



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Galatians 5:13-26

"Life By the Spirit"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Will you take your Bibles now and turn with me to Galatians chapter 5, verse 13 through verse 26 for our Scripture reading. Galatians chapter 5, verse 13 through verse 26.

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of 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 you may not do the things that ye would. But if ye be led by the Spirit, (the apostle assumes that is so for the sake of discussion) ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousy, wrath, factions, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and the like: of the which I tell you before, as I also have told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (That word do in the latter part of verse 21 is the Greek word that means practice. And

so the reference here is to a practice, a bent of life. They who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God). But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, (and here the word faith undoubtedly has the force of faithfulness) faithfulness, Meekness, self control: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, (again, the apostle assumes this to be so for the sake of argument). If we live in the Spirit, or by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let's bow together in a time of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we turn with thanksgiving and praise to Thee to render to Thee the worship that is due unto Thine marvelous and wonderful name. We thank Thee and praise Thee for a Father in heaven who has loved us and has given his only begotten Son that we might be saved.

We are grateful for the plan of redemption and we thank Thee for the marvelous wisdom and mercy manifested in it. We thank Thee for the marvelous way in which the name of God has been revealed in mercy, in grace, in love, in wisdom, and in judgment. We thank Thee for all of the things that have to do with the nature and attributes of our great God. We desire, Lord, to know Thee and to worship Thee as Thou truly art.

We pray that our time together in the ministry of the word and reflection upon it, in the Sunday school classes that follow, and especially around the Lord's table, may be the means of growth and grace for all of us. May at the end of this day we have a deeper and a more personal conception of all that Thou art. We pray that this week, this first day of the week, may be days in which Thy name is lifted up and exulted and glorified in a

most practical way in all of the activities of it. We commit the week to Thee. We thank Thee for this, the first day, a lovely day, that Thou hast given to us.

And Father we thank Thee for the privilege of prayer. We thank Thee for the privilege of a part in what Thou art doing. We thank Thee that the predestinating purpose of God includes all of the means whereby those in shall be accomplished; prayer, witnessing, the reading of the Scriptures, the fellowship and council, and exhortation and conviction that comes from our friends. We thank Thee and praise Thee for all that Thou hast revealed in holy Scripture.

And Father we pray for the whole church of Jesus Christ and not simply Believers Chapel. We pray that Thy hand may be upon the body, which Thou hast brought into existence for spiritual good. We ask that if it should please Thee through the preaching of the word of God in the meetings of the Saints today many will come to know him whom to know his life eternal. And may each of us who are members of the church of Jesus Christ through the faith given by our God in him, may that church be strengthened and edified.

We ask especially for the Chapel too, for its ministry, its outreach, its elders, and deacons, and members, and friends, and visitors who are here with us. Lord, may there be spiritual blessing experience by all of us that will not only rejoice us but glorify Thy name. We pray for our country and for our President. And we especially remember those who are suffering and in difficulty and trials and some who are bereaving. We pray, Lord, for all of them and we ask that Thou alt minister to them in most marvelous way. Guide and direct our elders and our deacons. Particularly we pray for the elders, that Thou alt give them wisdom and strength and counsel that comes from Thee. We commit the ministry of the word to Thee and the singing of the hymns of this day to Thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today in the exposition of Paul's letter to the Galatians is Life By the Spirit. The apostle in the Epistle to the Galatians has brought us to the place where he had begun to speak about the Christian life. Now that we have it how shall we live in it.

For many of us, unfortunately, the alternatives are either life under the Mosaic code or under law for favor with God. Or to the other extreme, license, a freedom that leads to license. Historically the Antinomians, or those who were supposedly against law, that's the meaning of that expression, and the Puritans fought over the place of the law in the believer's life. The former, the Antinomians, castigated the Puritans for resorting to what they call the whippings of the law to control believer's daily lives. Bunyon, who was a Puritan in theology, had Christian's say in the Pilgrim's Progress speaking of the Antinomians, "I walk by the rule of my master, you walk by the rude workings of your fancies. It was a bitter struggle, it is a struggle that really is not over." But generally speaking among the Calvinists the Puritan position prevailed. I think if we were to express what they came to believe it might be expressed in the words of Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, and verse 19 through 21, in which the apostle says,

"For though I am free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them who are under the law; (you'll notice he said, 'not being myself under the law.' That was his position.) to them that are without law, as without law, being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law."

