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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTIST.

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel
Brighton on Sunday Morning 13 January 1929

TEXT: Galatians Chapter 5 Verse 25

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

The labours of the Apostle Paul were greatly blest. The churches of Galatia received the power of the truth through him. Then, as always has been and will be to the end more or less, the devil, looking enviously upon the happy state of those christians in the churches of Galatia, slyly went among them. Ungodly men, unawares, crept in, Judaising teachers went, not being sent by the Apostles, from Jerusalem. They crept in unawares, and because they could not deny that the Lord Jesus had been on the earth, had lived and died and had brought in a new dispensation, they just insinuated that at least Moses must have some part in the matter of salvation and the insinuation got hold of their minds. These poor Galatians, simple hearted people, as it would seem, and so Moses was brought in and yoked with Christ, to the great damage of this people. We should be careful of what we receive, what we hear. Who knows whether these Galatian christians had become comfortable and held some thought in their own mind that at any rate now they knew the truth and so they were safe. If any of us at any time fall into that snare some error of either doctrine or practice will bring us to our senses. Oh beware of anything that for a minute would distract your attention from the Lord Jesus and the dependence of the soul on Him every moment, for the least feeling of independence that may come into our mind in the form, not of independence, but of assurance of being right, that moment we begin to fall. True are Christ's words "Without Me ye can do nothing". True is His gracious word, may we believe it, "Abide in Me. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me". So serious was the defection of these Galatians that the

Apostle said "Have I laboured among you in vain? I stand in doubt of you" How far they had gone we learn from the first chapter "I marvel that ye are so soon turned away from Him that called you, to another gospel which is not another" My brethren we do not know ourselves except insofar as the Holy Ghost has taught us, and in those points wherein we have not been instructed by the Spirit in respect of our ignorance and weakness and liability to fall and to receive wrong things, insofar, we are in danger. Danger not of hell, if we are bought with blood, but danger of getting broken bones, running sores in the night, God's felt absence, the rebukes of the Spirit and barrenness. May the Lord make us very careful. I have suffered from want of carefulness. I have lost much from want of observation. It is not a matter of getting to heaven, here. This is the point, that in the way we may suffer, and bones which are not seen may be seen sticking out, because of our lean, miserable condition. Now the Holy Ghost moved His servant Paul to write so vehemently in this Epistle against false things, false teachers, errors of doctrine, and everything that in itself has a tendency to move the soul away from Christ. Therefore he says "Stand fast" "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" Not an easy thing with a vile nature, a legal heart, love of self, and false teaching. O what a struggle it is to hold fast to the Lord Jesus but may He help us to keep close to the cross.

If we live in the Spirit. What a tremendous if; what a searching, penetrating if. If we live in the Spirit. Do we? Have we evidence that we are living in the Spirit? The Scripture tells us distinctly what the Spirit of God is in the children of God. This namely "The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" Two laws, therefore, are found in every believer, the law of sin and death working, lusting, slyly moving, insinuating itself here and there. Paul said "I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind

and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" On the contrary he says "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" But is the law of sin dead? No. Says the Apostle in this chapter, the flesh lusteth, willeth, moveth with energy, as much as possible. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. Here is a warfare. The Spirit lusteth against the flesh, and these in their natures are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. And dear friends this is true both ways. This word cuts. So that if a man lives in the lusts of the flesh, habitually, willingly, always, he is dead in trespasses and sins. If, on the other hand, a man professes to have the Spirit of Christ in him and never has any conflict, does not know seemingly what it is to have a contrary law lusting against the Spirit, that man, it is to be feared, is under an awful delusion. The soul of a believer is like a battle ground, a field in which are two armies and the death of one must take place. They will never unite; they will never become one. Their natures are absolutely different, diametrically opposed each to the other, so that a man must have victory in one of these two, the flesh or the Spirit. Do we know what this conflict is? I would believe, but unbelief says No, there is nothing to believe. I would love. Unbelief says, but there is an unkind God dealing with you in affliction. I would submit, but unbelief says in the form of rebellion, do not submit. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit.

