

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

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## ***Breathing the Fresh Air of Liberty in Jesus Christ***

Galatians 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

***“Spirit-Led Walking”***

**February 02, 2014**

**Sermon Text:** Galatians 5:16-26

**Scripture Reading:** Romans 8:1-17

### **Introduction-**

Let me begin this morning by giving you a helpful overview of some of the things we have been learning in our study of Galatians. Consider the following verses:

Galatians 3:7-14 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of

Abraham. (8) And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." (9) So then, **those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.** (10) **For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse;** for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." (11) Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." (12) But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." (13) Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us--for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"-- (14) so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, **so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.**

Notice here that Paul speaks of two groups of people:

- Those who are “of faith.” These are blessed with the blessing pronounced upon and promised to Abraham. These have received the promised Spirit. Redeemed by Christ.
- Those who rely upon the works of the law and are under a curse.

Now, what is this “law” that Paul speaks of here? And what is this “promise” he also talks about? Law and Promise. The Law is the Old Covenant. That which was given at Mt. Sinai through Moses. The 10 commandments you might say. In vs 11-12, Paul quotes from the Old Covenant, calling it the Law.

But what precisely is the Promise? Well, we know that it is a promise made by God to Abraham, in which all who are of faith become sharers. Let’s read on:

Galatians 3:15-22 To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. (16) **Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one,**

**"And to your offspring," who is Christ.**

**(17) This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.** (18) For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

**(19) Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made,** and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. (20) Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

(21) Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. (22) **But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.**

Once again we see plainly that the Law is the Mosaic Covenant (430 years after Abraham). God’s intent when He gave the Law was not to void the

Promise made to Abraham. The Law was given to “imprison everything under sin.” But it is through the Promise that the blessings announced to Abraham would come. By faith in the Promise, not by works of the Law.

are key in our understanding of God’s plan of redemption.

**Adam** (Covenant of Works).  
Pre-Fall.

**Adam** – After the Fall. Condemnation. Promise (sometimes called the Covenant of Grace) starts to be revealed (Gen 3:15)

**Abraham** – More details about the Promise. Made to Abraham and his Seed (Christ) and thus all who are in Christ by faith.

**Moses** – Here is the Law. It is implemented to the physical descendants of Abraham through whom Christ would come. But the Promise is still progressing and in effect and approaching. The real people of God, the true Israel, are those who are of Promise (faith), not those who are only in the Mosaic covenant.

Galatians 3:23-29 **Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. (24)** So then, the law was our guardian **until Christ came**, in order that we might be justified by faith. (25) **But now that faith has come**, we are no longer under a guardian, (26) for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. (27) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (29) **And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.**

Let me see if we can summarize this so that we get a good picture of the overall progression of how God saves us in Christ through these things the Bible calls covenants/promise/Law.

In understanding this, the phrase “*but now that faith has come*” and “*until the coming faith would be revealed*”

## Life in the New Covenant: Walk in the Spirit

Here is another announcement in the Old era of the Promised New Covenant:

Jeremiah 31:31-34 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, (32) **not like the covenant** that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, **my covenant that they broke**, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. (33) **But this is the covenant that I will make** with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: **I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.** And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (34) And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' **for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."**

**David** – Still more details about the Promise. Messiah would be a King and descendant of David

**Christ** – The time of childhood under a guardian has ended. The Promise has been fulfilled and the New Covenant has been established in His blood. The Old Covenant is ended. The purpose of the earthly Jewish nation has ended.

So in the Old Testament era, we have the New Covenant being progressively revealed, and it is called the Promise because it is looking forward to that which was promised, justification in Christ. But it was not ratified and in effect until Christ. That is why the Spirit did not come until after Christ's work was done. Before that, it was the era of the Promise. The Promise of a way in which the enemies of God could become His sons, by faith alone.

And with this mention of the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant era, we come to Galatians 5:16.

And this is not the only prophetic announcement of the promised New Covenant:

Ezekiel 36:25-27 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. (26) And I will give you a new heart, **and a new spirit I will put within you.** And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (27) **And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**

And the New Testament refers to these Promises of a New Covenant:

2 Corinthians 3:3-8 And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, **written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God,** not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (4) Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. (5) Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, (6) who has made us competent to be **ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit.** For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (7)

Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, (8) **will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?**

Hebrews 8:6-13 But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. (7) For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. (8) For he finds fault with them when he says: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, (9) not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. (10) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: **I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts,** and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (11) And they shall not

teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. (12) For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." (13) In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Notice that consistently these promises of the coming New Covenant mention the Holy Spirit being the agent of this New Covenant. The Spirit:

- Gives us a new heart on which is written His Law
- Is in us
- Causes us to walk in the Lord's statutes and obey Him

And sure enough, as Paul begins now to describe our new life in this New Covenant, the Spirit comes right to the forefront:

**Galatians 5:16-26** **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. (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. (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.

