

Walk in the Spirit

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon emphasizes the importance of walking in the spirit and living in accordance with the Holy Spirit's guidance and power.

Duration: 54:27

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:42, Galatians 5:13-15, Ephesians 5:18

Topics: "Spirit Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the presence of God and the need for repair work in our relationship with Him due to sin. He discusses the current trend of cell groups, where believers gather in smaller groups to share their needs, victories, and pray for one another. The preacher explains that sin breaks our connection with God, making us unaware of His presence. He then turns to the book of Galatians, specifically chapter 5, and highlights the importance of walking in the Spirit and using our freedom in Christ to serve one another in love.

Transcript

This evening to Galatians chapter 5, fifth chapter, the epistle of Paul to the Church of Galatia. I shall begin reading with the thirteenth verse and conclude with the end of the chapter. Galatians chapter 5, verses 13 to the end.

Our theme this evening is Walk in the Spirit. For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion in the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. For may I stop, years ago a gentleman in Chicago brought a message on this theme entitled Christian Cannibalism. I think that the theme was appropriate to the text, do you not? This I say then, walk in the spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like.

Of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law, and they that are Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. To consider the Christian life, apart from the place and ministry of the third person of the Trinity, of the Holy Spirit, is to turn the grace of God into a mere shadow or picture of its reality.

Let me explain exactly what I mean. Were you to see only God in his majesty on the throne condemning you as a sinner because of your multiplied crimes against his holiness and justice, then were you to see the Lord Jesus Christ dying for you, a sinner, in your place instead. And were you simply by the operation of your mind upon this word to receive the truth, and in so receiving the truth, assurance of forgiveness or awareness from the text of forgiveness, and you were not to meet and know God in his omnipresence, then I say the Christian life would be like a photograph.

It would have just two dimensions, length and height, but there would be no dimension of reality, no dimension of experiential content and quality. Therefore, as the word of God makes quite clear to us the place of the majesty of God, God and his sovereignty on the throne, equally clear to us the work of Christ in mercy and compassion and grace, the Church usually stops there. This is actually the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, but there is a tendency on the part of men to ignore the person of the Godhead or the means of revelation that God uses at any given time.

For instance, when God please to use Moses as the vehicle of communication with Israel, the people murmured against Moses. But when God sent the judges, they murmured against the judges and said, we have Moses. Then when God sent the prophets, they said, we have Moses and the judges, and they rejected the prophets, stoned them, killed them, and then built sepulchers over their graves.

When our Lord Jesus came, they said, we have Moses and the prophets, and they crucified Christ. Today the tendency is to say, we have the Word and Christ, and ignore the person and work of God the Holy Spirit. This seems to be a tendency in Church history and Bible history to ignore the person of the Godhead administering and operating at any given time.

Afraid of God could be that which characterizes, afraid to meet God and to know him and to contact him. Now, perhaps we would, some might say, the Spirit of God is mysterious. There's a quality here that's difficult to understand.

Who is he? Just a word, for we certainly haven't time to develop all the scripture might say on this, but the Holy Spirit is God. God in his omnipresence. God who is here.

Now we understand that the Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and with the Son, because one of the names of Jehovah is the name Jehovah Shammah, the Lord who is there. We recognize that David understood this. A man went to an Episcopal clergyman some years ago and said, I have been an atheist for years of my life, and I would like to return to the Church and return to my faith.

The Bible is a big book. Where should I begin reading? And the clergyman properly told him this, begin with Psalm 139. Meditate upon it until the truth of it grips your heart.

Why? What was it that's uniquely presented in Psalm 139? The testimony of David. Whither shall I flee from thy spirit? Whither shall I go from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost part of the sea, there thy hand leads me and thy right hand sustains me. And the testimony therefore that David gave was this, that God is omnipresent. Now this one, a person of the Godhead, the omnipresent one is the Holy Spirit.

Our Lord Jesus said, God is Spirit. And thus when Paul spoke on Mars Hill and declared, in him we live and move and have our being, he was stating a basic truth of our faith. It is thus that everyone is walking in the Spirit.

Even Khrushchev, if you please, is as near geographically to God as the most devout Christian you would know. Now let me explain what I mean. In him we live and we move and we have our being.

