

JOHN 14: Verses 15-17, 25, 26.  
15: Verses 15-26.

GALATIANS 5: Verses 13-25.  
6: Verses 7-9.

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In these verses we have read together we have a reference to the activity and the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit in the believer; a truth no doubt well known to most of us, but a truth of the most surpassing value for our life in this world.

It is a sad fact that the energy and power of God's Holy Spirit in this day of ours is neglected. It is not received with that simplicity of faith which alone makes it effective in the life. I know that God's Holy Spirit is sovereign; He acts as He will; His power is illimitable. But we must ourselves be in the line of that power to receive its benefit for ourselves. A sailing ship as it proceeds across the ocean takes advantage of the breezes that blow. Unless it extends its sails, how can it be helped by the breezes that blow? They are there; and God's Holy Spirit is here moving where He pleases. It is for you and for me, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, to be in the attitude of heart and condition of soul that the gracious, holy power of the Holy Spirit may work through us.

We had before us this afternoon a little that reminded us of the difficulties of the present time, of the almost hopeless condition of things from a human point of view; not merely in the world at large, but among the companies of those that confess the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is there at this present time but a spectacle that makes the heart sad. We say, why is it, why this leanness, why this

barrenness, why this lack of witness, faithful and true, for the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it so that the Holy Spirit has lost His power? Is it so that He who was sent from above to quicken the heart of the believer, and help him to be an effective witness for his absent Lord has failed, or deserted His office that was given to Him? We know He abides, and will abide as long as the church is here. Until the period of Christ's absence ceases for His church, the Holy Spirit is here. He is here to glorify Christ. He is here to lead our hearts into spiritual blessings such as the heart has yet never dreamed of.

We turn to these scriptures, and they seem so simple. And yet speaking for oneself, and looking into one's own heart and life - as it is good to do sometimes - one feels there is something missing, something lacking, something wrong. And what is it? There is no fault on the part of the Spirit of God. And let me say at this point that it is a striking feature in scripture that God's Holy Spirit appears in His sovereign action just at times of crisis, at junctures when things seem to be hopeless and gone wrong.

You open your Bible, and in the very first two verses of Genesis, there we read in the 1st verse of God's mighty power in creation, perfect and blessed as it must be. In the 2nd verse we read of a time of wasting and desolation which has come upon that first creation, and we have the mention of the Holy Spirit.

There it is that the Spirit broods. There are His influence, and that mighty power of His by which He creates the heavens, and works again for the establishment of men upon the earth.

When man had gone on for many centuries after Adam's day, and gone further and further down the precipice of corruption and violence, God determined to cleanse the earth by a deluge, and then it was that the Spirit of Christ, Jehovah's Spirit, strove with men. Not always would He so do as Jehovah God, but then it was, in that age, in that populous time, when men had set themselves to do evil, and to wallow in it to their hearts' content, it was that God's Holy Spirit was striving there for the glory of Christ, and for the salvation of some.

And you might go on through the scriptures. When a little remnant came back from Babylon to build again the temple, how feeble were they, how few they were, what little power they had! Look back to Solomon's day with its gold, and its silver, and its wealth, its armies of workmen for many years toiling to rear that magnificent structure for Jehovah's Name. And here is the little flock under Ezra and Nehemiah. What are they to do? How can they build the temple of the Lord? The prophets Haggai and Zechariah remind them of God's Holy Spirit. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." There was God's Holy Spirit come to the rescue. The temple was raised in Jerusalem.

And the very occasion for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as we have it in the Gospels, what was it but a crisis? God had sent His own Son into the world, and how was He received? He was rejected, He was despised, He was cast out, He was to be crucified; the hope of men, the Saviour of men, the Prince, King of Israel. He was to be King, and the world was to be robbed of Him who was the Light of the world. And the Lord Jesus Christ, when He was going away, leaving a few behind Him in a hostile world - a few who loved Him, and cared for His Name, and had companied with Him during His days of ministry - He was leaving them, a few sheep amongst wolves. What was His comfort for them? It was a crisis for them. What shall we do without our Master? How can we face the world without our Master? It was then that the Lord promised that another Comforter, One who should take His place, should come down to help these few to stand in the world, and to be witnesses for Him.

The whole period of the Church's history, as we know, is a crisis. It is the time when God's judgment against this world that crucified His Son is held in abeyance, and grace now reigns through righteousness. And it is during this period of crisis that the Spirit is here to cause believers to be true and effective witnesses for Him here in this world.

