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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Wednesday evening 8 November 1933

GALATIANS 5 V 25

"If we live in the Spirit let us also
walk in the Spirit"

A very solemn word this and I can feelingly say that the help of God is very particularly needed to enable one to speak rightly of this double subject, for it is a double subject. The first, "If we live in the Spirit", the second following that as a gracious consequence "Let us also walk in the Spirit". The first is the ground and reason of the second. The first is the larger and the second is the smaller, and yet very important. The Spirit of God was promised by Christ in the chapter which I read (John 16) and that promise contained the whole ministry of the Spirit in the church of God and later in the world, because He is to convince the world of unbelief respecting the Person of Christ. The world there cannot be the church, because the church does believe in Christ, but the day will come when every unbeliever in respect of the Person and glory of Christ will be convinced and his mouth closed in the day of judgment. Jerusalem knew not her mercy when Christ was on earth and her unbelief caused her house to be left desolate and is desolate today. The ministry of the Spirit carries this with it, that all to whom He comes have life and faith. To live in the Spirit is first to be born again. We have nothing but flesh if we have not that. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" and nothing better, higher, and spiritual can ever be evolved out of that. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" and will ever be spirit. You cannot mix it nor degrade it nor debase it into the flesh. To live in the Spirit then is to have, as the Apostle speaks in the Romans, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus making us free from the law of sin and death, that is from the dominion of the law of sin and death. It is to be illuminated - "After that ye were illuminated", and the illumination comes out of that promise of Christ. "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I unto you that He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you". And one thing that Christ has is light. "I am come a light into the world

that whosoever believeth in Me should not walk in darkness but have the light of life." So to live in the Spirit is to live under His divine illumination; that illumination that shows a sinner that he is a sinner, that shows a hungry soul where the bread of life is, that shows the path of life, the way to heaven, and a great mercy it is to be so illuminated. To live in the Spirit is to live in the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of truth. Therefore if we live in the Spirit we know the truth. He shall be with you and shall guide you into all truth, and that is set forth by the Apostle John who says: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One and know all things" That unction appears there to be the Holy Ghost who is the teacher and the guide into truth. To live in the Spirit is to have Him in the heart as the Spirit of grace and of supplications and every praying person knows more or less distinctly at times what it is for the Holy Ghost to make intercession for him with groanings which cannot be uttered. Each one knows his ignorance respecting prayer. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought". We are too ignorant to know the will of God in affliction until that will is revealed. We know not the way of God for that is in the sea and His path in the mighty waters and His footsteps are not known. When affliction is on you, any of you who fear God, bodily affliction, affliction in circumstances, there are many exercises, but we do not know the particular intention of God with respect to the afflictions except it please the Spirit, who searcheth all things and knoweth the mind of God, is pleased to reveal to us why God has sent such and such afflictions, but He is in the heart making intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered. We may feel depressed and distressed by this and that trouble, but when the Spirit of God comes and carries the soul Godward, with groanings which cannot be uttered, then we live in the Spirit. And further, to live in the Spirit is to be enabled to do what is exhorted in the first verse of this chapter: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage". This is the freedom of the gospel; this is the blessed liberty that is by Jesus Christ. This is the purging of the conscience, the removal of the law from the soul, and giving sweet liberty by forgiveness, justification, sanctification, wisdom, and redemption, and this liberty given is a precious gift. And, says the Apostle, stand fast in it. These Judaising teachers who were troubling the churches of

Galatia sought to bring them under the law, and the Apostle says, if you come under the law - that is the yoke of bondage - Christ shall profit you nothing. Therefore the importance of the word is very great; stand fast. And how can we? By faith, by prayer and supplication - and faith and prayer both stand in the power of God - and the inspiring touches, teachings, and leadings of this most holy, gracious Spirit of God.