God is as near as the light that's now shining on your face. He is as near as the air that's now cooling your brow from the fan. He is not the air and he is not the light.

But he is as near as the air and as near as the light. For you understand that God is Spirit. God is Spirit and God is omnipresent Spirit.

Now there is no segment of the Church in history that has seriously questioned or debated or challenged the basic attribute of God, his omnipresence. Omnipresence. This means that God is everywhere present.

Now let me say it again. God is as near as the air you breathe. He is as near as the light upon your face.

He's here. But you understand that we do not see him with our eyes, nor do we feel him with our nerve ends located in the skin, nor do we taste him with our taste buds, nor is he smelled with our nostrils. The senses that we have were given of God for this world of time and sense.

But the Word makes it abundantly clear that God is here. I remember reading years ago, and I mentioned it several times, the professor that was an avowed atheist. And so to trick the class, he said, I want you to go to the board, to one of the lads, and write this statement.

And he spelled it out. And the boy wrote it down. What it was supposed to have read was this.

God is nowhere. But the lad had simply made a mistake in spacing his letters. And what the people read was this.

God is now here. And this is the basic truth of our faith. God is now here.

The world says he's nowhere. When the Gagarin came down from his trip around the globe, he said, there's no God up there. Well, I didn't see him when I was out in space.

Of course, the silly man realized that every one of us can, on a clear night, see the moon, and beyond that, 95 million miles away to the sun. And obviously, if God had tangible representation, he could have been seen from here as well as from there. But it still made good propaganda, and some, I suppose, were impressed with it, though most of us thought that it was like a little child whistling by the cemetery, trying to deny the reality of death by his tuneful squeak.

And this is what it sounded like to me, that they were trying to deny the reality of God. But nevertheless, we know that he is there. But he's not seen from the window of a capsule.

He's not seen with the eyes. But he is still there. I said Khrushchev is geographically as near to God as the most devout man walking on the face of the earth today.

What is the difference? Well, the sinners all, every sinner, he doesn't have to have the magnitude and proportions of a Khrushchev, but everyone that is an alien toward God and an enemy of God, it has his faculties for knowing God out of operation. We have at home the radio. It's been with us a good many years, and it has an FM band.

Now, sometime along the way, something happened, and we have, I have difficulty with it, because it will be listening to something quite desirable and pleasant, some concert or something that I enjoy hearing on FM, and all of a sudden it stops. Well, I suppose if I took it down and had a repairman adjust whatever it is, it would be fixed. But I've discovered that if I fiddle with it, you know, just a little, one way or the other, I'm never sure whether it's this way or that, so I usually do both, push, pull, twist.

Perhaps you've known appliances like that. And then it'll come on and say, now it's fixed, and a little while later it goes off again. It's there, the music is there, but just this little minute adjustment is sufficient to stop all of the reception.

And so it is that sin breaks the connection so that a person can live in God's presence and be utterly unaware of him. We understand that the presence of God in the universe is the same everywhere, wherever one would go, by whatever spaceflight they'd means. David said, if I take the wings of the morning, go to the uttermost part of the sea, whatever it is, wherever I go, said he, there his hand leads me and his right hand sustains me.

And so we understand that God is perfectly filling the universe with all that is essential to his being. Let me say that again. What God is here, what God is anywhere, he is everywhere.

But the question will well be asked, why is it then that we speak of the third heaven? Why is it that this is the home of the angels where they dwell? Why should it be that there is something other there than here? And the answer is that God has condescended to respect our frame. He remembers that we're dust. Years ago I was in a prayer meeting, and one of the brethren got carried away.

I'll never forget it. It was quite an eerie sensation. And in great vehemence of spirit, he said, O God, reveal thyself in this room tonight with the same glory that you're revealing yourself in heaven.

And all I could do was whisper a little P.S. when he finished and said, Lord, remember that he's just enthusiastic. Please don't do it. Because if he had, we all would have been disintegrated, for God is light.

And these frames of ours have peculiarly low tolerance for light. And this is the reason why this mortal must put on immortality, and this corruptible must put on incorruptibility. Because if God were to take us into heaven with the bodies we now wear, he'd have to make something even more protective than the so-called fallout shelters.

