

## **The Ministries of the Holy Spirit, Part 2**

Scripture: Galatians 3:1–5

Code: 90-32

Galatians chapter 3 verses 1 through 5, Galatians chapter 3, verses 1 through 5. I've been very gratified that the Spirit of God really did prompt my heart in doing this series because there's been more response to this series from the congregation than any series I have done in a long, long time. It is obvious to me that the Spirit of God thus ordained it and it's been very encouraging to see the wonderful response.

What we're talking about basically is the fact that somehow the Christian church has gotten away from an evident belief in the sufficiency of the Holy Spirit for matters of Christian living. We have substituted all kinds of earthly things for the supernatural power which is granted us in the Spirit. And the purpose of this series is to get us back on track with living on the spiritual plane, which is absolutely essential.

We have said much in the last two messages and I would encourage you to get the tapes if you missed either of them, I would encourage you to get the tapes even if you heard them and listen to them over and over again because of the importance of this truth.

Look with me at Galatians chapter 3 and let me begin reading in verse 1. "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you, did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish, having begun by the Spirit are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain if indeed it was in vain? Does He then who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you do it by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?"

Now the apostle Paul is confronting among the Galatians a rather bizarre turn of events. These people who had begun in the Spirit, that is they were saved by the work of the Spirit, were now trying to come to spiritual perfection in the flesh. They started out in the power of the Holy Spirit and now they were trying to carry on in the strength of their own wisdom and their own ingenuity and their own system of effort. Paul confronts the folly of that and says, "You don't believe do you that you have begun your Christian experience by the power of the Holy Spirit and now you can somehow perfect it by your flesh?" The indictment is needed. The indictment is direct. And I believe the indictment in some sense is timeless because it relates directly to us. Although the cultural issues might be a bit different and although the very effort that the Galatians were engaged in, in the flesh, to try to do what only the Spirit could do might have been different, the matter is the same and the church today is equally engaged in trying to perfect in the flesh what was begun in the Spirit.

Joseph Carroll tells a very interesting story. He tells the story about the time he had a series of meetings in North Carolina. I heard him tell this on a tape I listened to this week. He said he was ministering in North Carolina and he was preaching in various places around the city of Asheville, that lovely city there. And he was staying in the home of some very dear friends in Asheville for the

duration of his ministry. And each night he would go to one or another place and preach.

Toward the end of the time period in which he was there, he was scheduled to speak in Greenville, South Carolina at a church meeting and because he did not have a car himself he was to be transported there by some people who would drive up from Greenville, pick him up, drive back, have him preach and drive him home, then drive back again. They wanted him enough to go through all of that, even though it is a multiple-hour drive from Asheville to Greenville.

The night came in which he was to be picked up in the early afternoon and driven all the way down to Greenville. And as he was leaving the house of his hosts, they parted and said their farewells and he told them he would hope to be back by midnight, perhaps a little bit later. And so they went off toward Greenville, South Carolina and there he ministered in the church and as pastors often do he hung around a little bit to talk afterward and had some fellowship. The people that had driven him down and then drove him back and as they approached this house in Asheville, the light in the window was on and the light on the porch was on and he knew that they had spoken about his return together and so he assumed the hosts would be prepared for his arrival. And when he was then exited from the car, he simply said, "Go on, on your way, you must hurry, you have a long drive back. I'm sure they're prepared for me, I'll have no problem." And he sent them on their way.

He walked a rather long walk to the house and it was very cold, it was in the dead of winter. He said by the time he reached the porch his nose was numb and so were both of his ears. He tapped gently on the door and no one answered and so he tapped a little harder and no one answered. And then he tapped even harder and no one answered. And finally in a bit of a concern about the cold, he walked around to the kitchen door of the house and began to tap gently on that, a little harder on that, then tapped on the window and still there was no response at all.

