

Gal 5:16-26 Sermon Outline

Theme: Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Intro:

Point 1: Those who belong to Christ live by the Spirit

Imm Context: 5:1 Christ has set us free;

Ill;

Those who belong to Christ Jesus live by the Spirit and have crucified the sinful nature in Christ

Ill;

the right use & limitations of Christian freedom; don't throw your freedom away

cf Gal situation 4:10; answer to abuses is a Spirit controlled life, cease to act naturally/selfishly

but doesn't happen immediately which may well explain Galatians lapse into legalism, by nature

we don't find the leading of the Spirit congenial but repugnant 1 Co 2:14

The Spirit and the sinful nature are opposites; Phil 3:3 no confidence in the flesh; It's no longer I who lives, but Christ who lives in me

Ill;

Point 2: The acts of the sinful nature are obvious

ie ... cf Ro 1:29-31, Acts 15:29

not comprehensive

can be divided into sexual, ritual, social, drinking sins

Apply; what today? sexual the same, ritual; the self centred quest for experience, social; drink: drug addiction

those who live like this won't inherit the kingdom of God

Ill;

faith without works is dead

Point 3: The fruit of the Spirit are obvious

ie ... cf 2 Pt 1:5-7

Ill; cf Mt 7:16

not comprehensive either

love first as it embraces all others

love, joy, peace a common trio cf 1:3

a list of slave virtues, of a servant Messiah, most qualities otherward

always serve brotherly communion, the upbuilding of the church, to fulfill the requirement of love; not just character formation

against such things there is no law

Point 4: Since we live by the Spirit, let's keep in step with the Spirit

Imm Context: 5:13-15 Don't use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature but serve each other in love

Ill; a freed prisoner who uses his freedom for wrong finds himself right back behind bars again

Appl: Since we live by the Spirit, keep in step with the Spirit

how?

and we won't gratify the desires of the sinful nature

Aim: Live by the Spirit

Gal 5:16-26 **Rd:**

Dear Cadets, Congregation

With today being Cadet Sunday, we're going to spend some time thinking about what it means to be a Christian Cadet.

I remember starting Cadets at the ripe old age of 9. They called you a scarfy for that first year in those days – I'm not sure if they still do that. And I stuck with cadets, without missing a year I think, moving up through the ranks, until I was about 21.

But as we do that, we're not just thinking about what it means to be a Christian Cadet, we're thinking about what it means to be a Christian.

Do you know that old song that says: "I can't help myself – bad habits"? I'd sing it for you if I was a bit braver. But what it says is close to the truth, isn't it? When it comes to doing the wrong thing, we often feel like we just can't help ourselves, and we settle again for our old familiar bad habits - like being lazy, grumpy, anxious, impatient, biting our nails, eating too much, drinking too much coffee or coke or alcohol. You probably know what some of your bad habits are. And we all know how hard it is to put them behind us. Even more serious is when we cross the line from bad habits into sin.

So how do you break the bad habits and sins you know God isn't happy with? Maybe some of us have tried different approaches already. You've tried using that stuff that makes your finger nails taste disgusting. You've tried a hundred different diets and exercises. You've tried decaffeinated coffee, nicotine patches, 12 step programs. And some of these things have helped. But I suspect that every one of us still has bad habits and sins that we'd be glad to be rid of for good, but haven't found the discipline and perseverance to beat them.

But God has given us a solution that can deal with all our bad habits and sins. It's not an instant solution. And we still need to work hard ourselves. But when you stick to it, it's 100% effective. It simply involves living according to what we already have in Jesus Christ, through faith in him, by the power of the Holy

Spirit.

Point 1

The reason we suffer from all of these things is because since we fall into sin we're naturally inclined to do the wrong thing. So we shouldn't be too surprised that we naturally suffer from the bad habits of the sinful nature. But the difference between Christians and non-Christians is that *our old natures have been crucified*. When Jesus died on the cross, our old sinful natures died there with him.

As well as that, Christians have risen again from the dead. When Jesus rose from the dead, we rose to new life with him.

