

Sunday, July 16, 2017

Forest Hills United Methodist Church

Message: “Walking Daily with the Holy Spirit”

Rev. Dr. David Werner

Message Series: The Holy Spirit in Daily Life

Scripture: Galatians 5:16-26

Text: Galatians 5:25 “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”

Blurb: Being a Christian is a daily walk. Yet it is not a walk we take on our own; we walk in step with the Holy Spirit. And that changes not only where we go, but also how we walk to get there. Don't miss this Sunday if you are stumbling in your daily walk, or having a hard time staying in step with God. We will discover how to walk in the Holy Spirit.

Gathering Song: *Taste and See*

Welcome: -Pastor David

Worship Set: Sanctify

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Fill My Heart

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Kids invited to Kids' Church

Faith Sharing: Red Rock Camp - Jason & Vicky Keintz

Prayers: -Andrew

Offering: *How Great Thou Art* -Noah Bonsell

Sermon Bumper

Message: “Walking Daily with the Holy Spirit”

PP#1: Walking Daily with the Holy Spirit

“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” -Galatians 5:25

The Holy Spirit in Daily Life. Walking Daily with the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:25, “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”

PP#2: *Pictures at Wildfire working in the soup kitchen: 2 pix of the boys prepping food.*

On Wednesday this past week, our mission team worked at a soup kitchen in Duluth, offering a free, hot meal to anyone who stopped in to eat.

PP#3: *Pictures at Wildfire working in the soup kitchen: pix of the girls prepping food.*

Our menu was beef and gravy over biscuits, fresh lettuce salad, fresh fruit, dessert, and milk.

PP#4: *Pictures at Wildfire working in the soup kitchen: 2 pix of serving the food.*

We prepped, served, and cleaned up, serving nearly 200 meals. Don't they look so cute in their hair nets!

In the background on the left you see a green shirt. This was Tim, our supervisor and chief cook. This is the only picture I got of him, and I suppose it's fitting, because he was not one to seek attention. One of my God moments during the week was working with him. He showed me what a person who was walking with the Holy Spirit looked like.

It quickly became obvious that he was there not to cook or serve food, but to touch people and show them that God loved them. He wanted the food to be good, wholesome, tasty, and appealing. He wasn't just making food "good enough" for people who should be grateful to get anything for free. He cared about the people coming in! He never sat down, even when he made us take a couple of breaks. Before we began serving, he gathered us up for prayer, and he freely prayed in front of us all. He prayed in a simple, but honest way, asking for the people who were coming to be blessed. He wanted them to know that God cared.

As the people came through, he would jump in, carry plates for kids or people with difficulty. Even though it was all supposed to be self-serve, he walked around the dining room, getting beverages for people, wiping up spills, and taking away dirty plates. But more importantly, he made personal conversation with people, asking how they were doing, following up with concerns he had heard about before, and laughing and joking with them. He paused and talked to people, calling many of them by name. For him, it really wasn't about the food.

I overheard Jenny talking with him before we left. He told Jenny that after he left there, he was going to work the evening shift at Home Depot. He said that Home Depot was his main job, but it didn't quite pay enough. So he took on this second job. And he said, "But you know, this job is where my heart is. The other one just pays the bills. This is where I want to be."

PP#5: *Image for "walking the talk" or faith with feet, or something similar*

Tim wasn't just a nice person, trying to do good. There was something inside that burned, pushed him, made this his passion. This man had the Holy Spirit inside, and it affected his daily walk. Such a simple thing, really, serving food. But it was actually about loving the people who came. He loved the people that most people ignore.

I saw this again yesterday, in some of the people who came to serve at Community Care. There was something different about them. They weren't just doing good. They really cared about the people who came. There was a God-given love there that I could see came from the Holy Spirit within them.

I, however, as Vicky will testify, got somewhat frustrated with some of the other volunteers. I needed to be reminded what this was really about. It wasn't about getting X-amount of food in people's cars!

PP#6: Entry point vs. the main point.

Being a Christian is really about our daily walk. Yes, we must give our lives to Jesus, put our whole trust in Him as our personal Lord and Savior. That is a willful decision we must make. But

that is not *the point* of our salvation. It's only the *entry point*. The point, the main point, of our salvation, is holiness. Holiness is our daily walking with God rightly. In the Bible, being righteous means doing the right thing. It's walking in step with God's plan for our lives, day by day. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, put it this way: Justification (or deciding to follow Jesus) is only the porch of salvation. The door is faith, whereby we enter. But the house itself is living for God every day thereafter, or, as he put it, the house of our religion is holiness.