Well, somewhat frustrated and becoming colder by the moment, he thought that maybe the best possibility was to walk a little bit down the road to the next house of a neighbor, and there were a few in the area, neighboring houses, and knock on their door and ask if he might use the telephone because surely the telephone would be closer to where they were sleeping and awaken them. But then he thought to himself, "Strangers knocking on people's door after midnight is not really a healthy thing to do." And so he decided that that might frighten people and consequently could be somewhat disastrous to him potentially. So he decided that the best thing to do was, using his own ingenuity, to just walk to a public telephone.

Not being too familiar with the area and being very late at night and dark and, of course, cold and not well lit in the sky, he didn't really know where he was going so he started down the road and he walked and he walked for several miles, looking for a pay telephone. He was walking along a banked road, he said, and he was walking on the grass that was very slippery and at one point it was so slippery that he slid down the bank into two feet of water. He crawled up out of the two feet of water soaked, now almost frozen, and finally walking further beyond that he saw a glittering blinking motel light and realized that he had finally found a place where he could get a phone. So he walked in and awakened the people who were already asleep in the motel and when he asked them if they could loan him the telephone to make a call, they were happy to do that. He made the call. He awakened his host and he said, "I hate to disturb you, I couldn't get anybody to wake up in the house. I'm several miles down the road at the motel. Could you come and get me?" To which his sleepy host replied, "Joseph, you have a key in your overcoat pocket. I gave it to you before you left." Sure enough, he reached in his pocket and there was a key.

As I listened to that story I thought to myself, "Boy, isn't that a perfect picture of many Christians?" The house of blessing is what they want. They want comfort. They want warmth. They want ease. They want rest. They want peace. They want nourishment. They want fellowship. And they use all of this amazing plethora of schemes to try to devise a way to get in. And all the time they have in their pocket what? A key. May I say to you, beloved, that the key to the house of promise, the key to the house of blessing, the key to the house of comfort, the house of rest, the house of nourishment, the house of fellowship is the Holy Spirit, and that most Christians are roaming around with the Holy Spirit and by their own ingenuity trying to do what they can't do and only He can do and thus frustrating themselves in the very thing which they want and which is immediately available to them, if it is pursued in the proper way? How can we believe for a moment that we can accomplish entrance into the divine supernatural house of blessing through human means? How have we ever acquiesced to pragmatism? How have we ever acquiesced to human psychotherapy to accomplish what only can be accomplished by the divine mode of entrance into the provision that God has awaiting us?

Do we need to be reminded of the very familiar 23rd Psalm which says this, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Have we forgotten? I mean, we haven't forgotten the Psalm, we've only forgotten its meaning. We haven't forgotten what it says; we've only forgotten what it means. We know where to find it; we just don't know how to appropriate it. "The Lord is my Shepherd," says the psalmist, "therefore I shall not want." I have no lack, so whatever I lack I go to my Shepherd. "He makes me lie down in green pastures." I need food, "He leads me in green pastures." I need water so He leads me beside quiet waters. My soul is weak and weary and without strength, so He restores my soul. I'm lost and don't know the way I should go, I don't know how to chart the course of my life so He guides me in the path of righteousness. I have to face the reality of death but He leads me through the valley of the shadow of death without fear. I am so often distressed and in upheaval, but His rod and His staff, they comfort me. I am concerned about those around me who are hostile, but He prepares a table for me in the presence of mine enemies. I need healing but He anoints my head with oil. It's a long life and I want the best of it so He provides goodness and mercy to follow me all the days of my life and I desperately want hope after death. And so He gives me the promise that because He's my Shepherd He'll take me to dwell in His house forever.

So where do I go for everything? I go to my Shepherd. Why has the church abandoned this? Have we forgotten that you are complete in Him, Colossians 2:10? Have we forgotten that we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 1:3? Have we forgotten that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us and that God has supplied all our needs according to His riches by Christ Jesus, Philippians 4? Have we forgotten that we possess all things that pertain to life and godliness, 2 Peter 1:3? Have we forgotten all of that? How in the world have we ever descended to the level of living on a human plane to satisfy spiritual need?