So the apostle expresses his viewpoint as being not under law but still in-lawed to Christ. The apostle, I think, took a position that was quite similar to the Puritan position with, but yet he did not put the believer under Moses code. He proposed something like

a third alternative. On the one hand, under Moses law, on the other hand, in license, and he proposed life in the liberty of the Holy Spirit. Life under the Spirit.

Now, he insisted that that life fulfill the righteousness that was in the law that we find, I think, very clearly expressed in Romans chapter 8, in verse 4 where in speaking about the law he has just said,

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law, (now I noticed that) that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

In other words, the apostle's freedom that he speaks about, this freedom to be under the spirit, is not a freedom that led to violation of the righteousness contained in the Mosaic law, but at the same time we are not under the Mosaic law as a code. So the author of the law, the Holy Spirit, is now the believer's guide. We are free from bondage, we are free for obedience to God out of love, implanted in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has brought home to us the significance of the death of the second person of the trinity for us. John Stoddard said, "Christian freedom is freedom from sin, not freedom to sin." We do not have a freedom to sin.

If I may use an old illustration which I have used before in Believers Chapel, incidentally when I get too old is when I use the same illustration twice in the same message. That's when I want you to come and tap me on the shoulder and say, "Your place is in the congregation and not behind the pulpit." It has been done, incidentally, a number of times by the elderly.

If I may use, however, an illustration that I have used previously, when we were living in Britain one of the greatest things that impressed itself upon us when we first got there was the fact that almost everybody in Britain seemed to own a dog. Dogs seem to

be everywhere, particularly in the late afternoons when people came out of their flats in order to walk them. Another thing I read in connection with this was a book written by a Frenchman. He wrote it as an Englishman explaining life in Britain, as I remember, and his name was Major Thompson. He had a lot of interesting things to say about the British. But one of the things that he said I really identified with after I saw British life with so many dogs on the streets. He said, "If dogs had a Pope the Vatican would be in London." [Laughter] And that really was something that I could empathize with.

There are three kinds of dogs, incidentally I don't pose as a philosopher of K-9 animals, but I have observed that there are three kinds of dogs. There are dogs that have law but no liberty. They are the types of dogs that come out on their master's chains. They want to be free but they cannot be free. If they see something that they want to go after, to sniff at, there is that inevitable chain. If there is another dog and they want to make an acquaintance with that dog, there is the inevitable chain. They are unhappy because they have law but no liberty.

Then there is the kind of dog that has liberty but no law. If dogs could speak I would imagine that they would say to those who are under chain, "It would be wonderful if you could be like I am, my master doesn't use a chain. As a matter of fact he lets me go anywhere I want to, I can roam all over the neighborhood." We have a few dogs like that in our neighborhood right now and I want you to know they are in danger [Laughter]. A dog that has freedom and no law is a likely subject for the pound, to start with, and the neighbors I should say. And also he is a likely subject to find himself under an automobile or a truck. He has liberty but he has no law.

Then there is the dog that loves its master. He comes forth with his master for a walk in the late afternoon and he bounds off but he always comes back to his master. He's always under his master's control because he is regulated by the law of the liberty. That is, he has a love for his master and the love for his master is the thing that dominates him. That dog is a safe and a happy dog.

Now in the life in the Spirit there are those who are under law and have no liberty. The result is that there is often biting and devouring of one another, as the apostle speaks about. If I were to give just a word of commentary on the struggles of Armstrongism at the present time it is because the head of that movement has never given anything but a kind of glib moralism and a kind of legalism in the proclamation over the radio and over television, and the struggles now going on within that movement are the product of the legalism which has been espoused over the radio and over TV.

