

Open Sails

“Walking in the Spirit”

Galatians 5:16-25

Introduction

- When I was in Bible college I was the only one in my dorm room with a laptop and a printer, and this was olden days, not so old because we had laptops and printers, but you did not turn in your assignments online, like all of my students do today – we had to print out a hard copy
 - And since I was the only one in my room who had one, it was being used all the time

One time though I will never forget, it was an afternoon, my work was done and I was laying down for a nap, but one of my roommates was trying to print out his paper that was due that night

- and I awoke to him yelling at my printer, like it spoke English, stupid printer, why won't you work, and started hitting it with his giant arms
 - and I said, hitting it won't help, are you sure you are trying to print with the right printer, I still have the drives for other printers on there
 - are you sure you selected the right one

Yes, it just won't work – I printed mine out earlier, I know it does

- And I laid back down only to be awakened again with more yelling and physical abuse of the poor little machine
 - So I sat up from my top bunk in the cool beds we had and from my vantage I could clearly see the problem
- The printer's broken huh – yeah, dumb thing doesn't work, so I jumped out of my bunk, plugged the printer into the wall and said you're the dumb thing that doesn't work or some encouraging comment like that

I think of that story every time we talk about the Holy Spirit and walking in His power in our lives

- I feel like we read every self-help book there is, we strive, we make promises, we don't seem to be the husbands God wants us to be, the wives, the single men and women
 - And could it be that we are not plugged into the one power source God intended for us for life and ministry?

We think our Christianity is broken or we are broken, but maybe it is just we are not plugged in, that we are plugged into the wrong things

- or that we have not opened our sails and said, God I want you and all you have for me in my life

With that picture we are doing a series called “Open Sails”

- And the picture is opening yourself up to all that God has for you in the power of His Spirit
 - Letting Him lead and direct your life, your marriage, your decisions
 - Letting Him bring victory over sin and rebellion by the power of the Holy Spirit

Over the last few weeks Pastor Rob has opened this series by really giving us the theology, that big word just means the study of God. Pastor Rob has given us the insight into what the Spirit of God is, and our need to be filled and baptized, plugged into His power

- We have seen that the Holy Spirit is not an it, but a person, the third part of the trinity, God the Holy Spirit
 - He is not a force, but God, that part of God that dwells inside mankind, and again empowers us for life and ministry

We have seen our need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, not just one time at the moment of conversion

- oh I'm not saying you are not baptized into the body of Christ by His Spirit at the moment you are converted you are
 - Pastor Rob mentioned from John 14 how the Holy Spirit starts off alongside every one, convicting you of your sin
 - You may have called Him your conscience, your little angel on your shoulder, it was the Holy Spirit, accomplishing the first ministry of the Holy Spirit – to convict you of your sin, to show you your need for a savior
- John 16 helps with this understanding of what the Holy Spirit has been sent to do

“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me;” – John 16:8-9

- Then when you are convicted of your sin and you repent, as John 14 says, the Holy Spirit then goes from being alongside you, to in you

“The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” – John 14:17

- He starts out with you, alongside you, but then He comes in you
 - And the word there isn't "in" like we are in the room, because in a couple short hours when I'm done preaching, just kidding, then you will leave and you will no longer be in here
- But the Word is the one the Greeks would use when they put you in the grave – you were there and you were there to stay

So if the Holy Spirit is in me to stay, why do I need to be filled with the Spirit, baptized in the power of the Spirit???

- because Jesus said in Acts 1:8

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” – Acts 1:8

- Jesus tells the disciples who were already at this point in history, baptized into the body of Christ, who already had the Spirit of God in them – wait in Jerusalem, until I fill you up, overflowing is the idea

The same idea in Ephesians 5:18, when Paul says

“But do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Holy Spirit” – Ephesians 5:18

- Instead of plugging into the wrong thing which will also turn you into a different man or a different woman, the world and the things of this world
 - We must plug into Him
 - We must open our sails to the right source of power – the Holy Spirit

But now that we have been given the theology, the who and the what?