If we live in the Spirit we live in confession of sin and cleaving to Him of whom the Apostle writes in his first epistle: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you". A cleaving faith is a blessed faith. The Puritans distinguished - and we may well follow them in that distinguishing thing - they distinguished between the faith of adherence and the faith of assurance. The faith of adherence is the faith that cleaves to Christ, that ventures, Esther -like, unbidden as it seems, into the presence of God. It adheres to His precious atonement and has no plea to make but that. It adheres to the righteousness of Christ and has no hope of being perfect before God but in that righteousness. It adheres to His precious, cleansing blood of infinite value, and the soul cleaves to it as believing that. That is the faith of adherence. It adheres to the Scriptures as given by inspiration of God and all that is declared of Christ; all that is said concerning His Person and His work, His position in heaven and His coming a second time without sin unto salvation, the faith of adherence cleaves to. Can you let Him go? You will remember Bunyan's trouble with respect to that. Part with Him. Can you part with Him? O, says faith, Lord forbid I should ever feel that. Let Him go. With all the weakness and all the fears and all the misgivings we may have there is in the soul this blessed faith of cleaving to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is living in the Spirit. And in the Romans we are told something also concerning living in the Spirit. It is being spiritually minded. To be spiritually minded is to have the heart and mind and the conscience and will and affections and understanding fixed on the Son of God. The whole soul is fixed here. Sometimes some of you have said, have you not: "My heart is fixed". "O God, my heart is fixed;" I have been glad to say that at times. Fixed where? On Whom? On Him whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for our sins. Fixed on Christ. Every believer has an objective religion as well as a subjective one,

and the latter comes from the former. If you see, by precious faith, the Lord Jesus, then you are living in the Spirit and if you say to Him again and again "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I", then you are living in the Spirit, having the grace of supplications. "If we live in the Spirit."

If we live in the Spirit we have holy desires. Much of the religion of God's people consists of desires and the man living in the Spirit says, at times, "All my desire is before Thee and my groaning is not hid from Thee". "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple." No carnal man ever said that truly; no carnal man ever has a desire for God really. So, when a sinner can say that before God, he is spiritually minded and he comes, sooner or later, to say, I know what it is to have peace in this. If we live in the Spirit we live in love. God is love, and herein know we that the Spirit is in us that we love God. Hereby we know that the Spirit is in us that God has given to us of His Spirit, that we love Him because He first loved us. Love is not a sentiment when it is thus spoken of in Scripture. It is a sober, solemn exercise of the affections of the soul on God. It is a humble cleaving to Him with the affections of your heart; it is a going out to Him and finding Him to be better than the whole world. Love is of God. It goes out to the truth; it walks in the truth; it goes to the church and we are to love one another. If we live in the Spirit we live in the spirit of love.

If we live in the Spirit we have also this, a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God. You never will be satisfied with what you know of God. You will always be feeling, when rightly exercised, that you are wishing to know more, praying to know more of Him, to increase in the knowledge of God. This is life, this is happiness, this is peace, this is humility, this is everything, and the Apostle prayed that the Ephesians might receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. And the knowledge of Christ there appears to have this one particular thing, namely that, the glory of His resurrection, the power of His resurrection. This is the glory of his calling, the hope of his calling, that Christ was raised from the dead. No hope of getting well through, no hope of

forgiveness, no hope of heaven, if Christ be not raised from the dead. But now, says Paul, Christ was raised from the dead, and this is known in every part more or less distinctly by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. You know Him now, not on the cross. You see Him there by faith, but you know Him to be in heaven and you know Him there as being raised by the Father and as having given to Him a Name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess and you can say, sometimes, Lord I bow my knee in adoration; Lord I confess with my mouth the Person and glory of Jesus Christ and there I fix my hope; there is all my treasure. This is living in the Spirit.

Living in the Spirit once more is this, following hard after God. My soul followeth hard after God. Every child of God knows something, painfully knows something, about his departures from God, his indifference to God sometimes by the hour, yea a day or a week - a lifeless lump of loathsome sin. But then the Spirit comes and renews the face of the earth and brings the soul to say: My soul followeth hard after God.