And so in verse 24, Paul writes, 'Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.' Our bad habits and sinful desires and passions are already dead on the cross in Jesus Christ.

And that truth should then increasingly become our day to day reality through the power of the Holy Spirit. It's through him that we experience the new life that is ours in Jesus Christ.

And so the answer to the sins and struggles we have is to live a life controlled by the Holy Spirit. To stop living the way we're naturally inclined to go apart from Christ, and instead live the new life in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

But one thing that's important to remember is that this victory isn't instant. It's not like coffee or milo. You can't just add milk or water, and hey presto, there it is. Ads on the television will offer you instant solutions to some of your problems without you having to work at it yourself, but for most people they just don't work.

The Galatians were wanting an instant solution. They had actually begun to lose faith in the gospel because things weren't happening that quickly. They wanted to overcome the sinful nature. But they

weren't seeing it happen as fast as they expected. And so they were thinking of helping the gospel along by turning back to the Old Testament law. But that's simply not the answer. This process of sanctification takes time. In fact it takes the rest of our lives. But it's still the only solution that works.

What's happening is that the old sinful nature and the Holy Spirit are having a tug-of-war, and we're caught in the middle. Have you ever had a tug-of-war - maybe at a camp, or a sports day - each team trying to pull the other one into a mud puddle in the middle? That's what this spiritual battle is like. Our old sinful nature and the Holy Spirit are having a tug-of-war with us in the middle. They're pulling us in opposite directions. The sinful nature wants to drag us into sin and death. But the Holy Spirit wants to lead us into a greater experience of the life we have in Jesus Christ.

Point 2

We're told here that *the acts of the sinful nature are obvious*. And there's a whole list of them here to help us recognise them. Something that's common to all of them is that they're self-centred – this list is all about what I want, not what God wants.

And you can split them up into four main groups - sexual sins, spiritual sins, social sins, and sins mainly to do with alcohol. This doesn't cover all the expressions of the sinful nature. As we apply this list to ourselves, we could probably add other things we struggle with. If you look at a similar list in Romans 1, you also find things like greed, murder, gossip, arrogance, disobedience to our parents. But anything that is self-centred and ignores God is an expression of the sinful nature.

And we're told that *those who live like this won't inherit the kingdom of God*. You'll know from the parable of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price and passages like that, that the kingdom of God is valuable beyond belief. It's like a treasure, like a pearl that's one of a kind. It's priceless. It's the only thing we should set our sights on regardless of the cost. But no one whose life is spent indulging the sinful nature at the expense of a relationship with God will inherit this kingdom.

Point 3

And so, moving on from this list of acts of the sinful nature you come to a list of the fruit of the Spirit.

And the fruit of the Spirit are obvious too. You notice that this list is opposite to the list of the acts of the sinful nature. That list is self-centred - this list is concerned about others, serving others, fulfilling God's law of love.

And so the things mentioned in this list spring out of life lived in the Spirit. In fact, they're all aspects of the one fruit that the Holy Spirit grows in our lives. They're like segments of the one mandarine or the one orange. You peel back the skin of the fruit of a believer's life and you find all of these qualities slowly growing together.

And the reason I picked this text this morning is because ***many of these qualities are the kinds of things the Cadets have been thinking about this year.*** The Cadet Code says that 'a cadet is reverent, obedient, compassionate, consecrated, trustworthy, pure, grateful, loyal, industrious, and cheerful.' And even though the words might be different, there's a fair bit of overlap between the fruit of the Spirit, and the Cadet Code – they're saying the same sorts of things.

A cadet is reverent. Reverence means things like worship and respect. We love God and our neighbour and so we worship God and respect others.

And so, you cadets are sitting here in church again today, worshipping God by listening to what the Bible has to say and praising him in the songs you sing and the prayers we pray. And I hope you're being respectful to your Counsellors by doing what they ask you to do, and not doing what you know you shouldn't.

And ***a cadet is obedient*** - which means similar things to 'goodness' here in Galatians 5. Jesus said if you love me you will obey what I command – you will be good.