The very fact of the Spirit being here is a fact that showed our Lord Jesus Christ anticipated the difficulties in which His own would be placed, and gave

them the Spirit to uphold them, and to maintain them; to supply everything that was lacking on their part. "I will pray the Father" He said "And He shall give you another Comforter" - One who should be to them all that He Himself had been.

And oh, who had the Lord been to His disciples! Who shall tell what the Lord Jesus Christ was to Peter and James and John? Their faults and failings are chronicled in the scripture for our warning, but, beloved friends, there is a great deal that is not written there of love and loyalty. They had given up all for Him - only fishermen, possessing very little as far as the world accounted it. But what can a man give up more than his all? "We have left all and followed Thee."

"I will give you another Comforter, and He shall abide with you." And the great fact about it was that He should abide with them for ever. Oh, let us cling to that word, beloved friends, for we are the successors of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are those who bear His Name here in this world. And the promise of the 14th John is for you and for me. We are here to stand for Christ, and to maintain His Name in this world.

And how is this to be? Now the Holy Spirit was not only to be with them, but in them. He said "I will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

It is a distinction which is important for us to note. The Holy Spirit is here dwelling in the midst. So did Jehovah dwell in the midst of the congregation of Israel when they passed through the wilderness; but we never read that Jehovah was in the Israelites. That was the distinction that the Lord made. It was a privilege in these times of difficulties that we are weeping and wailing over, that the Holy Spirit should not only be in the midst, One to be looked at, but in them. And no Christian is a Christian in the true sense of scripture unless he is sealed by God's Holy Spirit, and has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him.

Now I ask you, beloved friends, do we realise the fact that God's Holy Spirit dwells in the midst, dwells in the heart of the believer, in my heart and your heart? It is a solemn fact, God's Holy Spirit finding a shrine in my heart, a place to dwell, so that wherever I may be there is God's Holy Spirit, silent, and not in any way cognisable by our senses. The world cannot see Him, the world cannot receive Him. It is by faith that He dwells there. If you cannot exercise faith about that, why call yourself a believer? Why a believer if I cannot believe the word of the Lord Jesus Christ concerning that fact?

Now if it a fact that a person in some meeting of two or three is indwelt by God's Holy Spirit, ought there not to be infinite resources in that, infinite comfort in that? What cannot be

accomplished if God's Holy Spirit will only work! We find what He did do in the beginning; God tells us the acts of His Holy Spirit; these they are. He came down and took up men, and women too, and used them as witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ. He came here; He is here to dwell; and He is here to abide. What effect has it on your life? That is the question, beloved friends, that stares us in the face. It is no use to read of it as a historical fact. It is something which has its influence now upon us. It is true that as long as Christ's Church is here in this world there will be the Holy Spirit to make the individual believer a witness to His glory.

Now at the end of this chapter 14 we see the preparation of God's Holy Spirit that they may be with Him. We have first had the unchallengeable fact of God's Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart of the believer in Christ, but at the end of the chapter, the 26th verse, the Lord says "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." He must be there as interpreter, as a teacher of new things. He was there also to bring the things of the past, the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, to their remembrance, to make them living and powerful in their souls.

It is by the things that our Lord has spoken; it is by God's holy word that the Spirit of God works. And let me suggest that it is there that we break down. I

cannot find in God's word that the Holy Spirit works amongst believers apart from His word. He can take up a wicked man and use him, for His power is almighty; but we are only speaking of the family of faith, the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. And why is it that God's Holy Spirit does not work with me as He would? Because I do not receive the word. He is here to teach us all things. The whole vast realm of the spiritual world is His domain, and He will reveal any part of it to you if you will only wait upon Him. He is down here for that purpose.

The Lord Jesus instructed while He was here. He gave truths suitable for His own particular ministry, and these things were to be brought to their remembrance. It is one thing to remember as a parrot would; it is another thing to remember when the Holy Spirit brings it back. Sometimes in your meditations, maybe in the darkness of the night, some word of God leaps, as it were, to your memory, and it is invested with riches and beauty you have never seen before. How does it come about? It is God's Holy Spirit setting the word of God in power before your souls. He is down here for that purpose, to take of the word and to apply it to your circumstances, and to teach you all things.

Well, I must be teachable. I must read the word of God. I must wait upon Him. I must seek the instruction that He is waiting to impart. And that, I am sure, is where our responsibility is, and, alas, where we often fail. The word of God is dull to us. We read a scripture, but we do

not understand it, and we pass on to something we do understand. Why not seek the guidance of God's Holy Spirit on that scripture? He will make it clear to you. What is a teacher for? You have a teacher of music, and you have a difficulty. You go to your teacher, and you expect your teacher to explain the difficulty to you. Here is the Holy Spirit come down to be a teacher; He will teach you all things. Will you wait upon Him? Do you seek guidance by that humble, enquiring mind to which He so readily responds with His teaching?