Paul's point is, you have begun in the Spirit, you cannot be perfected in the flesh; you cannot be. And why will you fall victim to your own inabilities, to increase your frustration? You are frustrated because you have a problem. You are frustrated because you can't solve the problem. Why will you look in pragmatism and psychological therapy for solutions that only God can bring? Why don't you reach into your spiritual pocket and take out the key, the Holy Spirit of God?

So as I've said in these messages, it is a time to return to the power of the Spirit. For an hour this morning I just over and over kept praying to the Lord, "Lord, please help me to help the people

understand what I'm saying." This has been a great burden on my heart and I...I only had one request that I just kept saying over and over and over and over, "Lord, please may I get this across to them," because this is so vital and because the church today is buying into a deception. For the Christian, every trial and every issue of life is resolved in the power and presence of God and the knowledge of that has been the foundation of spiritual commitment in the church for centuries. You can go back to St. Augustine and you will hear him pray these words, "Hide not Thy face from me, oh that I might repose on Thee, oh that Thou wouldest enter into my heart and inebriate it, that I may forget my ills and embrace Thee, my soul good."

The psalmist said it in Psalm 73, "I desire nothing on earth besides Thee. And whom have I in heaven but Thee? You're my only Shepherd. I am complete in You. All resources are there."

Spurgeon said this, "Oh there is in contemplating Christ a balm for every wound. In musing on the Father there is a quiet for every grief. And in the influence of the Holy Spirit there is a cure for every sore. Would you lose your sorrow? Would you drown your cares? Then go plunge yourself in the Godhead's deepest sea, be lost in His immensity and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest, refreshed and invigorated."

Writing of Hudson Taylor it is said, "Frequently those who were wakeful in the little house at Chinkingiang might hear at two or three in the morning the soft refrain of Mr. Taylor's favorite hymn. 'Jesus, I am resting in the joy of what Thou art.'" That was his favorite hymn. He had learned that for him only one life was possible, just that blessed life of resting and rejoicing in the Lord Himself under all circumstances while he dealt with the difficulties inward and outward, great and small. Few people have endured what Hudson Taylor endured to bring the gospel to China. When his beloved first wife died, he would often awake in the middle of the night in terrible, terrible pain of loneliness, feelings of grief. And in those moments he would speak to the Lord and say to the Lord that, "You promised if any would come to you, he would not thirst." And he would tell the Lord of the thirsting in his soul and claiming God's promise he would find solace and comfort and peace.

You see, the greatest men of God through the history of the church have always run into the presence of God because they know that having begun in the Spirit they are completed in the Spirit, not in the flesh. They do not seek solutions in a dimension where solutions are not found. That is why to me it is so distressing that the church would buy into the...the fleshly weapons of pragmatism and psychology. Do you realize, beloved, do you realize that psychology is equally valid on the unsaved who are spiritually dead as it is on the saved? And if that's true then it does nothing for the spiritual dimension, nothing. The Christian life began with the Spirit and it ends with the Spirit. That's how it's perfected.

Now in our last couple of studies we noted how we've begun in the Spirit. The Spirit convicted us of sin. The Spirit produced repentance. The Spirit energized faith in the hearing of the gospel. And the Spirit regenerated us. That's how we begun. Then the blessed Holy Spirit indwelt us. Then He was the agent by which we were baptized into the body of Christ. Then He gifted us for ministry, secured us for eternity, and separated us from sin and death. He did all of that at the time of salvation. We began in the Spirit. And we will also be made perfect in the Spirit. We have got to get to the place where we're living on the spiritual domain, if you will.

Now what does the Spirit do in us to perfect us? That's what we're talking about. I have seven things the Spirit does. I've given you two, I'll give you probably two more today and we'll wrap them

up next time.