- now we need the why
 - why it is important to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives
 - and for that we turn to the book of Galatians, chapter 5

You see sometimes we mystify the idea of what it means to walk in the Spirit or we think that is something pastors and missionaries need to do

- it's not – it's not just something for pastors or missionaries – and it's not weird, it's practical, it's not weird

It's not that Rob and I when we are walking in the Spirit we go into a trance

- I know sometimes you might picture that we meet every Monday for a couple of hours to pray and plot world domination, no that's me, sorry, but we get together to pray and plan and the minute you hear that, you think, we start praying and sweating – and then Rob

looks up to the ceiling and his eyes roll back in his head – I'm getting a direct communication from God – I bear witness

It's not weird – walking in the Spirit is the opposite of living this life by walking in the flesh

- It is acknowledging the Lord in my everyday life, verses just going by what my brain thinks is the most practical
 - So often we make our lists of pros and cons and whatever outweighs the other, that is the direction we head in
 - And I am a big believer in wisdom, being practical
- But what Bible story do you know of where they only did what was practical
 - Abraham and Sarah – move when you are 80? – don't know where you are moving to
 - Or Joshua walking around the city of Jericho

God does not always do what is practical – so as Christians, I need to ask Him – Lord guide me today, though I have fixed 1,000 cars, how do you want me to operate today, I have checked 100,000 people out at Target, but help me interact today

- It's as simple as learning to lean upon Him for every decision in your life – not going by what you think is best or your puny brain to figure out

Sometimes we think how amazing it would have been to be a disciple – I mean you get up every day and you get your directives from Jesus

- we are going to this village, we are going to say this to them
 - and every time you were feeling down or burden by sin – you could go and talk physically with Jesus and He could say to you – this is how you handle this emotion
 - this is how you deal with that attitude
- We think – wow that would have been cool

Oh precious church

- Jesus when He was explaining to His disciples that He was leaving, they were bummed, what are we going to do?
 - And Jesus said to them...

“The Spirit, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans;” - John 14:17-18

- Jesus says, I am not leaving you alone, orphans
 - I am giving you my Spirit – I used to tell you to walk this way and go in this direction
- But although I am physically leaving you – I will now lead you from within by the Spirit of God
 - Walking with the Spirit isn't going into a trance, your eyes need not roll back into your head
 - But the same experience of direction the apostles enjoyed was not just for them

But you can every day, say Lord where are you guiding me and my family

- how do you want me to minister to my wife, to deal with my husband
 - Lord – I'm struggling with this sin and this attitude, what do I do – He will speak to you by His Spirit and through His Word

Walking in the Spirit – its practical direction and leading and help, but it is also life transforming, making you into a different man and a different women that we desperately need to be

- Again notice verse 16 – this is a promise - Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh
 - Sounds like something we need to hear

- But what was Paul trying to communicate

You see many Bible scholars believe that Galatians was the first book of the Bible that Paul the Apostle wrote

- it was written not to one particular church, like the book of Ephesians or Philippians which were written to the church in Ephesus, the church in Philippi

But the book of Galatians were written to a group of churches for a region

- Galatia is not a city, but a region made up of the cities of Iconium, and Lystra and Derby

This region of what is today Turkey was one of the first places Paul and Barnabas ever went to preach the gospel after being sent out from the church in Antioch

- it was in the region of Galatia that some of the first gentile churches were planted
 - it was in the region of Galatia that Paul met a young man by the name of Timothy who would later be huge in the ministry of the early church

And it was in this area of Galatia that a problem began to brew

- The problem was a group known as the Judaizers who were teaching the new converts, “Faith in Jesus is good, but if you really want to go deep in your walk, you need Judaism
 - Jesus was a Jew
 - Paul was a Jew

And if you want to become all God wants you to be, you too, need to adopt the law of Moses, to be under it, to let it shape you

- And because of these Judaizers, these false teachers, many in this region of churches were being ripped off and tripped up in their simple faith in Jesus

So along comes Paul, who led many in those churches of Galatia to Christ, Paul who was at one time as stepped in Judaism as you could be

- He knew the law was not the answer
 - He knew trying to perfect your life by being under the law was frustrating and futile
 - That is true of God’s law or even laws we invent
- Most of us have no desire to go back under the Jewish law, I love bacon too much
 - But we invent our own new laws – I have to pray for 20 minutes a day, and read my Bible for 30, and I have to witness to 2 people per week
 - And not that each of those things aren’t wonderful and do need to be a part of your life for you
- But sometimes we act like we are again earning God’s favor by being under some law
 - And so Paul writes this book, writes a letter to the churches of Galatia to help them understand

