

Sermon Text Discussion 6/14/2020

The Work of the Spirit and the freedom of Grace (Taylor Sutton)

Galatians 5:16-24

Overview

In this passage, Paul draws a sharp contrast between the flesh and the law on the one hand and the Spirit and the gospel on the other hand. In doing so, he is giving us the blueprint of how Christians grow and change. His argument breaks down into three parts:

- The pathway to growth: Christians grow by leaning on the Spirit, not on the law or the flesh (5:16-18).
- The promise of growth: the Spirit produces better things in us than the law or the flesh ever could (5:19-23).
- The basis for growth: the cross of Christ (5:24).

We are challenged by this text to allow God's grace to help us put off the works of the flesh and to put on the fruit of the Spirit.

Quotations

"The Spirit alone brings the cross of Christ into our hearts with its sin-killing power." John Owen

"It's in the sinner's embrace of Christ that the Spirit loves to work. So, let's embrace him again today." Taylor Sutton

Understanding & Application

- 1) Read verse 16. What does 'walk by the Spirit' mean to you? On a practical level, describe behaviors of someone who is walking by the Spirit. Can you think of a particular season in your life when you were walking in the Spirit? Describe it to the group.
- 2) What two opposing forces does Paul describe in verses 17, 18? Why are they at odds with each other? What advantage does each have as a means of controlling us? Which one has the upper hand? Why?
- 3) Verses 19-23 provides two contrasting lists – the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. As Christians, should we expect to be able to avoid the behaviors listed as 'works of the flesh'? Why or why not? What does Paul mean by his warning that 'those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God'?
- 4) It is only by God's grace we can move from the 'works of the flesh' to the 'fruit of the Spirit'. Pick a behavior from the 'works of the flesh' list (maybe one with which you have struggled). Find a fruit of the Spirit that contrasts the behavior. What would be effective means of moving from that behavior to the contrasting fruit of the Spirit? Discuss several pairs as a small group.