PP#7: "Jesus answered, 'I assure you, unless someone is born anew, it's not possible to see God's kingdom.'" John 3:3

"Jesus answered, 'I assure you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, it's not possible to enter God's kingdom.'" -John 3:5

"A new heart I will give you and a new spirit I will put within you ... I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes." -Ezekiel 36:26-27

Holiness is a work of the Holy Spirit in us. When we give our lives to Jesus and to follow Him, God gives to us His Holy Spirit to live directly within us. Jesus calls this, when talking to Nicodemus in John 3, being *born again*. People who commit to Jesus are reborn by the Spirit. They have a new identity, a new way of living. The Holy Spirit that lives within them breaks the power of the selfish nature, and makes us able to choose well and right and good.

Back in the Old Testament, through the prophet Ezekiel, God said that He will take our heart of stone and instead give us a new heart, a new spirit—God's Spirit—within us. And God's Holy Spirit within us will cause us to walk rightly!

There it is again, the Christian life as a walk. It is the walk of Tim at the soup kitchen. It is the daily walk of holiness.

PP#8: *Image from last week of the inner war.*

Let's go after this daily walk by the Spirit a bit more. It think this is so important for many of us. How do we walk by the Spirit?

Last week we learned how there is that inner war within each of us, waffling between right and wrong, selfishness and Spirit-led. Walking by the Spirit means putting our selfishness to death, and living instead by the Spirit. And we highlighted some of the ways that we can unleash the power and victory of the Holy Spirit in our ongoing lives.

PP#9: Galatians 5 (CEB)

16 I say, walk by the Spirit and you won't carry out your selfish desires. 17 A person's selfish desires are set against the Spirit, and the Spirit is set against one's selfish desires. They are opposed to each other, so you shouldn't do whatever you want to do.

Today, let's turn to Galatians 5. Paul here reveals three gems for daily holiness. The first comes right away in verse 16. "I say, walk by the Spirit and you won't carry out your selfish desires. A person's selfish desires are set against the Spirit, and the Spirit is set against one's selfish desires. They are opposed to each other, so you shouldn't do whatever you want to do."

Walk by the Spirit - that's the first gem. It's an intentional, daily decision we make. And here's the amazing truth-telling: if you allow room for the Holy Spirit to lead you, you won't carry out your selfish desires! What a powerful promise! We all have our selfish desires. We have that inner struggle. The question is, how do we conquer them.

PP#10: Walking Daily with the Spirit

1. Walk by the Spirit - let the Spirit change your desires

You see, the reality is that although we have the Holy Spirit within us, but we can still live on our own. We can live our daily lives without giving room for the Holy Spirit to work. And when we live on our own, in our own strength and rationalizing, we cave into our selfish desires. It's just like how we are more likely to make bad choices when we're alone and there aren't others around.

That's why morning devotions and prayer time is so important. Have you been choosing daily Bible verses to put on your phone in the morning each day? Today, I suggest Ezekiel 36:26. It's opening your day to the Holy Spirit, making room for Him, choosing to walk with the Spirit. And the Holy Spirit will guide you to make better decisions, and empower you to do them.

PP#11: Galatians 5 (CEB)

16 I say, walk by the Spirit and you won't carry out your selfish desires. 17 A person's selfish desires are set against the Spirit, and the Spirit is set against one's selfish desires. They are opposed to each other, so you shouldn't do whatever you want to do.

Look at the end of verse 17. "You shouldn't do whatever you want to do." Wow. This is so counter-cultural. Our culture constantly tells us to follow our feelings, our desires, our wants. But this verse hits us right in the face: "You shouldn't do whatever you want to do."

PP#12: Walking Daily with the Spirit

1. Walk by the Spirit - let the Spirit change your desires

When we walk with the Spirit, we make room for the Spirit, every day, to create in us different desires. I mean, let's be honest, the struggle with selfishness is really not about willpower. That's because our willpower, no matter how strong, eventually weakens. We wear down. Even the best of us may have strong willpower in some areas, but all of us have areas where our willpower wears out. It's not so much about being stronger, or having a more stubborn tenacity—although we do need to grow and strengthen that. Write this down, this is good: It's more about letting the Holy Spirit have room *to change our desires*. Will power is about us having the strength to resist against what we *want* but shouldn't have. When we walk with the Spirit, however, He brings transformation. He gives us a new heart, a different appetite, changes what we desire! Walking in holiness means that the Holy Spirit changes us to want different things. Then, we are free to do what we rightly want! This is good, really good stuff! And it leads us into the next gem.

PP#13: Galatians 5 (CEB)

18 But if you are being led by the Spirit, you aren't under the Law. 19 The actions that are produced by selfish motives are obvious, since they include sexual immorality, moral corruption, doing whatever feels good, 20 idolatry, drug use and casting spells, hate, fighting, obsession, losing your temper, competitive opposition, conflict, selfishness, group rivalry, 21 jealousy, drunkenness, partying, and other things like that. I warn you as I have already warned you, that those who do these kinds of things won't inherit God's kingdom.