Obedience is important. When I was a cadet we'd go camping, canoeing, rafting, practice archery, jump off rocks into swimming holes, and all those kinds of things that can be dangerous if you're not careful. I'm sure you boys do the same kinds of things today. And you probably know what can happen if those things go wrong – you can really get hurt. And so obedience is important – doing these things the way your counsellors tell you. And obedience to God is even more important.

A cadet is *compassionate*. That says the same kinds of things as 'kindness and gentleness' in this verse. If you want to know what compassion is all about, read the parable of the Good Samaritan. He was willing to help someone who probably hated him and wouldn't have done the same thing in return. He was willing to risk being hurt and robbed himself for the sake of the other person. He was willing to go the extra mile for the well-being of the other person. That's what being compassionate is all about.

And a cadet is *consecrated*. 'Consecrated' means holy - set apart for God and what he wants. And so sin has no place in the life of a cadet.

I remember that on our camps when I was a cadet, we'd sometimes have a tent that was set aside for the stores – the food and equipment and things like that. That tent was consecrated – set aside for a particular purpose.

And as Christians we're consecrated to God – we're set aside for him and what he wants us to do. We can't do whatever we want, if it goes against what God wants for us.

A cadet is *trustworthy*. A cadet can be trusted. And of course that says similar things to the word 'faithfulness'. A cadet faithfully keeps his word.

And again, that's important. The last thing you need on a hike is a cadet who can't be trusted – someone who hasn't brought water like he said he has, because he decided it was too heavy to carry - someone who wants to stop walking every 15 minutes, even though he's fitter than half the other boys.

A cadet is *pure*, which basically says similar things to consecrated and holy.

And a cadet is **grateful**. A cadet is thankful for the good things God has given. He's thankful for the way his parents, counsellors, and others look after him, provide for him, and help him.

I remember from when I was a counsellor that one thing that was a real pity was when the counsellors put a lot of work into something, and the cadets had really had a great time, but then they just took it for granted and didn't say thanks. That's when counsellors start to wonder if they're just babysitting, if they really do want to keep putting in the time and effort that they do. So make sure, kids, that you regularly thank your counsellors for work they put into every cadet night and every activity. And then not only your counsellors, but your parents, your teachers, and anyone else who helps you too.

And a cadet is **loyal**. Loyalty is similar to faithfulness again – but this time faithfulness to others. You know how kids can sometimes be friends with someone until someone more popular comes along - then all of a sudden, they don't want to know the other person anymore. Well don't do that. We should be loyal to people. Our friends yesterday should be our friends today.

A cadet is **industrious**. He works hard. He's not lazy. He has self-control, self-discipline, perseverance. He doesn't leave building a go-cart up to his counsellor so that the counsellor has to be here for a bunch of Saturdays finishing it off by himself.

And a cadet is **cheerful**. The second quality in verse 22 is 'joy'. And so a cadet is cheerful, joyful. He has this joy of the Lord deep in his heart, and it comes out in his manner as cheerfulness. You often see it on his face. You see it in his actions.

And because this is what the Holy Spirit is doing in our lives, **God calls us in this text to keep in step with the Spirit**. He calls us to cooperate with what the Holy Spirit is doing in our lives as he helps us grow in all these kinds of things.

Conc

And so, in this tug-of-war between the sinful nature and the Holy Spirit don't lean in the direction of the sinful nature. Maybe the sinful nature still has a hold of us, but the Holy Spirit does too. And the Holy Spirit is stronger. If we lean in his direction, he'll win this battle over sin, and we'll win with him. But if we choose to lean in the direction of the sinful nature and do the things that our old sinful nature wants, we'll lose.

So what are you cadets doing? Are you living by your code? Maybe you say this code every cadet night, I'm not sure, but are you living by it? Are you living the life God wants you to live? Are you winning the spiritual battle by the power of the Holy Spirit?

For that matter, how are we all doing in that regard? We're all fighting the same battle. Have we put our trust in Jesus? Are we living by the power of the Spirit? Are we keeping in step with the Spirit? Are we growing in our walk with the Lord? Are we seeing these fruit of the spirit blossom and grow in our lives?