One more word on this point. To live in the Spirit is to live in the faith which was once delivered to the saints; to live in the faith that God, the Holy Ghost, gives and works in the soul. Faith and sense are often very very far apart, but when there is no comfortable sense there is a faith that cleaves to God and believes everything that is good of Him. In the Corinthians we are told that this charity believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and I have felt at times this is one thing it believes, everything that is good, wise, gracious, holy, and glorious, of God and will receive nothing that contradicts that. "If we live in the Spirit". Do we? Some of you may say, "I am carnal, sold under sin". So said Paul of himself. Some may be saying: "The good that I would I do not and the evil that I would not that do I. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death". Says Paul, if the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, He that raised up Jesus from the dead, shall also raise up your mortal bodies, and He will also, I may say here, raise up the soul from time to time. It is the Spirit who takes the beggar from the dust, lifts him from the dust, takes him off the dunghill, and sets him among

princes, and sometimes you will say, what a change I feel in my soul, what a moving after God. I cannot live without Him, I cannot live without prayer and supplication. "If we live in the Spirit". The Lord keep us from lying against our right in this particular.

Now the second part - "Let us also walk in the Spirit". "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts". "Let us walk in the Spirit". First there is the walk by faith. "We walk by faith, not by sight". To walk by faith is to walk in the Name of Christ. "I will strengthen them in the Lord. and they shall walk up and down in His Name, saith the Lord." To walk up and down in the Name of Christ is to walk in His blessed Person, that is to say to have no light, no life, no hope, no peace, but what He is pleased to impart. To walk in the Spirit is to walk by faith in the midst of affliction. When you can solemnly say, I believe in the goodness of God in this, my trouble; I believe in His mercy, wisdom, grace and power; although His way is in the sea, His path in the mighty waters and His footsteps are not known by me at present, still I believe He will bring good out of it to my soul, this is walking by faith and not by sight. He is speaking in a parable to you in trouble and you do not understand what He is intending, what He is saying in His providence, but though that be the case faith says: "Just and right is He". "His way is perfect; just and right is He", and what I have often said: "He exacteth of me less than my sin". You have said it, have you not? In your troubles you have said it, have you not? This is a good walk. It is walking against sense, against reason, against appearances, and it is walking according to Christ's word. Judge nothing by appearances, judge nothing before the time. "I", says the Lord, "will wait to be gracious", and the sinner, by faith, waits till He is gracious. "I will" says the Lord. I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies, and faith says, "I will wait for the Lord who hideth Himself from the house of Israel". Reason says, there is no good possible. Faith says that all things are possible, and the Lord says, of that faith, "All things are possible to him that believeth". Think of it. O believer, all your troubles and difficulties and unbelief and fears and temptations and corruptions, all shall turn to a good account and faith says in your heart, I believe it. I cannot see how, says the sinner, but I believe it. He promises one thing in Isaiah, namely to turn His hand upon the little ones, to purge away

their dross and take away all their tin. I did hope once in that word and do still, yet the tin remains, the dross remains. Faith says the Lord will make it known one day. He will do it as He has spoken. Therefore, "wait on the Lord, be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart. Wait I say on the Lord." Faith trusts Him. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning on the arm of her beloved". A believing soul, I say a believing soul, and he judges of his state by the kindness of God to him, and he judges of the issue of trouble by precious faith. Reason about your matters and you will get more and more confused. Casting your burden on Him you will find light and peace and liberty. Faith is an amazingly blessed grace; how little we have of it. Still, if we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, the sycamore tree, yea the mountain, will be cast into the sea. Faith does wonders. It is a blessed grace that lives and labours under load; though damped it never dies. Your faith will never die. It will grow smaller sometimes to your own sense; it will be damped and trampled on to your sense at times, and sometimes you may feel there is no ground for you to believe, nothing to believe in. So dark, so poor, so weak, so ignorant, so tempted you may feel as even to say that, but faith will rise in the renewing power of the Spirit and you will believe in hope against hope and so give glory to God. To walk in the Spirit then is to walk by faith.