He'd have to get us down about twice as far and twice as deep to protect us from the unveiling of himself. For these frames could not look upon him and live, for he is light, infinitely brighter and more glorious than anything that he has made, when the revelation of himself is complete. But just as a person can be on an

airplane as frequently as I have been, and not know the one sitting across the aisle, not recognize someone that later in the newspaper you read was on the same flight, and perhaps a government official or someone in arts, letters, or entertainment, and you were sitting next to them but were not aware of who they were, so it is that we can be in the presence of God and be unaware of his presence and unaware of his nature and his person.

You see, a person might be a preacher, as I am, and yet I am under no compulsion to get up at the front end of the plane and make an announcement that I'm a preacher, and because I'm a preacher I have to preach. There's an appropriate place to do it. Perhaps I'm being met at the airport and carried to a service where they're expecting, and they've prepared, and they've anticipated, and they welcome the ministry, but they certainly didn't on the airline.

And so it is that God does not reveal himself to all. He only reveals himself to those that are prepared to meet him, and desirous of meeting him, and longing to see him, but not to all. Thus we can be in his presence and be unaware of his presence.

So this fact we establish right now, God is here. Whether you feel him or not, whether you sense him or not, whether you know him or not, this book declares God is here. As near as the air you breathe, as close as anything can be, he is here.

All objects in the universe are imminent in his presence. He is here. Now we do not confuse this with pantheism.

We're not saying that the objects he's made are God. This is what the pantheist says, that God is the sum of all that he has made. And this we categorically deny.

He made the wood. He made the metal. It's been shaped and formed by men, but he gave it its original character and quality.

But he is not the wood or the metal. But the metal and the wood are in his presence, and he is here. And every step we take and every breath we breathe, we move through his presence and we breathe in his presence.

He is here. We live in three atmospheres. The first atmosphere is air.

We're at the bottom of a sea of air. It extends, we're told, something like 17 miles above us. Exerts a pressure of some 15 pounds per square inch.

Actually we're walking at the bottom of a sea of air. And in it we live and move and have our being, yet we don't see that air. We feel it.

We're aware of its presence. We depend upon it. And as thus it is, there is the presence of God.

There's another sea that surrounds us. It's a sea of electronics. We are amazed, I'm quite amused in fact, by the fact that we have a line from here up to a tape recorder in the office.

If we put on the playback from this tape recorder, we can listen to three or four or two or three radio stations. Because here in Manhattan, the emanation from the Empire State Building, the figure in my mind, I may be completely wrong, is 250,000 watts of power that are emanating from the tower over here. And I believe I was told that if we would string a wire up and put a condenser on it, that we could actually light a

room with the effective radiation of electrical energy that's here.

But on this wire from the tape recorder, we'll get overtones of two or three different radio broadcasts. We know it's two at least, because we hear music and talking at the same time, and no single station would do that. And sometimes we hear music and talking in two languages, and so on.

So we're impressed with the fact that there's a tremendous amount of pickup. But right now, we're surrounded by a sea of electronic sound, and now with television, all the pictures. I'll never forget the time in Africa when I had a little radio that I fixed up with a battery connection, and I had visitors from the Coma tribe that came.

They sat there talking. I knew about 50 words of Arabic. They knew about the same number.

And we used them often enough, and we'd had an enjoyable evening together, especially they were looking at all this curious creature that was there. And I reached over behind me to a little box and twisted the radio. Wires went out with a snap cord to the battery and the card driven up alongside.

Soon we heard the squeaky voice of BBC from Malta, rebroadcasting a program from London. My, their eyes widened. They got big.

You could have brushed them off with a stick if you'd had one handy. They just couldn't believe it. And one of the girls got up, the sister of the wife of the young man that was there, and she went out, and I didn't ask anything about it.

Pretty soon I noticed she came around, and she very quietly came in, and she stooped down, and she looked, and she came in behind the radio, and she got way down. She came back and sat down, and then she said something. I said, what did she say? And Salia said, she said that she knows who's doing the talking.

She saw the light on their little houses back there, and you got some people in that box. Oh, no, I said, I don't have any people. And she said, don't.

And I told him, and he said, he doesn't have any people in that box. And then she got mad. She said, you tell him that I've got two good eyes in my head.

I can see a buzzard in the sky farther than anybody in our village, and you know that. And I say, there's a house there. I saw the lights on it, and there are people in there.

