

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 4 Jun 2023

Sermon Title : Walking by The Spirit: Fruit

Speaker : Rev John Foo

Text : Galatians 5:16-25

INTRODUCTION

This is the third and concluding sermon of the “Walking by The Spirit” sermon series. Last week, Pastor Peter preached on how we can and should be filled and empowered by God’s Spirit – receiving the power of God’s Spirit. Today’s sermon is about how with God’s enabling power, we can then walk by the Spirit because there is no point being filled and empowered by God, but not knowing what to do about it.

Decluttering your life

While we may spring-clean our church or homes every now and then to get rid of things we do not need, we need to also declutter our life, to get rid of things which we do not like about ourselves and strive to be a better version of ourselves. Have you ever done this? In the secular world, this is termed self-improvement or personal development but in the spiritual realm, it is known as re-generation or transformation.

So, while we may do physical a spring-cleaning of God’s house, the church, God is also doing a spiritual spring-cleaning of our lives. There is no denying that we have things in our lives which need to be cleaned up or thrown out, especially those which obstruct or stumble us when we try to live out our Christian lives.

Things God wants out of our lives (Gal 5:19-21)

These are things related to the desires of the flesh or our sinful nature: Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

Although some of the things in the list above are things we will not even indulge in, we who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires so:

- We are expected to throw away all these things that are associated with it.
- We have a choice in the kind of life we choose to live. A choice between walking by the Spirit or living by the flesh.

Others who are not born of God’s Spirit do not have this choice as they can only live by the sinful nature.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Kingdom Living

We have that new life in Christ that we can choose to live in. When we live in this new life walking by the Spirit, we are living in the Kingdom of God here on earth – Kingdom living. After listing all the things connected to the desires of the flesh, Galatians 5:21 continues with a warning – that those who do such things or continue to walk according to the desires of the flesh or sinful nature, will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Walking by the Spirit

Since we all want to inherit the Kingdom of God, it might seem that we will naturally choose to live or walk by the Spirit. Unfortunately, this is not true because even though we have the desire to walk in the Spirit, we are still displaying the traits of the sinful nature.

1. We can only choose one

We face the following struggles in our desire to walk in the Spirit in our Christian life:

- We cannot decide which one we really want between living by the Spirit or living by our sinful nature.
- We do not want to decide on choosing one because they both hold their unique attractions for us:
 - We have been living in our sinful nature all these years that we have been so accustomed to it and its ways in our lives that we find it very difficult to get rid of, especially when the sinful habit or nature involved does not hurt anyone or is destructive. This sinful nature becomes who we are and it becomes hard to let go.
 - Life in the Spirit is also very attractive as it makes us a better or more wholistic person, a more attractive person comes from within us. We get peace, we do not fret or worry, we do not lose our temper over trivial stuff, we get more patient, is more self-controlled bearing the other Fruit of the Spirit too.

Sadly, we tend to choose both and try to live with both choices even though we know it will not work out as they are opposed to one another:

“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.” (Gal 5:17)

Hence, we find it a struggle to live our Christian life by the Spirit because our sinful nature is always opposing it, as long as our old self is still there.

2. We must delete where not applicable

Since Gal 5:24 – “And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” Since we have already crucified the flesh, once we have chosen to walk by the Spirit, we must:

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

- Delete all works of the flesh; get rid of it.
- We must not keep the sinful nature around on stand-by in case the new self does not work out.

This is what “putting off the old self” means in Ephesians 4:22-24 – “You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Keeping in step with the Spirit

Galatians 5:25 – “If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”

- Anything that is out of step with the Spirit, we must intentionally get it out of our lives.
- We must not keep our old self/our sinful nature, in the “recycle bin” of our lives to recycle or reuse it.

Practical way to ‘Walk by the Spirit’

- If we see a trait or habit belonging to our old sinful nature coming out, we must stop it from coming out and renounce it.
- We must turn to the Spirit of God and ask for help and guidance from God on what to do instead.

We must repeatedly delete such traits or habits with the help of God’s Spirit, until it is completely gotten rid of. It may take a while but if we keep on deleting, we will soon get rid of our old self because this is what God wants us to do. This is the only way that we can begin to walk by the Spirit, and that is to have nothing to do with our sinful nature.

CONCLUSION

God has given us His Holy Spirit to be our counsellor, to guide us and be our teacher. The Holy Spirit teaches us God’s truth, leads us into His truth and empowers us to live out God’s truth in our lives. But this can only happen when we walk by the Spirit. The Fruit of the Spirit comes from the Holy Spirit, not from us. We can never cultivate such fruit in our lives. Our common misconception is to ask God to get rid of our sinful nature, while we try to work on our own to grow the Fruit of the Spirit. Instead, we need to get rid of our sinful nature so God can grow His Fruit of the Spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control in our lives. Let us do our part so we can truly live out our Christian life by walking in the power of the Holy Spirit.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

- 2a. Appoint someone to read Galatians 5:16-25 aloud.
- 2b. Which attribute(s) of the Fruit of the Spirit do you find lacking in your life? Have you been trying to cultivate the Fruit of the Spirit by your own effort?

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

3. To be able to live in the power of the Holy Spirit, you need to first choose between living by the Spirit or living in your sinful nature.
 - a. (i) Have you made the decision to only live by the Spirit? If not, why?
 - (ii) What struggles or challenges do you face in living your Christian life by the Spirit?
 - b. Have you been expecting God to get rid of your sinful nature for you?
-
4. Do you desire to inherit the Kingdom of God? How has Galatians 19-21 spoken to you?
 - a. Why is it important for you to repeatedly get rid of, delete or die to your sinful nature and not keep them around on standby, if you desire to walk by the Spirit?
 - b. What is one thing you can do to walk by the Spirit so God can grow His Fruit of the Spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control in your life?
 - c. How can your group members encourage or help you achieve 4b above, in the following week(s), till your next meeting?

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action

Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.

5. Share your testimony on how you repeatedly stopped or got rid of a sinful nature or habit so the Holy Spirit could grow the Fruit of the Spirit in your life.

OR

Give thanks to God for giving us the Holy Spirit to be our counsellor, guide and teacher, leading us into His truth and empowering us to live out God's truth in our lives when we walk by the Spirit.

6. With a prayer partner, bring before God all that you have shared. Tell God how much you desire to inherit His Kingdom. Seek the Lord to make the important choice to die to your old self and live in the Spirit.

Pray also for your group and our church to walk by the Spirit so the Fruit of the Spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control may be displayed in all our lives.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Blessed Be Your Name – Matt Redman
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTpTQ4kBLxA>
2. This I Believe – Hillsong <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuDI-sk2nJU>
3. Refiner's Fire – Vineyard Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQclw7Ptxwc>

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7