Many years ago I had the privilege of hearing one of the great Bible teachers of the last generation or so, William R. Newell. When I was a Christian the first book that I read on the Bible was William R. Newell's Verse-by-Verse commentary on Romans. It was entitled Romans Verse-by-Verse. Mr. Newell was a Presbyterian minister who engaged in a wide Bible teaching ministry generally among non-Presbyterian churches in the latter half of his life. He had large Bible classes in the Chicago area and was a very effective teacher of the word. In his later years he had arthritis so bad that when he would preach he would sit down in a chair. And he was a marvelous teacher of the Scriptures.

I happened to have the privilege of hearing him and of course it meant a great deal to me because his book on Romans started me out on some fairly sound doctrine. In his commentary on Hebrews called Hebrews Verse-by-Verse he tells a little story of something that happened in one of his Bible classes. There was a large group present and he was speaking on Romans. Now Mr. Newell wrote the book on Romans, revised it several times, changing his views occasionally, and in fact he taught it so often that his wife used to say, "He is written on Romans and he's taught Roman's so many times that he thinks he wrote it and not Paul." [Laughter] That's what his wife used to say.

Well one night he was teaching it and he had taught Romans chapter 7 in which he had pointed out that the believer according to Paul had died to law. A young man in the audience who was a married man objected to it, he said that if we have died to the

law and we are not under the Mosaic law well then we have no means for preserving obedience in the Christian life.

Well Mr. Newell spoke with him but did not get very far with him, however the man kept attending with his wife and as they were seated there one evening he had just been told that the young man had recently been married. So in the middle of the class he came down from the platform, for he saw the young couple in about the second row, he walked over to the young couple and he said, "I understand that you've lately been married." And the man reddened with embarrassment, as you might expect, and said, "Yes." Mr. Newell says, "Does your wife obey you?" Now you can tell this happened a long time ago [Laughter]. "Does your wife obey you?" The young man said, "Certainly." He said, "Have you got kitchen rules posted up in the kitchen for her to obey?" He said, "No." "Do you have dining room rules posted up, parlor rules posted?" And the young man said, "Yeah - no." [Laughter] "Do you have any kind of rules posted?" And he said, "No." "And yet you claim," Mr. Newell says, "that your wife obeys you, why?" "Well," he said, "she loves me." And that really for Mr. Newell settled a question and seemed to settle the question for them.

Because that is really what the apostle proclaims. He proclaims a third way. Not life under the law, not life in license, but life under the Holy Spirit. And in this relationship to the Holy Spirit, grounded in the love of Christ, there is the strength and the enablement to fulfill the righteousness that is in the law and please God. I think that is essentially what the apostle is saying through this section and through the other sections of his epistles in which he speaks on the relationship between the law and the Spirit.

We look now first at the exhortation that he gives against license in verse 13 through verse 15. And first of all he tells us what we, as Christians, have been called to. Incidentally if I am speaking to some in the audience today who are not believers in Christ you are not Christians, your first responsibility of course is not to learn anything about walking by the Spirit, for you do not have the Holy Spirit. Your responsibility is to

believe in our Lord Jesus Christ in order that you might be saved. And then having been saved the Holy Spirit comes to indwell you and then your responsibility is to him to who has come to indwell you. These words are written for believers. These are written for those who have already received the Lord Jesus as their own Savior.

The apostle says, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty." Now that is his basic position. We have been called unto liberty, we are not under the Mosaic code. We have been freed from that. As Peter says, "Neither we nor our fathers were able to bear that code," but we are in freedom now. The historical situation out of which Paul writes is, of course, the relationship of circumcision to salvation. He was speaking primarily to individuals who have become confused and were thinking that a person could be saved by believing in Christ, and also adding to that the right of circumcision.

Now of course that situation does not prevail today. That was the historical situation then. The apostle had pointed out that in verse 3 that if a man is circumcised he is a debtor to do the whole law because in the Bible we do not know any kind of separation of the law into its moral's civil and ceremonial aspects.