No – the answer to sanctification, going deeper in your walk with God, the answer is not in Judaism

- It is not to put yourself under some law, that will perfect you and make you all that God wants you to be
 - No – that is misunderstanding of the law
- The law is good – keeping the law, the wisdom of God is good, for you

But it won’t perfect you – because you won’t do it, not totally, not completely – the real purpose is to drive you to Christ, to show you need a savior

But Paul then, listen, this is important, Paul then, wake up, you need to hear this, Paul anticipates a question

- well if I am not under the law, then how in the world am I supposed to be Holy
 - you see the early church did not interpret liberty, freedom in Christ to mean I can live every way I want
 - they did not believe that – look at verse 13 of Galatians 5
- don’t use your liberty as a base of operations for the flesh, no way

- sometimes in the church today we understand liberty to mean I can be involved in all types of Carnality and God will still love me – of course he will, but carnality will still have the same effect in your life it always has – it will bring you down

So the early church understood, liberty doesn't mean I can do whatever I want, but not being under the law, how then am I going to be holy

- and Paul answers, hear me on this in verse 16, you can still be holy without being in the law
 - but you must walk in the Holy Spirit

Not the culturally relevant Spirit, not the trendy tweeting Spirit, not that those things aren't good – you need to be culturally relevant, I don't wear a 16th century robe, you can use all the tools this world has to get the Word of God out

- but you need to walk in the Holy Spirit – He is Holy
 - And if you walk in Him, you will be Holy too, isn't that what verse 16 is promising?
 - Isn't that what it is saying?
 - But there is a battle we have to fight for this

You see Paul is describing a battle, verse 17 – read it from the NKJV

- I want you to put on the screen this same verse in the new living translation so we really get it

“The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.” – Galatians 5:17 NLT

- Paul is telling you there is a battle going on
 - The picture of the text is really saying this, that every day your life is like this

In this corner, wearing the black trunks, weighing in at more than you can bear is the flesh and in this corner wearing the white trunks, weighing nothing, but He is heavy, is the Spirit

- and every time your alarm clock goes off in the morning, instead of ehh, ehh, ehh
 - what you should really picture in your mind is “ding, ding, ding
 - let's get ready to rumble
- This is a battle friends

That is why this whole idea of “let go and let God”, it sounds so nice and if you mean by that, let go of your thinking that you are going to accomplish being the husband or the wife or the single person in the power of your flesh, amen let go and let God

- But I fear sometimes when we hear that we think – well I'm just going to sit here and wait for God to make me Holy
 - it's not going to happen friend
 - it's a battle and you have to fight

Because it is only by the power of the Holy Spirit, by walking in life under the direction of the Holy Spirit will I be any good to my wife and my kids

- the only way this church will be any blessing to North County San Diego is not by the power of the flesh or the ingenuity of man
 - it is only by the power of the Holy Spirit
 - how – well we looked at this about six months ago, but I just want to review quickly and then we will be done
 - it is not my job to teach you things you have never heard, it is my job to teach you things you should never forget
- So how do we walk in the Spirit?

#1 – Cry out – Luke 11:9-13

“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks* for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*” – Luke 11:9-13

- Now you will hear on some Christian TV programs that this verse is about money – “seek and you shall finda” – I don’t know why you need that voice to be a prosperity gospel preacher, but you do

But that is not what Jesus is talking about

- He is talking about the Spirit
 - I need to be transformed, I need Him to work
 - We need to cry out

We need desperation

- do you see what is happening in the world today

Do you see what is happening in the Middle East, to our country?

- But what do you do?
 - Get your gun and have revolution – where is that in the Bible
 - No – we as the people of God, cry out to God, we need Your Spirit
- I know this won’t be popular with some but the reality is the hope for our nation and the world is not in any political party, it is not in an election
 - We should participate as Americans, of course
 - But what does the Word say – I know you know this but listen

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” – II Chronicles 7:14

- My people – not a political party
 - If my people do what – get a gun?
 - Humble themselves, pray, turn from their wicked ways, not the world turns from sin
- No – if my people get on their face, pray, turn from their wicked ways
 - We need to cry out for our country
 - We need to cry out for our church
 - We need to cry out for our marriage
 - We need to cry out for our kids
 - We need to cry out for ourselves and our wicked hearts
 - We need to cry out