"If we live in the Spirit" I say again, it is a penetrating, searching word. Beware of trust ill grounded. If we live in the Spirit, that is to say if we have the Holy Ghost as the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, what a wonder. And this is seen in several ways. It is seen first, according to Scripture, in the indwelling of the Spirit. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in you which ye have of God, and ye are not your own" I think that this is one of the most

solemn, trying tests to which a poor child of God can come. Here he is, vain thoughts, hardness of heart, unbelief, pride, vanity, independence, wanderings, gaddings of the spirit. Here he is, and now he comes face to face with the solemn question "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which ye have of God who dwelleth in you, and ye are not your own". I have found that very close, very difficult indeed to think it, very difficult to think it that a man, full of sin, whose mind gads and wanders, whose unbelief is powerful, whose enmity is bitter, whose hardness seems to be impenetrable, that such a man should have the Holy Ghost dwelling in him and yet it is not to be denied, neither brushed aside as of little or no importance. It is in this blessed word of God. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and that is living in the Spirit. And what is this? It is that motion of life, that operation of the Spirit, that heavenly instruction, that leading of a poor creature out of himself, as convinced of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, unto the Lord Jesus. I have thought that it was a very difficult matter for the disciples whose very near defection and falling away from Christ had been foretold them. You shall all forsake Me. Peter, you shall deny Me, deny all knowledge of Me, and then that divine Prophet turns, as it were, to them as their Priest, and their Saviour and says "Let not your heart be troubled" Think of it; all but in the same breath, a foretelling of falling and an encouragement to believe. When you are a sinner in your own eyes, when you apprehend God in His holiness and righteousness, O how difficult it is then to believe a Saviour is possible but now comes the Saviour and says to them believe in Me. My brethren to believe in Christ in such a case is by the operation of the Spirit of Christ in you. This is from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost and he in whom the Holy Ghost dwells is a child of God, is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and he is being built up for a habitation of God on the foundation, Jesus Christ.

Now you take these two, these contrary lustings, and they, as you may see them in the light of God's goodness and teaching, may prove to you that you have the Holy Ghost in you. Take the lustings of the flesh against God. Why do not you indulge them without check? Why do you cry against them as they offer violence to your soul? Why do you say Lord help me against them, graciously keep me from complying with them? These awful lustings of which I cannot rid myself, most mercifully manage for me. Deal graciously and deal powerfully with me. Whence this opposition, this wishing not to comply? The Spirit lusteth against the flesh. The strong cry against compliance, the fervent prayer that you may not live in sin, the earnest desire to be found in the Lord Jesus, to be cleansed from sin by His efficacious blood, to be brought near and kept near the cross of Christ, the lusting of the Spirit after the love of God, after justification and sanctification, and communion with the Lord; the Spirit lusteth, willeth, moveth, and energiseth against the flesh. Living in the Spirit. Take these two and if you can in your sober moments of meditation and searching into the things of God and your interest in them, conclude that you do not sin wilfully, that you do not Judas like seek an opportunity to betray Christ, that you do not go with Balaam, seeking to injure the people of God, but that on the contrary, you love or would love, you fear or would fear God, and cleave to the Saviour of sinners, then I say you may come to a scriptural conclusion that you live in the Spirit.

Take another evidence of this in the promise of Christ. In those precious promises made by Him and recorded by John in three or four places, the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, and the Comforter is to come where comfort is necessary. He is to come as a teacher, and God knows how the ignorance of some of us calls for a teacher. I know what that is. I never feared it in my early days, being overcome by ignorance; turned aside by ignorance, as I do today. O we do need divine teaching. That is a suitable prayer.

"Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." "That which I see not teach Thou me" Here is the Comforter; here is the sinner on his knees before God saying "Lord do teach me. Teach me to know Thyself. Teach me the nature and the virtue of the cross of Christ. Teach me the doctrine of justification; bring me into it. Teach me how to walk in the fear of God; teach me how to behave myself as I walk in the midst of providences which trouble me, which weaken me, which make me wander and I am afraid of stumbling." Do you follow this? Who is it that teaches a sinner to pray? What is real prayer called? It is called praying in the Holy Ghost. Can you come in here? Live in the Spirit. If we live in the Spirit. You live in prayer if you live in the Spirit. The Spirit of prayer is promised. How often you may have prayed for that prayer "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications" I say how often you may have prayed that prayer. Lord give me prayer, teach me how to pray. Help me to come boldly to the throne of grace.

"If we live in the Spirit" and take another point. I like points when they are clear in religion. Take this point. Here is a poor man, has no faith; he says he has none, he feels he has none naturally. What then, is he to say there is no God, no. To say there is no Saviour, no cross, no righteousness, no blood, no forgiveness, no. Lord, he says I would believe, help Thou mine unbelief. What is it to have your unbelief helped? To have some demonstration of the truth in your heart and conscience and understanding, to have the Holy Ghost opening, manifesting, and revealing the Lord Jesus so as that you can say I see Him. In John's gospel it is written, yea it is said by Christ "The world seeth Me no more, but ye see me" O the greatness of that mercy, "Ye see Me". My disciples, you see Me. I am going away, but you shall see Me, you shall see Me by faith. Now a demonstration of that kind scatters unbelief in a moment and the man says "Lord I believe, help

Thou mine unbelief" He lives in the Spirit.