Now in analyzing the Mosaic law we often say the Mosaic law was composed of the moral law of the Ten Commandments, the civil law of the laws among the Israelites for their daily life, and then the ceremonial law of the priesthood and the offerings which pointed forward in an educative way to the coming of Jesus Christ. So we are inclined to say the law had three parts. But that is an analysis that we have made concerning the law.

In the law itself there is no justification for saying the law is made up of three parts so that we could possibly say we can say we are under one part of the law but not under another part of the law. It is sometimes customary for people to say we are no longer under the ceremonial law, we don't have to bring animal sacrifices but we are under the Ten Commandments as Moses code. There is no justification in Scripture for separating the parts of the law. As James says if we violate one, we violate all. The law,

we have said, is like a pane of glass, it is not like a bundle of straw or sticks in which you can break one and not break the others. But being a pane of glass when you break any part of it you break it all. He says if you be circumcised you're a debtor to do the whole law. The whole law.

And incidentally the right of circumcision was a right to belonged to the civil law of Moses. So you see what he is saying is the law is a unity and consequently you cannot be under a part of it and not under all. So the idea that we are under Ten Commandments but not under the civil and ceremonial part of the law does not have any justification in the Bible, so far as I can tell.

Now I have some very good friends who hold that position and I do respect them for it and I am not angry with them. But I do not think that that is found in holy Scripture. Let me, however, make an application here. It is possible, you know, for people to be under law and at the same time say they are not under law. That is, it's possible for us to manufacture a form of legalism. There is a negative kind of legalism and also a positive kind of legalism that exists among those who think they are free from the Mosaic law.

Now, if you've traveled around the United States at all you know there are different kinds of churches in this country. In certain parts of the United States there are certain taboos that have been invented by Christians. These taboos often have the authority of the word of God, and I might say occasionally have an authority higher than the word of God, because they are observed when things in the word of God are not observed. Let me just give you some of them, and I don't recommend these things, I'm using them as illustrations. Smoking, smoking has been a taboo. It has been a measure of spirituality in churches. If a person smokes he's unspiritual. If he doesn't smoke he therefore is spiritual. He has gained some merit before God. Drinking, even taking a drink. Wearing lipstick. Going to the beauty parlor. Attending movies, Opera. This is a kind of give-up Christianity.

I remember I had a friend in Houston, she was a lady, she was very, very wonderful company. She had been a Christian for a little while and she wasn't totally sanctified from - by that I mean she had not given in to the taboos that the Christians had taken as Christian taboos. She said she was speaking to a friend who had just been converted. And this friend said she had been converted and now she was no longer smoking, drinking, wearing lipstick, going to the movies, the Opera, and various other types of things. And she said it in such a way that it was obvious she was quite proud of what she had been able to accomplish. And my friend who had a very sly sense of humor said, "I think I would have enjoyed knowing you better before you were saved than since you've been saved." [Laughter]

But there are people who have this give-up kind of Christianity. This negative legalism. Often they are unaware of it. Give up Baby Ruth's on Monday, Twinkies on Tuesday [Laughter], TV on Saturday morning between six and seven in the morning, of course. This kind of give-up Christianity over looks the inward sins, envy, jealousy, gossip, hate. Why, these sins are popular among Christians. You can be a Christian and a spiritual Christian and gossip. You can get on the telephone and rip the saints up and down, but if you don't do this or do that you are recognized as spiritual. It is sad, but it is very true.

And then there is the positive kind of legalism. You know, we are spiritual because we read the Bible. Now, of course, I'm for reading the Bible. It's the greatest means to spiritual growth that exists probably. But if we read the Bible in order to gain merit before God and to impress our friends with our spirituality, we have lost the value of the reading of Scripture. Witnessing in order to make points before God, prayer. You can use the greatest things in a legalistic way. What we have is a spirituality by works and that, of course, is another form of legalism. It is a testimony to the ingenuity of the old nature, that we can take the greatest of things and make them the most heinous of spiritual sins.