But there is another thing that comes out in Galatians in connection with our responsibility. The 15th chapter of John speaks of the Holy Spirit as the witness for Christ, and the Lord said "Ye also shall be witnesses." Now unless the witnesses are taught, they cannot witness aright. Unless they are resting in the power of God's Holy Spirit, their witness will be ineffective. The great essential for us is that we should be in the influence, and under the power and direction of God's Holy Spirit.

Now in the 5th chapter of Galatians we find in the latter part a good deal about the action of God's Holy Spirit, and in the 16th verse it says "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Now this exhortation receives light and power when we consider it in connection with the epistle itself. The epistle speaks about the believer putting himself under law, and so losing the effects of grace. The law is a stern

master that commands, and the law speaks to the flesh, and it gives the flesh something to do, which as a matter of fact it cannot do. The old dispensation proved that the law could not save.

But the Galatian error was that believers who were trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ took up the law as a supplement "We will have the law to keep us right in our lives; we shall improve our status by incorporating the law; we will do something; we will do what the law tells us to do." And they were clinging to the law of Moses. The apostle said "What are you doing? You are setting aside Christ. He is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth, and you are encouraging the flesh, yourself." For if you love God with all your heart, and love your neighbour as yourself to your own satisfaction, you will be the first. You will take away the glory from Christ, and that will never do. By this the Galatians were nullifying the Spirit's teaching and influence and power in their midst. Why? God's Holy Spirit had come down for the express purpose of glorifying Christ, and they were getting into a state of mind of glorifying themselves by keeping the law, and so the Spirit could not act. It is the flesh that stands in the way of the Spirit.

The apostle in the 2nd chapter breaks out concerning himself in those words that we know. He says "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." There was his life. Christ Jesus was

his life. All his energy, all his love, all his service was devoted to Christ. His whole life was one unified act of devotion to Christ. And when he had said that he begins to speak about the promise of the Spirit that the Galatians had turned their backs upon.

To sum this up very simply for our young brethren, in the 5th chapter we have this very simple lesson. There is nothing that so easily and effectively blocks the action of the Holy Spirit like my own, what I am in myself. It is my wretched self that rises up and intrudes itself between me and Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit is here to make me like Christ, to reproduce the life of Christ in me, to make me like Him, positively devoted to the will of God. And self insists, selfish claims come in, and the Spirit, by which we are sealed unto the day of redemption, does not act. And there we are, poor, dead, helpless failing things as witnesses for Christ, because the power is gone, and the Holy Spirit is not working. Why? Because myself has filled my heart, and filled the vision of my soul, and Christ Himself has disappeared. Ah, beloved friends, you cannot get away from the fact that the great office of the Holy Spirit in this world is not to glorify me, but to glorify my absent Master. And it is His office to turn my eyes there and keep them there, and take me up and use me for testimony in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. If my life is given up to the service of myself, then the Spirit's action is frustrated.

Now I am called to walk in the Spirit.

You see how the Spirit acts. You get it in the 3rd chapter of John's Gospel. We read that God's Holy Spirit there forms a new nature. There are those who are born of the Spirit, and they have then what they never had before, the Spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." His works are manifest, as we get in Galatians, but in the 3rd chapter of John's Gospel the Lord said that the flesh cannot enter into the kingdom of God. It was something from which no good could be expected. No possible intervention would make the flesh into spirit. There was a new beginning, a new nature formed in the believer.

In the 4th chapter the Lord Jesus, speaking to the Samaritan woman, one outside the pale of the law altogether, spoke to her of the water that He would give; and that water, He said, would be a well, a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. Everlasting life speaks of that which is above, and the well of water speaks of a power in the water to make it rise. The principle of the well, of the spring, of the fountain, is that it is always striving to reach its source. Well water comes from the hillside; it gets down to the valley, but strives to climb as high as the place from whence it came. And so the Lord Jesus, sitting by the well side, uses that beautiful metaphor, "The water that I shall give shall be a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

And how does the water spring up in our hearts? Where does it come from? From the

Father, from the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit. And when our hearts leap up in praise and thankfulness, there is the well of water springing up. It is the Holy Spirit in the power of worship in the heart of the believer. It is everlasting life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But there is another thing, and it is not the water springing up in worship. There is the living water going out to refresh the waste all round. And that we have in the 7th chapter, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." There the believer is a testimony to the Lord. The world cannot receive the Spirit of God, but every single believer is a potential source, not of a trickle of water, but rivers of living water. Out of the Garden of Eden the water that watered that beautiful tract of country, went out and divided itself into four heads, and watered the whole earth. So from the new life formed in the believer by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit goes out in power to water the earth around from one believer.