I could see them. And that's what he does, and just ask him what he feeds them. That's all I want to know.

What's he feeding? And I said, there aren't any people there, and there's sounds all around us, and the sounds are being picked up. And I couldn't go any further than that, because I don't understand this day or the radio. I know if you turn it on, it works, it works, and if you turn it on, it doesn't work, and you carry it away to somebody that knows how.

And that's the science of it. And so I said, I turn it on, it picks it out of the air. She said, listen, I can hear a lion roar when the rest of you folks are asleep, and you know that.

And if there's any sounds around us, I hear them, and don't let him try to tell us that there's sounds that we can't hear. We got better ears than he has. And so it was that I sent them under the night, utterly

convinced that I was the biggest liar that had ever put my feet down on African soil, because I was trying to tell them that there were sounds in the air that they couldn't hear.

Now to you, because of your culture, this doesn't seem astounding at all. You're not impressed with it. You don't feel anything about that, because you know full well that there are electronic impulses sent from various stations on wavelengths that allow you to get music and conversation and pictures through the air.

So it is when I say that God is here. I expect that you, because you hold the word of God dear, believe that I am telling you the truth, that God is here. Now, the human spirit was made to know God, but sin came in and disrupted it.

And so it is that before we can ever know the God in whose presence we live and move and have our being, there has to be some repair work done. And that is on the basis of our repentance and faith. When God, the Spirit of God, drives the truth into your heart and convicts you of sin, brings you to see the enormity of your crime, of willing your will, and the just deserts that you have of an eternity in hell, causes you to fear that eternity and fear that consequence, and brings you to that place that in fear and in grief and in repentance you throw yourself at his feet, then God in grace can breathe into you a renewing life, just as he breathed into man and man became a living soul, so he breathes again by the Holy Ghost.

And those faculties by which man knew God are repaired. And thus it is in regeneration that the human spirit has its connection soldered and set so that we can know God. And it is thus in regeneration that we have our first renewed conscious contact with God.

Now when a sinner is under conviction, God is contacting him, but all he sees is his sin. When he comes to the cross, all he sees is the Savior, and he sees the historical person Christ dying for himself, the historical sinner. And so he's aware of two objects in history, Christ then, himself now.

And God is manifest in Christ. But when he savingly embraces Christ, when he savingly receives the Son of God, then God, the Holy Ghost, regenerates him, recreates him, remakes him. And he now has the faculties fixed so that he can contact God and he can know God.

This we call the witness of the Spirit. And from that time that the Spirit of God speaks to our heart, comfort, assurance, joy, and peace, our whole process of Christian life is, can I use the terms and have them understood, to dial out the static of the world so that we can tune in on communion and fellowship with God. Now this is what the beginning.

Thus, if you were aware at the time you savingly embraced Christ, or sometime since, that God has spoken peace to your heart, God has brought joy to your spirit, that he has communicated with you and you know you've had fellowship with him, then you understand something of what is involved. We see this scripture, and you might like to note it in connection with the text, given to us in Romans chapter 8. It behooves us to understand scriptures that are as important as these. I begin with the third verse, excuse me, the fifth verse.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be fleshly minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind, the fleshly mind, is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, indeed neither can be.

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. If so thee be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. You were born of the Spirit, thus it is that the Holy Spirit himself witnesses to your heart that your sins are pardoned, you are forgiven. This is the initial contact with God and his omnipresence when you become conscious of one who has spoken peace to your heart.

But you understand it's not enough to be born of the Spirit. Oh, this is the that without, the not without which of the Scripture. Until you have been born of the Spirit there can be nothing beyond.

You see you were born of the Spirit, but you were not born full of the Spirit. The Scripture clearly commands be filled with the Spirit. And we recognize therefore that in addition to the assurance of sins forgiven, there are certain conditions that are to be met.

There are certain prerequisites that he establishes that we bring ourselves in conscious awareness of its meaning to the cross. That we present our bodies as living sacrifices and that we invite the Holy Spirit to fill us. You see it is that the Holy Spirit presents Christ to the sinner, but the enthroned Christ presents the fullness of the Holy Spirit to the cleansed saint.

And it is therefore that we are to be filled with the Spirit. This is the commandment. We recognize that this was the pattern in the New Testament.