Paul says we have been called to liberty. Now he says we have not been called to license. Notice the next part of verse 13, "Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh." In other words, in our liberty we must not give in to any form of license, in any freedom to sin. We have freedom from sin but not to sin. And the Pauline anecdote is expressed in the remainder of this section,

"But through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

The bondage of love, the love implanted by the Holy Spirit in the heart of believers. Love for Jesus Christ. That kind of love in its expression fulfills all the righteous demands of the law. What a wonderful thing it is to be free to love and in this way to serve one another. I'm not talking about weak, sentimental kind of love in which you give a hearty handshake and a number of teeth to your friends, but do not really love them. I mean the kind of love that serves one another. The kind of love that means a committal, and again, out of freedom. Out of the freedom of grace.

Now the apostle exhorts concerning the walk by the Spirit. This is the marvelous third way which Paul expands, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." That's a marvelous promise, isn't it, "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." In other words, walking by the Spirit, by the dictates of the Spirit, allowing him to be the law of our life, this person, then we shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Now he does not say we shall not have the lust of the flesh, he says we shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

I know that people find this very difficult, especially if they have been brought up learning the Ten Commandments and having the Ten Commandments posted on all the doors of the Sunday school classrooms, that was the kind of existence in which I grew

up. The Ten Commandments ultimately became a way of salvation to me. But let us remember this, God got along for twenty-five hundred years without the law. For it was twenty-five hundred years after the existence of the human race that God finally gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. Now he ran things pretty well during those days and there was no Mosaic law. Now that we do not have the Mosaic law as a code under which we should be we can count upon God to run things pretty well. So the fact that we did not have a law for that lengthy period of time should be evidence to us that we do not have to have a Mosaic law today.

Now he says in verse 17, here's the cause, "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 or may not do the things that ye would." He says that there is a conflict that is going on between the flesh and the Spirit. Ishmael and Isaac still struggle in the heart of the Christian who has come to faith in Christ. He does not deny that there is success in the Christian life, but he says that the success is in the midst of struggle. That means, by the way, that we shall always have struggle in the Christian life. Even after we've been Christians for years and years, and if managed by the enablement of the Holy Spirit to grow we can expect, still, to have struggle. As long as we are in the flesh the principle of sin dwells in our flesh and there is a struggle. We should not forget that. Now be surprised by it, but be prepared for it.

But while there is struggle there is also the possibility of success. He's not denying success, he's simply saying that the success does not come in our own power. Now listen to what he says in the 18th verse, "If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." To be led by the Spirit is the birthright of every Christian. Do you know that every single believer in Christ is led by the Holy Spirit? We do not have to ask the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us, he is leading us. In Romans chapter 8, and verse 14, the apostle says, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." In other words, the sons of God are distinguished among others by the fact that they are led by

the Holy Spirit. Every Christian is led by the Holy Spirit. Our responsibility is not to seek for him to lead us, our responsibility is to respond to his guidance which he gives. He leads every one of us. And if he is leading us we are not under law because we cannot have two masters. Our master is the Holy Spirit. To put us under law is to put us under another master, contrary to this greatest of all masters who wrote the law in the first place, the Holy Spirit.

What does he do within the heart of a Christian? Well he gives constant, effective, beneficent guidance, bringing us to maturity in his sanctifying influences so that ultimately we shall be conformed to the image of Christ. Now we all know that we were saved by grace, do we not? We are not saved by anything that we do. We are not even saved by our free will, are we. For if we are saved through the exercise of our free will then there is still an element of human works in our salvation. Now if it is true that we are saved by grace, that's the meaning of grace, by something God does for us, it is also true that we are sanctified by grace. And it is the Holy Spirit who works sovereignly in the hearts of the saints to sanctify the saints. And he's going to sanctify every one of us.

