(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. (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 walk by **the Spirit**. (26) Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

(Mal 2:6; Mt 7:16-20; Ac 24:25; Rom 6:6; 7:5,18; 12:13; 13:14; 2 Cor 6:6; Eph 4:2; 5:9; Php 2:3; Col 2:11; 3:12-15; 1 Tim 1:9)

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18. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

“I have told you,” says Paul, “to walk in **the Spirit** and to follow the desires of **the Spirit** while resisting the desires of the flesh, and not to bite and devour one another but to serve one another in love, which is the fulfilling of the Law. For if you do this, and thus are led by **the Spirit** and obey the desires of **the Spirit**, behold, you are not under the Law. You owe the Law nothing; instead, you are fulfilling the Law. Why, then, did you want to return again to the Law? Why are you trying to fulfill the Law in another way?”

I have said often enough above that “to be under the Law” means failing to fulfill it or fulfilling it in a slavish fashion, without a cheerful disposition. It is not the Law, however, or nature that acquires this cheerful disposition; faith **in Christ Jesus** acquires it. And this being led by **the Spirit**, this obeying the desires of the Spirit, this battle and struggle which constitutes our whole life, brings it about that **God** mercifully pardons us for failing to do the things we want to do. For we are not yet spirit, but we are being led by **the Spirit**. For John 3:6—“That which is born of **the Spirit** is spirit”—shows what we ought to be. But this passage shows what we are.

We ought to be spirit, but we are still in the process of being led and, so to speak, in the process of being formed by **the Spirit**. But those who are under the Law are also in the works of the flesh, as Paul says in Rom. 7:5: “While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the Law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.” So, too, in Rom. 8:14: “Those who are led by **the Spirit of God** are sons of God.” For this leading and prompting is identical with the drawing of which John 6:44 says: “No one can come to **Me** unless **the Father** draws him.”

Similarly in John 12:32: “**When I am lifted up**, I will draw all men to **Myself**”; that is: “I will prompt them pleasantly. I will make them cheerful and willing. By **the Spirit** I will arouse a desire in those whom Moses and the Law with its terrors used to force or for a time used to encourage like children, with temporal promises.” Thus the bride speaks in the Song of Solomon (1:4): “Draw me after You; we shall run to the fragrance of Your ointments.”

This means: “With **the word of the Law** and dire threats Moses and the prophets terrify and oppress me while I am weak and unwilling; but do Thou draw me gently, and anoint me pleasantly with **the Word of grace** and the memory of the mercy Thou hast shown.” For the fragrance of the ointments is **the Gospel of the grace of God**. Here one notes the fragrance of the ointment of God’s grace, that is, perceives it by faith.

For this reason it is stated in Ecclus. 24:20: “On the streets I gave forth a sweet smell like cinnamon and aromatic balm. I yielded a sweet fragrance like precious myrrh.” And in Ps. 45:8 we read: “Your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.” Thus Paul says (2 Cor. 2:15 f.): “We are **the aroma of Christ** among those who are being saved, etc.” The same “drawing” is also called “whistling” in Is. 7:18: “**In that day the Lord** will whistle for the fly which is in the farthest boundaries of Egypt”; that is, He will breathe upon them with His **Holy Spirit**. He will arouse their spirit, so that they feel desires that are contrary to the flesh.

Thus in 1 Kings 19:11 ff. it is written that Elijah did not perceive **the Lord** in the mighty wind or in the earthquake or in the fire (all of which are the terrors of the Law) but **in the whistling of a gentle breeze**; for **the Law of the Lord** is fulfilled, not with gloom or out of necessity but with gladness and pleasure.

LIFE APPLICATION

Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.
How does this become reality in our daily lives?