We are to see it first given in the case of the disciples in the upper room on the day of the resurrection. Our Lord Jesus came, said, Peace be unto you. He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

And that night they did. They took that which was presented to him, they took this one as best they knew him. And he came to bring life.

But on the day of Pentecost, the one who'd come to bring a regenerating life, for their names had been written in the Lamb's Book of Life, but he said he's with you and he shall be in you. Then on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God came upon them. We see the same thing happening when Philip went down to the city of Samaria and there he preached and baptized these believers.

And Peter and John came up and prayed for them and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. And so we recognize that we're born of the Spirit, but we were not born filled with the Spirit. And how glad I am today to see that so many in different quarters are coming to the awareness of God and the privilege that it is of the child of God to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And I trust you are. And if you aren't, I trust there's deep hunger and yearning and longing in your heart to know the fullness of the Holy Spirit. But you see, there might be some that would say, well, years ago I knew that I was filled with the Spirit, and so then the appropriateness of our text.

It's not only to be a born of the Spirit, it's not only to be filled with the Spirit. But that text in Ephesians 5.18 gives another dimension, says, be ye being filled with the Spirit. I heard this morning on the radio coming into church Samuel Shoemaker from Philadelphia, formerly of New York, as he spoke on the theme, staying in the stream.

And here an Episcopal clergyman, the canon of the Bishop of Pittsburgh, was testifying to conversion and testifying to the experience of the fullness of the Spirit of God. And was speaking on the theme, how to stay in the stream. How tremendously important it is that we should understand how to stay in the stream of the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Do you understand, of course, that there is the crisis, but everything in the Christian life that begins as a crisis continues as a process. I like the way Dr. Simpson put it so many times, not just once, but so many times in his writings. He said something like this.

We go into the presence of God to in-breathe of his life, and then we go out into the presence of men to out-breathe his life. So it's to in-breathe in worship and out-breathe in witness. It's to in-breathe in fellowship and out-breathe in service.

In-breathe in love and delight in him. Out-breathe and work for him. And thus the two are joined inseparably together.

I've mentioned it before, and to some it may seem repetitious, and it is, I admit. But I know of nothing more adequate to illustrate the point. When F.B. Meyer, the brilliant young English preacher, went to dear George Mueller, that man who certainly walked in the Spirit, and he said, Father, why is it sometimes I preach with anointing, with liberty, with freedom, with power, and then again it seems so flat, seems so empty, and I seem so alone.

Why is it? And the good godly old man, even then his eyesight failing, as his memory was failing, but he knew the Lord. And he looked through his eyes of the infinite pity in the Lord, not infinite, but measured pity of the Lord, that dear young F.B. Meyer that was serving so effectively. He said, my son, it's because you breathe out twice when you've only breathed in once.

Know how many there are that look back to some experience, and they feel that because they met the Lord in a very real way then, that this is enough. It's a nod without which, it's glorious, it's wonderful to have an experiential reality when you became aware of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. But you can't warm yourself by yesterday's ashes or feed on the yesterday's loaves.

There has to be the in-breathing of his life and the in-breathing of his presence in worship, in adoration, in love. And thus, the writer of the book of Ephesians said, being filled with the Spirit. How do you walk in the Spirit? Well, obviously, you have to have a certain preparation of heart.

And this means devotional reading, daily devotional reading, living in the Word. He said, my Word is Spirit and it is life. And I think it is quite true to say that if you neglect to read and neglect your quiet time and your place of worship alone with the Lord, that your life is going to be a wandering one.

You're going to be swinging back and forth and wavering all over the road like a drunken person does that's driving, that's extremely fatigued or intoxicated. He just can't hold a straight course. And so if you're neglecting your fellowship in the Word and God speaking to you from the Word, you're wavering in and out and up and down, even though you can go back to some point in time and say, God met me.

It's imperative that we live in the Word. We must stay in the Word. We'll never outgrow our need for milk, says the advertisement of the Dairyman's Council.

Well, we never outgrow our need for the milk of the Word. We must constantly be taking it. We must be living in it and meditating upon it and reading it and feeding our hearts upon it.

And so if you want to walk in the Spirit, you must walk in the Word. Then, of course, if we're going to walk in the Spirit, we have got to walk in prayer. When I speak of prayer, I speak of the fellowship with others in their need.