Then it is to walk in obedience. Obedience respecting God, respecting His precepts. The precepts of God, that is of the Lord Jesus, in whom the Father and the Spirit are, are many. First of all to name, for believers who have not walked thus far in such precept is baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. That is a divine precept, a commandment, and every child of God ought, when he knows something of God and has tasted that the Lord is gracious, to walk in humble obedience to Him. Therein He considers Himself honoured. Therein, when a person praises God in humble obedience, He considers Himself glorified. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God". It is a beautiful ordinance. I believe some who have the fear of God in their hearts would, if they got a sight of that ordinance that I got many years ago when I saw the holy Trinity in it, they would want, with enlarged hearts, to obey Christ. "If ye love Me keep My commandments". Walk in this spirit. The

Spirit leads sinners into it. If they rush into it themselves there is no beauty in obedience that is acceptable, but if they are led into it by the Spirit. Plain as it is in the Scriptures, most distinctly written, yet they need the illumination of the Spirit to enable them to see the beauty of it.

And the ordinance of the Lord's Supper; this follows. This justifies strict communion, yea, it is implied in it. Teaching them to do all things, and the first is baptism; the second is the Lord's Supper.

And then the precepts. First the precepts in the Church of the living God, first of all in humility. "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called in all lowliness and meekness". That is a precept. Yea, it is distinctly written in the Ephesians: For there is one God, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father above all and in you all.

Walk in love. "Let brotherly love continue". "Love one another". "Love as dear children". These are divine words written in Holy Scripture but they do get many and many a blow by a fallen heart, a wicked nature that rises up against them and justifies itself in anger and malice and wrath and when we walk after the flesh we walk in a most unbecoming way.

These are precepts in the Church; they belong to her. The Spirit of Christ insists on these precepts in the Church of the living God. Mind that. When you meet these precepts, remember that, that they are confined to the living family of God, and in that view, how beautiful they are. When the Arminian touches them then he mars them, spoils everything, and enlarges their extent improperly. Let us keep things just in their right place. What belongs to the Church may we never give up to the world. There are precepts given to the people of God respecting the world. We are to give no offence in anything - mind that - that the ministry be not blamed. Herein men are to know that God has dealt with His people and made them His disciples if they have love one to another. The world of that day took knowledge of the disciples that they had been with Jesus and learned of Him. They did not know the Spirit, but they saw the effect of it. They saw that they

had learned of Jesus. You have your neighbours, your business connections, your family connections, some not godly it may be, and the Scriptures say, now walk according to this Book. Do not give offence needlessly. Cleaving to the truth will offend professors but when you come to the profane world that cares nothing about religion, expect to take offence if it come, then the precept says this, give no offence either to Jew or Gentile; walk consistently; let your yea be yea, your nay, nay and so on. Let there be no inconsistency. If you can bridle your tongue you are a perfect man; James says so: If a man bridle his tongue he is a perfect man. Let your hands be clean. By the Holy Ghost, walk in the fear of God in all your dealings with men, because men have keen eyes, sharp outlook, when they are dealing with a professor whom they may not know to be a living child of God. If we walk in the Spirit, let us also do this continually by His blessed power, walk rightly; walk rightly. This concerns the world and do not say, dear friends, you have nothing to do with the world; you have. Paul says if we have not to deal with the world we must go out of it. Much liberty is given to conscience with respect to conduct but if that would offend the worldling and stumble him, do not touch it. If you are invited to a feast, go, but if conscience says, do not go, do not go in the face of conscience. God has put these things in Scripture for us to notice. We may be often exercised about our own cases so exclusively as to forget the precepts, but here they are and they are to stand here, and we are, as to our conduct, to be very careful to give no offence, either to Jew or Gentile. Nehemiah might have done what his predecessors did in taking from the people, but he said "So did not I because of the fear of the Lord". A lawful thing may be a snare if you attend to it unlawfully. "All things are lawful to me but all things are not expedient." Therefore, he says, I will not be brought into bondage by any of them. May I say, mind your attention to lawful things. Be very careful about lawful things. You may excuse an inconsistency by saying, well, it was a lawful thing for me to do but, though lawful, it may not be expedient. It might lead you to give some offence to a Jew or a Gentile, that is, to the world.

May the Lord help us to take particular notice then of this second part of the text. "Let us walk in the Spirit".

AMEN.