How many are there here tonight - rivers - more than one! In the picture of the Millennial scenes John saw a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and the Lamb to refresh the Millennial earth. But there is no Millennium here: there is no kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ here. But there are thousands of believers, and every one a river of living water. God's Holy Spirit does it. Why is it not done?

Because we seek to do it in our own way;  
because we want to have the credit of it.

Oh, the flesh is a terrible thing, beloved friends. The Lord Jesus Christ found it when He was here amongst His disciples. Peter made that glorious confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Lord said "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." And what did Peter say just afterwards when the Lord spoke of His going up to Jerusalem? Oh, the old nature, that flesh of Peter, leaped up at once. He loved the Lord; the Lord was his Master, and He was going to sit on the throne of His Father David. Going to Jerusalem to be condemned by the Council! "No, this be far from Thee. The Lord had to say "Get thee behind Me." His flesh had led him to sin and be a stumbling block in the way. He did it all in good faith, but it was the flesh.

Then again in the Garden, He said to Peter, James and John "Tarry ye here while I go and pray yonder." He was withdrawn from them a stone's cast, and then He prayed. He said "Tarry ye here and watch with Me," and when He came back He found them asleep. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." They were weary; their griefs overcame them. It was the flesh failing to realise the crisis of which the Lord had spoken many times. He told them in plain words that He was about to be crucified, but yet they could not watch with Him. It was the failure of the flesh. The Spirit can endure, but not the flesh. Oh, that we might learn that lesson!

If in our homes, in our circumstances, in our business, in our assemblies, we could only learn that what is of the flesh can do nothing to glorify Christ or to bless our fellows, what a difference there would be.

Now here in Galatians we have "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." That seems to be very simple, and someone, perhaps, will be asking the question "How can I walk in the Spirit?" You never find in scripture that God's Holy Spirit is an object before the soul as the Lord Jesus Christ is. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit came down into this world for the express purpose to keep before the disciples of the Lord, those who believe on Him, to keep the Person of the absent Lord constantly, individually, livingly before their hearts. It is easy to forget the Lord. It is easy to be so occupied with even our needful duties as to be utterly oblivious that there is such a Person as the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the office of the Holy Spirit is to keep Him before us. How can I in my office, how can I in the trivial domestic work at home, how can I keep the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ before me? The apostle tells me "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus." Bring Him in, if I may reverently use that expression. Let it be felt in my soul that the thing I am reading is in the Name of Christ; the thing I am purposing to do is in the Name of Christ, and that Christ's glory, His will, must be supreme in that; that it is not myself, it is not my own choosing; He must

be first. If that is so, and it is possible, then the Holy Spirit acts.

That is what walking in the Spirit is. That, I am sure, is within the reach of all that are here this evening. The youngest believer can do that. At school I am having a very difficult lesson to do. Why not do it in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ? I am studying something I cannot understand; the Holy Spirit would help me in the matter. If I cannot ask His intervention, then I ought not to be doing it. I am doing something wrong, and the sooner I leave it the better. Walking in the Spirit is in practice having the Lord Jesus Himself before my soul, and then I shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

We find there is a continual contest within us. We may not be conscious of it, and it is good for us that we are not conscious of it. That distinguishes us from the contest in the 7th chapter of Romans. No person can pass through the 7th of Romans without being conscious of a real struggle. But this is different. This is the antagonism between the Spirit and the flesh. The Spirit will have nothing to do with the flesh. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." That is to say, the flesh would lead me to do what the flesh wishes, not what the Spirit wishes; the Spirit will lead me to do what He Himself wishes, and not what the flesh wishes. They are opposed to one another, they do

not agree, and we must not mix them up. And the way to keep them separate is to bring in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the verses that follow you have the work of the flesh which are manifest. We need not dwell upon those now.