The flesh lusts against the Spirit when some adversities come, some long, painful absence of Christ is experienced, when proud, haughty, resentful nature is offended. Now the Holy Ghost lets down into the soul some sweet sensation of divine love, of divine wisdom in the adverse providences and now says the sinner "Lord I submit" Here is my heart, here is my rebellious will, take these faculties depraved by sin and moved by sin, take them, subdue them, and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. That has tried me sometimes, every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And you turn to your thoughts and see them, teeming multitudes of them, teeming in your mind, rushing here and there and fetching up a variety of reasons against submission and then, in a moment, for your whole soul to be like a weaned child and to leave off prying into matters too high for you; to be able to say "Lord my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in matters too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother, my soul is even as a weaned child", and there is not a crooked thing you would try to straighten yourself, there is not an ingredient in the cup of bitters that you would take out of it, not one. Well now that, as I judge, is living in the Spirit. It is the work of the Spirit, the blessed operation of the Spirit.

Take another point, namely the revelation that the Spirit makes in the hearts of sinners of the Lord Jesus. That is very remarkable. To be much remarked is that, that the Spirit of Christ takes of His Person and His things, and reveals them in a sinner and the revelation is in a measure so clear, the power so deciding in the soul, that the sinner says I know. I have seen Him. Perhaps you can say you have seen Him bleeding, dying for sin, and you all but said "for me". Perhaps you have seen Him as the Lord, the

righteousness of His people, and have all but said "my righteousness". Yea, it may have come to that in your soul that you said "Now here I lie down at the foot of the cross, here I come a poor wretched creature, covered with filthy garments, and here I lie down at the feet of the Lord Jesus, seeking justification in His righteousness. The sinner lives in this. It lives in him and this is living in the Spirit. Cleaving to the Saviour is living in the Spirit. Following after His goodness, and seeking to be alone satisfied from his fulness, is living in the Spirit. To hang about Him, and prefer Him in all His reproaches before the riches and honours of the world, is living in the Spirit. To seek to have His Name named on you and to walk in humble obedience to Him in the ordinances of His house is living in the Spirit.

Loving, the people of God is living in the Spirit. Ye are taught of God to love one another, and this is part of that work, namely look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of another. Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. Here then we have this great question and may we seriously, solemnly, reverently, look at it, "If ye live in the Spirit". How many of us have a hope that such is the case with us? Dear friends look at it. It relates to heaven, it relates to everything that is godly, it relates to all the things that exercise us in this life. Living in the Spirit will touch all these things.

Now having looked at this hypothetical question, let us look at the exhortation built on it. If this, then that. If you live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit. Walking as professors is a very serious matter

No big words of ready talkers
No dry doctrine will suffice,
Broken hearts and humble walkers
These are dear in Jesus' eyes.

Now let us look at this walking. First of all it is walking by faith. Abraham had a covenant made with him. He was called to leave his country, his father's house, his own people, and go into a country of which the Lord would tell him, and Abraham went out not knowing wither he went and he sought a city, he sought a city by faith, he sought a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God. That is what every pilgrim is doing. Everyone called by grace is doing that, seeking God, a city which He has built so that, if the Spirit of God is in us we are seeking a city. This is called in the Romans minding the things of the Spirit. They that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit. His things are Christ, and Christ's things, and Christ's Person and the promises in Christ and the heaven that is by Christ. These are the things of the Spirit, for He comes as the Spirit of Christ to bear witness of Him. Now what are we seeking my brethren, what are you seeking, what am I seeking, a city, a land which is very far off, the King in His beauty, that we may get sights of Him, according to the word, "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty, and the land which is very far off". This is walking in the Spirit. He works the work of faith with power that the name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified in us and we in Him according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. In another matter, John says, if a man does not love his brother whom he sees, how can he love God whom he sees not? Now here is trial to seek what you do not see, what your nature can have no conception of, no love for, to seek a spiritual, a heavenly kingdom and city, to leave what you see, to give up what you possess, to take up your cross and follow Christ. O this living in the Spirit, this walking in the Spirit, you will find to be exceedingly difficult. Seek Him who made the seven stars and Orion, seek an unseen God, seek an unknown city, seek the fellowship of the Spirit, seek the love of God, seek to be built up an habitation for God with all the saints. This is faith. We walk by faith and not by sight. O this is very near to us. The things which we see are so are very real to