You remember that the Spirit does this. Number one, He brings us into intimacy with God. He brings us into intimacy with God. You say, "Is that important?" It is important because God is the source of all resources, right? All spiritual resources are wrapped up in God. So if the Holy Spirit can give us access to God, He can give us access to everything, everything we need. It behooves us then, having come into the life of the Spirit, to then walk in the Spirit, be filled with the Spirit so that we may by the Spirit tap the resources that are available to us because we have access to God. The Spirit brings us into intimacy with God. How do we know that? Because it is the Spirit in us that causes us to cry "Abba, Father." "Abba" means "Papa, Daddy." It speaks of intimacy, it speaks of access, it speaks of acceptance and it is the Spirit of God that produces that intimacy by which we go into the presence of God, enjoy His fellowship, receive His resources, draw on His wisdom and thus have all we need for the matters of living life.

Second thing we said the Spirit does is He illuminates the Scripture. Not only does He take us to God with intimacy so that we can pray, but He also illuminates Scripture so that we can hear what God has to say. It's a two-way conversation. The Spirit energizes our intimacy, which causes us to be drawn into His presence in prayer and communion. The Spirit also illuminates the Scripture, which allows God to speak to us through His Word. In John's gospel Jesus said the Spirit of truth would come and He would lead you into all truth and He would really reflect to you "the things that belong to Me," Christ said.

So the Spirit then provides intimacy with God which is the source of everything and then He provides understanding of the Word of God. Now we went into those two in great detail last time. Let's go to a third one this morning. And I want you to understand this, I just pray that you will grasp this great truth, the Spirit glorifies Christ to us. The Spirit glorifies Christ to us. That is to say it is the ministry of the Spirit to reveal the majesty and the glory of Christ. Let me say it another way. It is the Spirit's ministry to create and produce a Christ-centered life. The issue is Christ in your life, focusing on Christ, knowing Christ, loving Christ, obeying Christ, serving Christ. Many Christians focus on the church. They focus on their service. They focus on activities. We must focus on Christ and that is the ministry of the Spirit to draw us to Christ, to exalt Christ, to glorify Christ.

In John's gospel this is very clearly stated to us twice by the Lord Jesus Himself. In John 15:26 Jesus says, "When the Helper comes (and that's the Holy Spirit) whom I will send to you, He will bear witness of Me." In other words, the Holy Spirit's responsibility is to give witness to Christ, to reveal Christ, to show the glory of Christ. In chapter 16 of John's gospel, the Lord also speaking to the disciples in the upper room says, "When the Spirit of Truth comes He shall glorify Me," John 16:14. "He will take what is Mine and disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine, therefore I said that He will take what is Mine and disclose it to you." He'll show you Christ, He'll show you all about Christ. He'll reveal to you the majesty and the wonder and the beauty and the magnificence and the glory and the authority of Christ.

Now I want you to turn for a moment to 1 Corinthians chapter 12 because I want to take this a step further. First Corinthians chapter 12 verse 3. This too speaks of the uniqueness of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in affirming to us the glory of Christ. Verse 3 says this, "Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says Jesus is accursed." Stop at that point.

Now that sounds reasonable, doesn't it? No one who stood up and said Jesus is accursed did that

because he was prompted by the Holy Spirit to do it. The Holy Spirit would never do that. And that was just the unbelievable abuse of the ecstasies of the Corinthian church. They were getting together with their so-called tongues and so forth and they were cursing Christ. And the people were saying, "Oh this is the gift of God," because it was in some gibberish they didn't understand, well possibly demonic language. And Paul says to them, "Wait a minute. Some of these people are cursing Jesus and this is not the Holy Spirit's work, He's not producing that. This is no gift of the Spirit when Jesus is cursed."