Fight him if you want to. Struggle with him. Do not allow him, if you possibly can, to continue his ministry, but he will still continue it. It is just like that irresistible grace that brought you finally to willingness and salvation. He will do the same in sanctification and he will ultimately sanctify every Christian. Make it difficult for him if you like, make it difficult for yourself, but he will do it, nevertheless. Many people are not saved until they've passed through the most horrible experiences. But nevertheless, having their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, they get there. It's a costly experience. The same thing is true in the Christian life. You can make it difficult for yourself, but he is going to take his Christians and ultimately conform them to the Lord Jesus Christ. He will do it in sovereign grace, not through your free will as a Christian. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure," written to Christians.

Now, my wife told me not to tell this illustration, again, but I'm going to do it [Laughter]. Years ago I used to, I read a lot of H. A. Ironside, I like Mr. Ironside. Some of his stories always interested me. He used to tell the story of an Indian, he'd worked among the Indians, who was giving his testimony. And this Indian had been saved and he said, "After I was saved everything went wonderfully, until finally, however, I discovered that there was another law in my members that I hadn't taken account of." He said, "You know, it was like two big dogs fighting within me. One was a great big black dog and it always wanted me to do contrary to the will of God. And the other was a great big white dog and it always wanted to do the things that pleased the Lord. And they were always scrapping and fighting in me. And have been even until this day." And he kind of stopped and one of the other Indians sitting around the fire looked over and rather iconically said, "Which one wins?" He said, "Whichever one I say sick him to." [Laughter]

Now I used to think that was a great illustration until I discovered, really, the significance of the freedom of the will. That's a bad illustration. It's not whichever one I say sick him to. Ultimately the victory that we have is a victory wrought by God, the Holy Spirit. It is he who wills and works in us to do after his good pleasure.

Well, now I must answer a question. How can we tell when we are led by the Spirit and led by the flesh? Well, Paul was a very practical man, he tells us how we can know. He gives evidence here of the two kinds of life. He says now if you are led of the flesh instead of the Spirit, this is what you will see. He says, "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife," all of these sins. And finally he gives up and he says, "And such things." It's a rather interesting thing that in the vocabularies of men they are far richer in sins than they are in virtues. I am told that, for example, in Tasmania that there are twenty-one different words, I think, for infanticide. In other words, the human race is very prolific in its expression of the sins of the flesh.

The apostle gives up, he says, "And things like these." Listen, if your life is characterized by any of these things you are not being led by the Spirit. These are things that are the works of the flesh. The Spirit does not produce them, he speaks of sex sins, social sins, spiritual sins, they're all here. These are the evidences of a life not controlled by the Holy Spirit. And further he says if these represent the bent of your life, if this is characteristic of your life, then you are not going to inherit the kingdom of God, because the salvation that we possess as Christians is a salvation from sin. And it must have its ultimate issue in the daily life.

Well, what about the Spirit? What does he produce? And we read, "But the fruit of the Spirit," what a beautiful expression. Not fruits, incidentally. This is like the Book of Revelations, it's the Book of Revelation, singular. It's the fruit, singular, of the Spirit. As a matter of fact you cannot say that you have the fruit of the Spirit if you do not have all of these virtues. You may say I have the virtue of joy, I have the virtue of peace, but you cannot say you have the fruit of the Spirit if you do not have them all.

Ruth Paxson who has written a very good book on Ephesians has said that, "What we have here," you see, I do listen to women, after all, [Laughter] in their interpretation of the word of God. Ruth Paxson says that, "What is represented here is the full orb, symmetrical life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nine beautiful virtues are arranged in groups of three, love, joy, peace, and so on.

It is a beautiful expression and it does reflect the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the fruit of the Spirit. Incidentally fruit is something that is the product of a life within the tree or the bush. It is the product of life, the fruit of the Spirit is that produced by the Holy Spirit who lives in the hearts of the saints, it's not a work, it's fruit. That is the product of the Spirit.