But then you get "The fruit is the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Now the first things are very striking - love, joy and peace, as being the fruit of the Spirit. I would commend them to you for your study. If you read the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of John's Gospel, which speak to you of the gift of the Spirit, you will find that the Lord speaks of His love, His joy, and His peace as being given to those He was leaving behind. And it is the fruit of the Spirit that makes that good. The fruit of the Spirit is that the love of Christ lives in our souls. It is the fruit of the Spirit that the joy of Christ is for you. It is the fruit of the Spirit that His peace that He gives to us is our precious portion: love, joy, peace. The works of the flesh are manifest - a murderer is known by his deed. Love seeks to hide itself; it expresses itself in acts, but love itself works secretly. Joy is that which is within, that speaks gladness, that permeates the whole being, and links it up to the heavenly Lord, the Saviour. Our Lord Jesus Christ when He was in this world was in continual enjoyment of heavenly delights. He did not gather His joy from what was around Him. His joys were from above.

But there is the fruit of the Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit is for the eye of God particularly. None of these things are conspicuous. Gentleness - who would take any notice of this! Well, we are very pleased to meet with those who are gentle. They do not give much trouble like contradictory persons do. It is not conspicuous, but it is found so beautifully in the Lord Jesus. When we think of His almighty power, holding the many worlds - infinite power, but infinite gentleness. And the Spirit of God will produce it in you and me. It will produce in us the meekness and gentleness of Christ. They form a beautiful group for study.

But I would like to note the fruit of the Spirit with what we have in the succeeding chapter, for there we have something very solemn, and with that I must close. In the 7th verse the apostle speaks of a principle for unbelievers or believers, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Now let us mark definitely what is said here, for our responsibility comes in. In this verse it is not, as formerly, the fruit of the Spirit. It speaks of sowing - energy. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." Now it is true of those things which we would not name in an assembly of this kind, it is true of everything that is not of God's Holy Spirit; what is of the flesh can produce nothing but corruption. I can take up a line which seem

very pleasing in my own eyes, very agreeable to follow, and I will follow this pursuit. I think we all have some particular thing which we enjoy more than others; it may be quite harmless in itself. I plough, I break up the soil, I prepare for the seed, I put it in. It is my labour, it is of the flesh. I wonder what will be the result. The flesh can bring forth nothing but corruption. Cain did not bring corruption to Jehovah, he brought his flowers and his fruit. When Jehovah looked upon them He could have no favour with them; they were of the flesh. Cain sowed to his flesh, and brought the efforts to Jehovah.

"He that soweth to the Spirit." Now how can I sow to the Spirit? I can only go back to what I have already said. Keep my eye on Christ. Read God's holy word. That is sowing to the Spirit. You must keep your eye on Him. Peter, again, walking on the sea; there he is sowing to the Spirit, you may say. His eyes are on the Lord, and he walks triumphant on the waves, a witness of the power of Christ. And he looks away at the waves as a man would do. What is wrong in that? He turned away from the source of his strength, He was shorn like Samson of that which gave him strength, and he went down just as any other man would do.

And it is so with us. The simplest things of life I may do to the glory and praise of God as led by His Holy Spirit, if the eye is in the right place. If I turn away the eye, then I may become as another man, and the result is corruption. "But he

that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

The fruit of the Spirit as we get here, love, joy, peace, is, I suppose, to be found here in this world, as many other things. But the great effects of this will be in that place in glory where everlasting life will come into its own. Here the Christian is like a fish out of water. He is here in this world, and things are contrary to that life. But when he gets into the presence of the Lord-- no difficulty to keep his eye there; all is purity, glory. It will be the very habitation that he is seeking. And there he will reap. There it is that love, joy, peace and gentleness do come forward, bringing their sheaves with them; all their toils as witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ over. And the blessedness of it all is that though the Holy Spirit produces all these things in us, and we cannot do without Him, when we get there the reward will be ours. He will deal out righteously. The Lord, the righteous judge, will give the crown of righteousness unto those that love His appearing.

I leave these scriptures with you to study at your leisure. But the great point on my own heart was just this, that here, in the scriptures themselves that I have read, we are told of an infinite power that lies in God's Holy Spirit, and He is here. In the days of our Lord, when it was announced that He was here, the multitudes flocked to Him. The Holy Spirit is here now, and is He not neglected? By the world most surely, but what about those among whom He dwells, and those who have Him in their hearts, to

rise in the morning with Him, to lay their head on the pillow with Him. What effect has it? Does it not make a difference between you and the man who has not the Spirit?

Oh beloved friends, let us take these scriptures and study them, and apply them by God's grace to the circumstances in which we find ourselves, that we may be, through His gracious Spirit, more to His glory and praise.

The Lord is at hand. The Lord is coming. The time is rapidly passing away. The Lord will call, and the time of testimony depart. Oh, let us make use of the moments that we have now. Let us surrender ourselves. If we will only come down in humbleness of heart, the Spirit of God will exalt us, and make us to praise His Name.