I think that it's imperative that we should have a prayer list, either one that you keep up to date and you can remember and individuals for whom you're currently praying, or you have actually a list that you've written down and you keep in your Bible. Not so long and cumbersome that it's like reading a page out of the telephone directory when you present it to the Lord, but you have kept it alive before him and he's quickened it to your heart. There are some names that you may delete because others or the Lord's lifted the burden, but at any rate, there's a live fellowship with others in their need.

To walk in the Spirit, therefore, is to have something of our Lord's concern for others. Love one another, he said. Seek the best interests and greatest good of others.

This will be manifest primarily in our prayer ministry. But then I would have to have to say this, that it is absolutely imperative that between the public service, when the Word is proclaimed as we're seeking to do at this moment, and your closet where you worship the Lord, where you read the Word, and where you pray and intercede for others, I believe that one of the failures of many in walking in the Spirit is that they do not have that which was indispensable in the New Testament because of its continuous recurrence, and that is the small cell, the group that met for fellowship, for sharing, for communicating the truth. And today, as I've been telling you in these Sunday nights, there are hundreds, even thousands of groups that have sprung up across the country, many different names, many different sponsorships, many different bulletins, booklets, papers, tracts that have been put out describing their procedures and their methods.

But this could be characterized at the moment, and this has been true for three or four or five years, this phenomena, and I am sure it's going to increase dramatically in the next few years, but this could be characterized as the era of the cell group. The movement is again back to the home, four or five, six, eight or ten or twelve, meeting together to share their needs, to share their victories, and to communicate what the Lord has done, to pray one for another. Between the pulpit and the closet, there has to be this intermediate fellowship of the cell.

We find it in the Word, for there in Acts 242, they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, that was the instruction they received in the temple every morning, in fellowship, in breaking of bread and of prayers. And therefore, perhaps one reason why you have not been walking in the Spirit and enjoying his presence and seeing the release of his life has been because you have not had any place of sharing, any place of communication, any place of drawing on the experience of others and entering into the life of others and letting them join you in prayer. And we do thank God for some groups that have already sprung up and are springing up, and you know that now for six years I've been seeking to emphasize to you in one form or another the importance of this ministry.

I say it, if you want to walk in the Spirit somehow, somewhere, you must find someone with whom you can share both your desire and your victories and your defeats and failures so that they can uphold one another in prayer and be nourished by the truth that's quickened one heart to another. As important as this service is, and I do not believe God is through with it, this type of communication, for here is set forth the apostles' doctrine, the teaching of the Word, there has to be the intermediate group if there's to be growth

and nourishment. Then, of course, the last means whereby we're going to walk in the Spirit is when we understand that the Lord has a particular place and will for us.

It is true that we are incorrect in putting, we put the cart before the horse when we say we're saved to serve. This isn't the case. We, God, seek as such to worship him.

But you understand that God has a plan for your life, and he has avenues of service. Just as for every member of the body, there's a function in the work of the body. And so if you are to walk in the Spirit, there must be a conscious desire and the, not only a desire in a passive sense, but an active effort to get into the will of God for your life in expression, in ministry, in giving forth.

Because you know a cup can only be filled so far, and then it's full. And it's when the water is drunk from the cup that it can be refilled. And so it is with your life, as he said, as Dr. Simpson said, in-breathe in worship, out-breathe in witness.

There will become a spiritual atrophy to your life, unless you find some, his, not just some, but his plan of witness and expression and outflow. For he said, after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you, ye shall be witnesses unto me. Were you to say, I want the Spirit of God to come upon me, and I want to be filled with the Spirit, but I do not want to witness, then you would be exposing yourself to every kind of counterfeit.

For he tied to gather effectively and authoritatively witness with the fullness of the Spirit. And this is the witness to Christ, to his character, to his work, to his grace, to his purpose. We understand, therefore, that if we're to walk in the Spirit, we must live in the Word.

If we're to walk in the Spirit, we must live in prayer. There must be a place for prayer. If we're to walk in the Spirit, there must be fellowship.

And if we're to walk in the Spirit, then we must walk in the will of God for us in outward service, in witness for him. And then we have to respect this. We have to recognize this, that the consequence of not walking in the Spirit is dire indeed.