Think about it for a moment. This is vital for every Christian to understand –

**Ezekiel 36:27** **And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**

This is the dynamic, the operating system, of the New Covenant we are

in. This is the heart of the difference between the Old Covenant, which could only condemn because it relied upon man's sinful flesh to be fulfilled, and the New Covenant which is empowered by the Spirit of God.

Here we have the mark then of every true Christian – the presence, power, and leading of the Holy Spirit to cause us to walk in His statutes and obey His rules. We read it earlier in Romans 8-

Romans 8:2-4 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. (3) For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, (4) in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, **who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**

So then, the Holy Spirit is in every Christian and He is actively leading and teaching:

1 John 2:27 But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no

lie--just as it has taught you, abide in him.

What is He leading us to do? What is He teaching us? Well, consider Ezekiel 36:27 again –

- To walk in the Lord's statutes
- To be careful to obey the Lord's rules

In other words, the Spirit's leading is the work of the Spirit working in us so that we walk in the Word of God and obey it. He has written the Law (the 10 commandments) on our hearts and put them in our minds, so that we know God's will and do it from our hearts.

Therefore, to "walk in the Spirit" is to walk in the Lord's commandments willingly out of love for God and His law. The Spirit leads us in this walking. It is why the Christian now says:

Psalms 119:5-12 Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! (6) Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. (7) I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous rules. (8) I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me! (9) How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. (10) With my whole

heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! (11) I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. (12) Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes!

If you look back up at Galatians 5:13-15, you will see what the Spirit leads us TO and AWAY from:

Galatians 5:13-14 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (14) For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Notice Paul's mention of "the flesh" here. The flesh is what would lead us to "bite and devour" others, rather than loving them as ourselves, which is what the Law of God instructs us to do and therefore is what the Spirit leads us to do.

So what we have here, beginning at 5:16, is basic instruction to those who are now alive in the New Covenant. Under the Old Covenant, the instruction was "do this and you will be blessed. Don't do it and you will be cursed." In the New Covenant however, it is quite different. The same moral Law is in us, but there is this new element – the Spirit in us

leading us, causing us from our hearts to want to obey the Lord.

And yet, in this present life, there is another principle active in the Christian – that hostile element called "the flesh."

*"It is vital that every Christian understand these things about himself. That he is being led by the Spirit, whom he is to follow, and that he is being pressured by an absolutely contrary principle called 'the flesh,' which he is not to yield to."*

Galatians 5:16-17 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.**

Let's consider some basic, plain facts stated in these two verses:

1. We have been told that the law is fulfilled in "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" and "do not bite and devour one another."
2. But we are not given commandments written down and told to do them and thus love our neighbor.



3. We ARE told to walk in the Spirit. If we will do that, we will not bite and devour one another, and we will love our neighbor as our self.

4. There are two “desires” in the Christian. One is the desires of the Spirit, the other is the desires of the flesh. This word “desires” tells us that these principles are within us.

5. These two desires are absolutely opposite and contrary to one another. So much so that if we walk in one, we necessarily will not be walking in the other. The desires of the Spirit are against and opposed to the desires of the flesh, and so the flesh against the Spirit.

6. And very, very importantly, we must take note of this phrase:

**“to keep you from doing the things you want to do”**

Think about this now very, very carefully. Who are you, Christian? According to what Paul is saying here, who are you? Well, obviously it is the FLESH that is working, trying to keep you from doing what the Spirit is leading you to do. That is to say, my sinful flesh is an active principle in me which desires to NOT love others, but to bite and devour them. But that flesh is NOT me! I am a new creation and therefore I am the one who desires the

things that the Spirit desires!! I WANT TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT. I DO NOT WANT TO SIN. And this is true of EVERY Christian in the New Covenant because everyone in the New Covenant has this new heart and Spirit. This dynamic was not present in the Old Covenant and thus the Old Covenant (the Law) could only condemn us.

As we read God’s Word, the Spirit enables us to understand it and to love it as God’s wisdom:

1 Corinthians 2:9-16 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"-- (10) **these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.** For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. (11) For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. (12) **Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.** (13) And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom **but taught by the Spirit,** interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

(14) The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (15) The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. (16) "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

And here the "spiritual person" is not some higher level of extra-holy Christian. No. Every Christian is the "spiritual person" in contrast to the "natural person" who does not know Christ and thus does not have the Spirit.

### **Conclusion**

Here then is enough for us to consider this morning, and even this entire week. If you are in Christ, then you are being led by the Spirit of God who is in you and who has given you a new heart and put the Law of God within you. The Spirit is active in you, directing you through YOUR desires to love the Lord and to love your neighbor. Your flesh is opposing that leading of the Spirit, but you must not mind it. That is not who you are any longer. Follow the leading of the Spirit and you will find yourself putting the

passions and desires of your flesh to death.

Romans 8:13-17 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (14) For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (15) For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" (16) The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (17) and if children, then heirs-- heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

And it is in this leading of the Spirit, this putting to death the deeds of the body (flesh), that our assurance is to be found that we really are in Christ. This is how the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are indeed the children of God, heirs of all heaven has to offer us.