Then on the other hand, look at verse 3 again. "No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit." People who have read my book on *The Gospel According to Jesus* say that one of the criticisms is, "Well if you make people have to confess Jesus is Lord, that's a human work." That's not a human work. No one can say Jesus is Lord except by whom? The Holy Spirit; He's the only one that can do that. No one can repent except God grant him repentance. No one can turn from his sin except God grant him a turning. No one can believe except God give him faith. And no one can confess Jesus is Lord unless the Holy Spirit does it. That's not a human work. But I want you to notice that it is the ministry of the Spirit to exalt the lordship of Christ, to affirm the lordship of Christ, not only to the unregenerate but here in Corinth to the church. He wants the church to see the exalted position of Christ. Why? There are two reasons, two reasons He wants to exalt Christ. One, so that you will see Him as your authority and submit to His will. Two, so that you'll see Him as your model and pattern your life after Him. The Holy Spirit exalts Him as Lord for the sake of authority and for the sake of example. Those are the two issues.

The Spirit then wants to exalt Christ, to magnify Christ. Why? So you'll see His glory and His majesty and His authority and understand you're to submit to Him. Secondly, so that you'll see His beauty and His wonder and His purity and His righteousness and you'll want to be like Him. Those are the two things.

So as Christians we live in the light of those two things. I am called to obey Christ. I am called to be like Christ. The Spirit exalts Christ. The Spirit lifts up Christ. That's His ministry.

Can I say it in a pragmatic way? When you as a Christian are operating in the Spirit, when you are walking in the Spirit, when you are filled with the Spirit, when you're living on the spiritual plane, you are going to find Christ becoming more and more and more significant, precious, exalted to you all the time because that's the work of the Holy Spirit. If you're not walking in the Spirit and you're not being filled with the Spirit, and you're living your life in the flesh, Christ will not be becoming increasingly more precious to you because you have short-circuited the process. It's so basic. It's so foundational and yet somehow we have become estranged from these very basic things.

Let me show you one other passage on this point. Second Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 3:18. Moses you remember, and the writer Paul is reflecting back to the occasion of Moses on the mount when he saw God's glory and it reflected on his face. You remember Moses went up into the mount to see God, God revealed Himself in brilliant light, the Shekinah glory, and Moses had that incredible opportunity, recorded in Exodus 34, to see the glory of God. And when he looked at the glory of God, this blazing Shekinah light that he saw and it was only the back part of God, not His full glory or he would have been consumed. But he saw the back part of it. When he saw the glory of God he came down the mountain. The Bible says his whole face was shining, his whole face was shining. Now get this point. Paul is saying this. Anyone who gazes at the glory of Christ gets the glory of Christ on them. If you see Him you tend to become what? Like Him. The more you see Him, the

more you're like Him. The more of Him you see, the more you're like Him.

And that's the analogy that Paul draws into verse 18. He's saying, "All right, as Moses, seeing God, then had the likeness of God on his own person, so we all with an unveiled face (nothing in front), are beholding as if in a blazing mirror the brilliant glory of the Lord." What happens? "We are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory." Stop at that point.

He's saying, as you gaze at the glory of Christ, as you focus on His glory, that glory gets on you. And the more you gaze on it, the more glory becomes your own, the more you become like Him. So you go from one level of glory to the next level of glory, to the next level of glory, to the next level of glory. In a sense it isn't even like stair steps, it's like this level of glory, and this level of glory and this. In other words, you become more radiantly Christ-like. So as you gaze on the glory of Christ — there it is right in verse 18 — as you behold the glory of the Lord, you will move from one dimension of glory to the next. What does that mean? You're becoming more and more like Him, more and more like Him, more and more like... Who's doing that? Who's doing that? Look at the end of the verse. "It's being done from the Lord the Spirit," that's the actual Greek rendering. It's being done from the Spirit of the Lord, the Holy Spirit's doing it.