Would you like to see what the Spirit of God says about it? For even though we've been born of God, even though we've been pardoned, nature abhors a vacuum. And unless you're walking in the fullness of the Spirit, you are going to be--unless, if you are not walking in the Spirit, you are going to be walking in the flesh, in your habits of thinking, in your previous fixed attitudes, in your dispositions of heart. You're going to be doing things the way you did them before, according to nature, according to the old life.

And therefore, the alternate procedure to walking in the Spirit is to walk in the flesh. Unfortunately, there's no middle ground. I wish there were.

It would be so much happier. But there's no middle ground. You're either walking in the Spirit or walking in the flesh.

Now, your flesh may have been nicer than my flesh or somebody else's. You may not have had the angularities and the nastiness that someone else had. But you are going to be walking the way you did without the Lord unless you're walking in the fullness of the Lord.

You're going to be being true to your nature unless you're being true to his nature, or put it as someone has and as I've written in the front of my Bible. Unless the Holy Spirit fails, the human spirit fails. Do you

see? Now, what will be the expression? We know then that the works of the flesh will be manifest--adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, and witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, and heresies, envyings, murders, and drunkenness, and revelings, and such like.

This then, or some of these things, or any one of these things, are going to characterize the person, even though he be a child of God, that is not walking in the Spirit. But you'll notice the dire threat that's here. Anyone that's content to walk this way and will, determines to walk this way, must understand that he has said that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

And the clear statement then is this, that the consequences are that one is unwilling to meet the hymn and walk in the Spirit, they will of necessity walk in the flesh and so reveal their nature and their character. Now let me ask you, you say you were forgiven back there? You say that you were born of God back there? Have you been filled with the Spirit? This is what his commandment is. You say, well, someone says to me, well, I believe you're filled with the Spirit when you're saved.

There's only one question I have to ask. I don't challenge that. I know it's a possibility.

It certainly was in the case of Cornelius. The question isn't that. The question is, are you being filled with the Spirit? Is this becoming a continuous expression of your life? My own personal conviction is, one is born of the Spirit, but not born full of the Spirit, and subsequently, in meeting the Lord, there comes that crisis when they're first aware of the fullness of the Spirit.

But if anyone would say to me, I was filled with the Spirit when I was born again, I have no objection. I'm not going to fight on that issue. I've long since passed the point of argument there.

The only question I say is, then are you walking in the Spirit? Are you walking in the fullness of the Spirit? Understand then, that it's not just a question of when we were filled with the Spirit at a historical point, for it was true of everyone. Sometime or other, there was a time when you were not filled with him. Then there came a time when you were.

The question is, are you repeatedly drawing upon his fullness and being filled with the Spirit? This is to be the normal life, not just something exceptional. This is to be, not only have been filled with the Spirit, but we are to walk in the Spirit. Walk by the Spirit, as the text literally says, by his presence, by his fullness.

Is this the case? Well now, and then if we find we are, we find that his nature is going to be manifest. Just as we walk outside of his Spirit, outside of his fullness, our nature is going to be manifest. His nature, utterly in contrast with ours.

And so we find that when we walk in the Spirit, there will be love, and joy, and peace, and longsuffering, and goodness, and gentleness, faith, and meekness, and self-control. This isn't that he makes us to be like this. We're always going to be other.

But it's that he's like this, and when he, the Holy Spirit, fills us, then he can be himself in us and be himself through us. And so the word is, walk in the Spirit. Great is the blessing that results when we do.

But if you, when pretty well put it this way, if you're not living in the word, how can we be walking in the Spirit? If you're not living in prayer and intercession, how can we be walking in the Spirit? If you're not experiencing fellowship with others, sharing in the things of the Lord, communicating and have something

to give and something to receive, how can we be? And if you're not working and witnessing, and so the question then comes, walk in the Spirit. Are you walking in the Spirit? Are you? You can. Isn't it wonderful? God, this one in whom we live and move and have our being, wants to manifest himself to us and fill us with himself so that every day becomes an adventure.

There's something so exquisite. The testimony of all that I've known, walking in the Spirit and knowing the fullness of the Spirit, is this. Every day is an adventure.

They feel they're part of a glorious plan. They feel that today is the unfolding of something supernatural. That heaven has come down, souls to greet, and glory grounds the mercy seat.