Now he says, for again for those who say is it possible for us not being under law to please God? He says at the end of verse 23, "Against such there is no law." In other words, the person who in subjection to the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit

finds that when the law of Moses examines the fruit of the Spirit the law of Moses can find no flaw in that kind of life. The life by the Spirit fulfills the righteousness of the law. We are not under a lower standard when we walk by the Spirit, we are under a higher standard of life. Under the Holy Spirit. The difference between being under a code and under a person. I do not in any way intend to denigrate the Mosaic law, it was a great expression of the righteousness of God. But it is in the liberty of freedom under the Spirit that we give the greatest respect to the law of Moses. We are inlawed to Christ. And we listen to the words of our Lord, which are said in the New Testament to be commandments and the Holy Spirit always leads in the way of the commandments of our Lord Jesus, in the way of the word of God. But we are not under Moses code. We are under him, the Holy Spirit.

Now he says as he concludes, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." He speaks of our position in Christ. And then he adds, "If we live in the Spirit," and he assumes that, that we do live by the Spirit, "let us also walk by the Spirit." If you'll give me just a minute or two I do need to say something about this.

In verse 16 when he said, "This I say then, walk by the Spirit," he used a word which has to do with the general bent of life. But in verse 25 when he says, "Let us also walk by the Spirit," if we live by the Spirit, and we do, let us also take each step by the Spirit. Walking by the Spirit is a puzzle to people. How do we walk by the Spirit?

You know, when the Lord Jesus says, "You are fishers of men," fishermen understand a great deal about witnessing because they know fishing. Fishing enables you to understand a great deal about how to witness. Well if you want to know how to walk by the Spirit, study walking. Have you ever noticed how babies learn to walk? They don't theorize, they don't sit in their high chair and look and see father and analyze what he's doing. You won't find any child who said, "Walking is rather easy, I've analyzed it philosophically. What you do is you put one foot out, transfer your weight to that foot, then move the next foot out, transfer your weight to that foot. Keeping them apart so that

you have good balance." And then the child to take the highchair and put it over its head, slide out and walk. You don't do that. You don't find that. You'll never find it.

Reason I know that is that my children didn't do it that way. Nor do my grandchildren do it that way. How do babies learn to walk? Well in the first place they roll over on the bed. You remember when they rolled over the first time, "Look, Johnny has rolled over on the bed." Of course he rolled off and hit his head, but nevertheless he rolled. He's rolling. And then he's sitting up. And then he's crawling. And then he's on his feet, hanging on to pieces of furniture. And he's now able to make his way from one piece of furniture to another piece. He collapses against the side of it, but nevertheless he can make it. And finally he takes one step and then collapses. Either sits down from fear or topples over from excess of courage. And soon he's walking. Very unsteadily. This happens over a period of time. Finally he can walk, but of course he never reaches the place where he cannot fall. And as he gets older and older and reaches his maturity, walks well. But then when he gets older than that, well he finds that the old habits return and he's falling. He's not walking as well as he used to. But he learned to walk by walking.

That's the way we learn to walk by the Spirit, by walking. It's to wake up in the morning and say, "Lord, this is your day, I want to walk by the Spirit. Give me some indication of what your will is for me today." It's expressed in the word of God. Lord, I'm going with the help of the Holy Spirit to trust the word of God today. Go out and have your fall, it'll be fun. But through the process of listening for the Spirit's guidance, for his leading, as he leads and directs you, you will come to understand what it is to walk by the spirit. And thus, you shall no longer fulfill the lusts of the flesh. And you shall have the joy and happiness of which the apostle speaks when he says, "Brethren, ye were called to liberty." The liberty of the freedom to be under the Holy Spirit and no longer under Moses code, I commend to you this third way, it is the way of liberty, it is

the way of life, it is the way of joy. Our time is passed, we must stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these words from the Apostle Paul, which has so beautifully expressed for us the freedom that we have under the new covenant. And we pray, oh God, that in our liberty we may not fall into license. May our lives be distinguished by the holiness of them, through the Spirit. May we have the true freedom, the freedom that comes from Thee. And oh God, if it should please Thee enable us to learn to walk by means of the Spirit. If there should be some here who have never come to Christ, oh God, through the Holy Spirit remind them of the blood that was shed for sinners, remind them of their own sin, cause them by Thy grace to flee to him and to his sacrifice for salvation. May grace, mercy, and peace go with us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.