#1 – Cry out – Luke 11:9-13

#2 – Cultivate – I Thessalonians 5:19

“Do not quench the Spirit”

We are to call out to the Lord, but the Word of God also makes it clear there are some things we can do to hinder the Spirit of God in our lives

Acts 7 – we can resist the Spirit

Ephesians 4 – we can grieve the Spirit

I Thessalonians 5 – we can quench the Spirit

How can we do that? – Well often the Spirit is compared with a fire. He is not a fire, but he is compared to a fire

- and I find that helpful, because we understand how we can quench a fire

A Fire can be quenched in two ways

#1 – Introducing an outside agent, not part of the fire process. i.e. dirt, water

- if you are trying to have a camp fire and it starts to rain or you kick dirt on it or someone brings a fire extinguisher, that doesn't help

And so too, when I introduce in my heart, something that is foreign to walking in the Spirit, the Spirit can be quenched

- now this is not works theology, we are not saved by walking right, God doesn't love you more
 - but it is wisdom to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit

It helps me so much to understand what Paul says in Romans 8:9 says, “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.”

- the word “dwell” there is interesting

“Dwell” – means to be at home with

- we all know what it is like to be somewhere that just doesn't feel like home

I was on vacation for a week, great time, but staying in road hotels, then went to pastors conference and shared a room with 3 other guys and there were 3 beds, four guys – then straight from there to the Youth Camp, where I don't know anyone who sleeps well at youth camp – I was so excited last night to be home, to sleep in my own bed

- You see I loved being with my family, I loved being at the pastors conference, I love teaching at the youth camp – but it wasn't home

And I feel like the Lord would say to some of us

- I love you, I love you so much it hurts
 - But this thing you are allowing, and making excuses for in your life – I'm not comfortable with that

You see I want to walk in the Spirit, I want to be a different man, and change my world

- so I need to cry out, and I need to cultivate a life where the Spirit isn't uncomfortable with me, but where the Spirit is at home

#1 – Cry Out – Luke 11:9-13

#2 – Cultivate – I Thessalonians 5:19

#3 – Commune – Romans 8:5

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” – Romans 8:5

We do need to cry out and cultivate a heart, but sometimes it's even more simple than that – I need to commune with God remember the illustration with comparing the Holy Spirit to a fire

A Fire can be quenched in two ways

#1 – Introducing an outside agent, not part of the fire process. i.e. dirt, water

#2 – Lack of fuel

Fire needs something to burn, it needs fuel - And the fuel of our Christianity is to commune with Him

- and that is what we are doing this morning, you are to be commended
 - but our week is a lot more than a few hours on a Sunday morning and so should our walk with God be
- and the reason again is not that I am earning something from God
 - no – it's that as I commune with Him I am becoming like Him
- when my daughter was 2 we lived with my grandparents and my grandpa would take naps and snore and she would watch him, but then she started to make the same sound when she came into a room, it was as if she was trying to speak grandpa
 - she was imitating Him

➤ Well so too as we behold Him, as we commune with Him, we will be transformed
“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” – II Corinthians 3:18

- And I want to be like Him
- But I struggle with the flesh and sin
 - And I realize – there is much to be done
 - But I need to grow

So we can go back to Judaism, back under the law, which Paul says is foolish, or we can turn our eyes upon Jesus, we can look full into His wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace

- Cry out to Jesus
- Cultivate your relationship with Jesus - Commune

But it is just too hard. My heart is too far gone, my marriage is too far gone, my kids are too far gone – that is impossible

- do you know another group of God’s people felt that way
 - those that came back with Nehemiah and Ezra, God told them to build the city of Jerusalem and the temple
 - and they were excited
- But when they got there the work was beyond them, it was impossible
 - And they started to lose hope
 - And in that context God spoke to them through the prophet Zechariah when He said...

“not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord.” – Zechariah 4:6

- I know the task is difficult, but we serve the God of the universe
 - And I’m tired of praying prayers that insult His power, that I could fulfill if He chose not to show up
 - The same God that filled the disciples, is here today, the same Spirit that transformed them, is here
 - We need to cry out
 - We need to cultivate
 - And we need to choose to commune that His Spirit would pour out in our lives