And that this day is a day of fresh unveiling, and just around the corner is going to be the miracle of the unfolded will of God. Marvelous, you know. And oh, when you think that the Spirit of God is blessing, is meeting many, and stirring their hearts, if I find, if you find an echo in your heart and a desire in your heart, you ought to do something about it.

We've been threatened all day. I do not know, I haven't heard the last report, but we've been threatened all day by an airline strike. Oh, you know, I think it would be wonderful if we could have Christians go on a strike and say, look, we're not going to move from this place till God meets us.

We're not going to do, we're just going to stay here till heaven comes down, our souls to greet, and glory crowns the mercy seat. We're not going to, I'd love that. I believe God honors desperation.

I'd love to see some people get so utterly desperate for the fullness of God and the glory of God. They just say, well, look, I'm stuck. I'm going to stay right here.

Or whatever it be. I don't particularly think that's a good idea, but I'm willing to stay with you, bless your heart, if you come to that place. Because I believe that he is desirous of being desired, and he died for longing for us, and he loves to be longed for.

And so we have to walk in the Spirit. Well, now we're going to close. I'm just going to ask you, is this true of you, and of me? Certainly none of us are satisfied, but all to have tasted and known something of the joy of walking in the Spirit.

Have you? I trust you have. You can. Shall we bow in prayer? Our Heavenly Father, we thank and praise thee for thy presence.

Oh, how our hearts do rejoice that thou art here. We thank thee for this. Thou art so mere.

In thee we live and move and have our being. And we needn't go to heaven, thou hast come to earth. And we thou hast prepared to fill all that were empty and all that are clean.

Bring your empty earthen vessels clean through Jesus' precious blood. And thou hast said, I will pour water on him that is thirsty. I will pour floods upon the dry ground.

Open your hearts for the gift I am bringing. Before you seek me, I shall be found. Lord, we thank thee for this.

We praise thee for it. And we trust that tonight this truth, this wonderful, wonderful truth, that thou dost want us not only to be born of thy Spirit and have the witness of the Spirit, but actually to walk in the

conscious flow and stream of thy presence, continuously aware that thou art in us and that we're in thee. And thou are living thy life in us and we're resting in thee.

So, Father, we pray that this will become a reality, not just words, not just pious phrases, but a glorious heavenly reality. And that there are those here tonight that will be so filled with desire, desperately hungry, that thou canst meet them and thou canst bless them. And we thank thee that this is a reality.

We thank thee for the many here that have known the fullness of thy Spirit. We praise thee for this. And we pray that together all of us, encouraged by thy word, may walk more closely and more fully in the center of the Spirit's will and purpose for our life than we ever have in the past.

Now, with our heads bowed, eyes closed, if you want special prayer, special help, want the word open to you, perhaps some are here unsaved to the great mountain of guilt, of sin. Even while we wait this moment, you can do one of two things. You can either remain right where you are till others have gone and will come to you in a few moments.

Or if you'd like, you can get up and slip out and go into the little room at my right, your left. We call it Wilson Chapel. There you can be seated or kneel and pray.

We'll come to you and share with you your desire and your need. And so we don't want anyone to go. If you have a burden, if you have a longing, if you'd like to confess your faith in Christ or seek special prayer, you needn't leave.

We invite you to stay. We want to share with you in every way possible. So you remain where you are or go into Wilson Chapel, and we'll be so happy to come to you.

Now let us stand for prayer and the benediction. We thank and praise thee, our Father, that thou hast, through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only made it possible for us to go where you are, but for you to come and dwell where we are. And that the normal Christian life is to be filled with the fulness of God, to walk in the Spirit.

We thank thee for this. We pray that tonight some heart, may just out of thirst and longing, desire, invite the Lord Jesus to move in and fill and possess every room. And they may know, even tonight for the first time, the glory of being filled with the Holy Ghost, filled with the fulness of thyself.

And then that all who in the time past have known thee may walk in the Spirit, move upon our hearts, bring us to that place where he is more real than life itself, and having every liberty and freedom to fulfill his will and purpose for us. Now may thy grace and mercy and peace be and abide upon us. Dismiss us with thy blessing.

Bless the young people that meet in the college and career group. May the memory of this day be glorious, because thou hast met with thy people. In Jesus' name, amen.

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