us but distant unseen things, these to seek and to find that they are more real in our hearts than the things we see never is this possible without faith. Speaking of trials and of the future the Apostle Paul says "Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not on the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal." A very solemn thing to profess, if we profess to be seeking and looking after, and looking on unseen things and profess that long trials, heavy afflictions and solemn contradictions of providence, things that were potent to us, that we could touch, and you look on them as of a moment. If you have not faith you cannot do it. If you have faith you will do it from time to time. Let us walk in the Spirit. Let us walk as men and women who have a better home, a better country, who are going, as we hope and pray, to where there is no change, no night, no pain, no hunger, no thirst, because no sin. Let us walk in the Spirit. How do you stand with regard to this point? Do you walk in the Spirit? If faith is not active in us, then flesh is. If faith is not overcoming, then the flesh is. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God. What man, what church, what minister can be lively without this faith in exercise. It comes very close to me for I have got a great deal of unbelief. Let us walk in the Spirit of faith. The work of faith must be in power. A very remarkable word it is we have in the Ephesians with regard to believing. The Apostle there speaks of the mighty power of God which He wrought in Christ, the exceeding greatness of His power being also in every believer. Very wonderful that a sinner with nothing but sin in his nature should have that blessed faith that holds fast to the Lord Jesus, and that faith, wrought in him by the exceeding greatness of God's power, lifts him up and sets him, in his own measure, after Christ, above principalities and powers and dominions and every name that is named. Well, if some of

us are measured by that word, how do we stand? Where are we? You put it to me. Are you above principalities and powers and might and dominion? O says a sinner, these things are over me I am not over them. And yet there are moments when the Holy Ghost comes and the exceeding greatness of God's power is in him and he says Lord I can leave the world, I can leave myself, and my family, and my business, and all my concerns, I can leave everything in Thy hand and I am here a poor sinner submitting to Thy will. I am here, nothing but a vessel whose only qualification for receiving is its emptiness. Here I am. Who can express the power of God that is exercised in a sinner in that case. O say not you are not believers. If ever you are brought to that point, then you are living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit.

Now I will give you another thing before I close. It is the blessing of Jesus Christ. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled," and if you observe it you will see this that He does not say now this is for a beginner. It is just an absolute word. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness" and I am disposed to say that as long as a christian lives in this world he will be hungering and thirsting after Christ who is his righteousness. He will be hungering and thirsting after clearer manifestations, after new conversions, after fresh influences, after new views of the Lord Jesus, after closer communion with Him and he who can say that that is his case is, as I believe, according to the text, walking in the Spirit. O how little is the world at such times. What empty things are riches, and pleasures and possessions of a temporal nature at such times. How poor are all the goods of earth compared with the durable riches and righteousness of the Lord Jesus but then here comes in the conflict, for flesh does put its claim in, O it does put its claim in. What says flesh, you leave everything? Yes says Christ to this sinner and the sinner then says it "If a man deny not himself and take not up his

cross daily and follow Me he cannot be my disciple." Yea says the Saviour if he hate not father and mother, husband and wife and self and lose his life and hate his life, he is not worthy of me. Some scriptures make you feel you can hardly read them, they are so solemn, so penetrating, so separating. How many of you can bear that scripture, and yet it is a word of the Lord Jesus, true, solemnly true. Follow Me. Let us walk in the Spirit. It is a great thing, if I may use such a term and convey what I mean by it, it is a great thing for a child of God to aim high. Many years ago, one who was a child of God, and I doubt not is in heaven, she died many years ago, asked me to tell her what was the lowest evidence on which she could rest for eternity. I said I would not tell you if I knew for that is tolerate ground for nobody. The highest thing is to be built on the only foundation that can bear the building and to know Christ is the thing. This is what I mean to aim high, even to seek the knowledge of that blessed person who said "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled. To be filled with righteousness is to be filled with Christ who is our righteousness. To be filled is to be filled with the love of God and to have the Spirit's testimony that it is well with you. Now may the Lord grant that we may be in that case, seeking to know what it is to walk in the Spirit. There are many other points in connection with this which I cannot now touch. I have said perhaps enough this morning and if the Lord should bring us to the point to search and try our way and see if we can in any degree come into this word that we are in the Spirit, living and walking in the Spirit, it will be a great comfort to us. May He grant it may be so indeed.