

Steve Clem's TSOM Internship Journal

Date: 4.27.2010

Scripture: Galatians 5:5,16-26 (The Relationship with the Holy Spirit).

More in-depth reading: Galatians 5

Insight: Through the Holy Spirit, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. This scripture reveals that we are looking beyond our own righteousness and towards attaining a righteousness in Christ for this age and the next to come. We are not justified by our outward acts, however, as we walk in the Spirit, we are given a righteous deposit of the fruits of the Spirit. And for our own good and God's purposes, we are expected to take advantage of this deposit and conform to the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

As I was meditating on the list of the fruits of the flesh, I noted that each and every one of them, when practiced to maturity, destroys completely. I find it noteworthy that these fruits are listed in context to the themes of self-justification by the law and hurting others. It is important to note that the Jews who opposed Jesus and the apostles of the 1st century were full of the flesh. And it's pretty obvious that where there is opposition to God in man, there will be the fruits of the flesh. For the flesh and the Holy Spirit cannot both rule in man at the same time. Note that the scriptures also say that those who "practice" such things cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. When practicing these fruits, people are also influencing others to do so and leading them away from redemption. This is why Christ said that "he that does not gather with me, scatters.

However, through the Holy Spirit, we can win the war of the flesh and be the influence that does not scatter. The righteousness of Christ is ours. We only have to believe by faith and overcome. We can receive what is ours abundantly through the Holy Spirit. Love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These very fruits of the Spirit are completely opposed to the natural inclinations of man and the flesh. And by living according to the fruits of the Spirit, when practiced to maturity, they build up completely.

What a contrast between the two kingdoms that are at war for us. The kingdom of Satan is of the flesh. The Kingdom of God is of the Spirit. God will not be mocked by man or Satan. The fruit we grow will eventually be visible. Our fruit may not be as obvious to the one without discernment, however the fruits we have are on display to Him who watches and has eyes everywhere. And they are there as glimpses into who we are and the kingdom we are more inclined to serve.

Prayer Request(s): We all have good fruit and bad fruit. Lord, I know that every branch that you don't like in me gets trimmed. Help me to be humble enough to recognize when I am swinging in the direction of my flesh being in control and allow the Holy Spirit to win the war in me.

Answered Prayer: God is willing to give good gifts to His children.

Insights into non-biblical reading: none

Personal reflection: It's not that I'm in the flesh a lot. Things do flare up and I get tired sometimes. The spirit is willing and the flesh is weak is a scripture that we can all identify with. What I think we could all use is to have the fruits of the Holy Spirit in greater abundance. It would be nice to be able to immediately recognize when we are giving more control to the flesh than we should. We need a voice that says, "you are giving in to your flesh, but this is what I have prepared for you that is of the Spirit and much better. Give this a try, and see if you can remember this lesson. Recognize this and choose correctly as you mature and understand."

I think we make choices subconsciously on a daily basis, but do we recognize these choices as being of the flesh or Spirit as they occur? I know our conscience is not a mediator between us and God, but are we aware of the choices as they occur so that we can make adjustments? Perhaps this is where the Holy Spirit comes in to help us, if we will listen.