Verse 18. Second gem: being led by the Spirit. First is our decision to walk by the Spirit. The second, however, is not leading the way ourselves! It's letting the Holy Spirit lead. "But if you are

being led by the Spirit, you aren't under the Law. [We'll come back to this.] The actions that are produced by selfish motives are obvious [OK, warning alert here. Paul now lists out some of the most obvious examples of selfish actions, ones we all can identify. But he gets rather specific! And this is why I chose this translation. It puts it in the words like how we talk about them. Sometimes the language of the Bible can cause us to keep these things at arm's length. But in this translation, it hits home. So, get ready to be hit!] The actions that are produced by selfish motive are obvious, since they include sexual immorality, moral corruption, doing whatever feels good [!], 20 idolatry, drug use and casting spells, hate, fighting, obsession, losing your temper [anyone still comfortable?], competitive opposition, conflict, selfishness, group rivalry, 21 jealousy, drunkenness, partying [as in wild partying], and other things like that. I warn you as I have already warned you, that those who do these kinds of things won't inherit God's kingdom."

Putting it this way makes it less Bible-ese, and more "Wow, this is what *I* do!"

PP#14: Walking Daily with the Spirit

1. Walk by the Spirit - let the Spirit change your desires
2. Led by the Spirit - let the Spirit direct your way

How will we know if we are letting the Holy Spirit lead? If we find ourselves doing these things, He's not leading! These are the works of selfishness. People who live this way, willfully and consistently, won't inherit God's Kingdom, because they are still living for themselves. They haven't made it into the house of salvation, they've stayed on the porch.

PP#15: Galatians 5 (CEB)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against things like this. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the self with its passions and its desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let's walk by the Spirit.

But when we let the Holy Spirit lead, we find ourselves doing different things. These Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit. This is the third gem: bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Verse 22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against things like this."

Highlight this verse. These are the famous nine "Fruits of the Spirit" that should be growing in every Christian! I don't have time to go into each of these deeply...that would be a cool sermon series, now that I think of it! But Paul says there is no law against these things.

PP#16: Walking Daily with the Spirit

1. Walk by the Spirit - let the Spirit change your desires
2. Led by the Spirit - let the Spirit direct your way
3. Bear fruit by the Spirit - let the Spirit grow different behaviors

The works of the flesh, or selfishness, are condemned by God's Law. They are the ways of unrighteousness. God's law for holy living rules them out, and tells us to restrict them. But the works of the Spirit, which produces these fruit, are not restricted. In fact, they are unleashed to be never limited. The more the better! Excel in these, rack them up boundlessly, keep going! We are free, and urged, to bear these limitlessly.

And bearing fruit is that wonderful image of being not for the self, but for others - serving and blessing others. The tree doesn't bear fruit for itself. It's for launching new life, and is a blessing those who eat it. Holiness is ever growing in these fruit of the Spirit.

PP#17: Galatians 5 (CEB)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against things like this. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the self with its passions and its desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let's walk by the Spirit.

Verse 24, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the self with its passions and its desires." When we give ourselves to Jesus, Jesus takes us and crucifies our selfishness. Jesus died to take away our sin, and our bent to sinning. He takes away the power of our former desires, and plants within us the Holy Spirit who changes our desires, and who bears through us this amazing fruit of holiness and righteous living.

So, to sum it all up, Verse 25: "If we live by the Spirit, let's walk by the Spirit." That means walking by the Spirit, being led by the Spirit, and bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

PP#18: Galatians 5 (CEB)

13 You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only don't let this freedom be an opportunity to indulge your selfish impulses, but serve each other through love. 14 All the Law has been fulfilled in a single statement: Love your neighbor as yourself.

In the couple of verses right before this passage, Paul says that this all really is living out Jesus' commandment of love. When born again and given the Holy Spirit, we are free to stop giving into the selfish desires and start bearing godly fruit. Verse 13, "serve each other through love." There it is: this is what walking by the Spirit is. "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Love, grown by the Holy Spirit within us, changes our desires from the inside out. We desire different things, and therefore, we behave differently.

Tim loved those people. And this affected how he served them. He served with his whole heart. He served us the same way. He was walking by the Spirit.

This is not something WE DO by the Spirit's help. No. Rather, It's DONE IN US by the Holy Spirit directing us. It's not so much what we do, it's how we do them. Ultimately holiness is not doing the right things, but doing what we do through love. This is righteousness.

We come to new life by a rebirth of the Spirit. We walk in the Spirit. We love with the love of the Spirit, who is God, who is love.

PP#19: 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

12 May the Lord cause you to increase and enrich your love for each other and for everyone. 13 May the love cause your hearts to be strengthened, to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all His people. Amen.

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 "May the Lord cause you to increase and enrich your love for each other and for everyone. ... May the love cause your hearts to be strengthened, to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all His people. Amen."

Closing Song: *The Lion and the Lamb* -Sanctify

Benediction: Pastor David