Now listen carefully. What does the Holy Spirit want to do? The Holy Spirit wants to show you the glory of Christ. And while you're gazing at the glory of Christ and seeing the beauty of His person, that glory is becoming more and more your own and you are moving and moving and moving more and more to radiate the glory of Christ. That's what Paul meant in Galatians 4 and verse 19 when he said to the Galatians, "I have birth pains, (I have labor pains, I hurt) until Christ is fully formed in you." I want to see that full glory of Christ reproduced in you.

And so, it is the Spirit's ministry to show us the glory of Christ. He shows it as we read the Word. He shows it as we meditate and contemplate the blessedness of Christ. As you sit back and read the Scripture and then meditate and think on Christ and as you let the Spirit of God begin to pull the truths of Scripture out of the page and expand them in your mind, you begin to see the wonder of Christ, as you think on Christ, as you discuss Him with a friend, and together you draw at the great truths of the majesty of His person you will find yourself in the vision of Christ being more and more able to radiate the glory of Christ and becoming more and more like Him. But only the Holy Spirit can do that. That can't be done on a human level. There's no formula for that. There's no seminar for that. There is no such thing as a Christ-like seminar. I'm sure somebody will start one, "How to Be Glorified in Three Easy Lessons." That's the work of the Spirit. He shows us Christ. And then as we gaze on Christ He moves us into His very image.

And, beloved, let's face it, the more and more and more we are like Jesus Christ, the less and less and less we are disturbed by anything. So where is the solution to everything? That's why I say the Spirit of God produces everything we need if we would just live on that level. The Spirit of God gives us intimacy with God who is the resource for everything. The Spirit of God illuminates the Word of God which gives us instruction on everything. And then the blessed Spirit of God glorifies Christ to us and in seeing the glorified Christ we become more and more the bearers of His glory.

One more point this morning. The Holy Spirit guides us into God's will. The Holy Spirit guides us into God's will. I am convinced that Scripture teaches that the Spirit of God not only reveals truth through Scripture, but the Spirit of God guides me personally. There is a personal ministry of the Spirit and I want to walk in the Spirit cause I want to be moving in the direction of God's will, don't you?

Look with me just to touch base with the fact that this isn't new. You don't need to turn to it but there is a verse in the great, great 36th chapter of Ezekiel which is the promise of the New Covenant. And as God is promising the New Covenant to come in the future of which we are the participants, in verse 27 of Ezekiel 36 He says this, "I will put My Spirit within you." Now if all we were supposed to do is follow what the Scripture says, why would the Spirit need to be in us? If He is just to show us what the Scripture means, there it is, that's it, why would He be in us? He says, "I will put Him in you so He can cause you to walk in My statutes." It isn't just information; it is a life pattern the Spirit produces. He doesn't just help you to know, He enables you to do.

That's why in Acts 13, and they were considering sending out missionaries, you remember, in the church at Antioch, and the five pastors at Antioch were praying and fasting and it says, "The Holy Spirit said to them, 'Separate unto Me, Paul and Barnabas.'" There was no Bible verse for that. How they going to find out God's will? How they going to find out God's will? Who is going to go? Who is going to take the gospel to the Gentiles? So they prayed and they fasted and they asked God through His Spirit to reveal to them and the Spirit of God revealed to them, "I want Ba... I want Saul and Barnabas...or Paul and Barnabas, that's who I want." That's the subjective ministry of the Holy Spirit. He led them.

You come into the 15th chapter of Acts and the Jerusalem Council is meeting and discussing how they should treat the Jews and how they should carry the gospel into the Jewish and Gentile world. And they decided how it ought to be done. And so they write a letter. And the letter says, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." That's an amazing statement. You know what that means? It means they all came to a consensus which they knew was the mind of the Spirit. How did they know that? Because in their hearts they had that confidence. Have you ever known in your heart that the Spirit of God was leading you? I believe that if a person is walking in the Spirit in obedience to the Spirit of God, that the Spirit of God personally guides that person into the will of God. That's the only way I want to live. You see, in Romans 8:14 it says, "As many as are the sons of God, they are led by the Spirit of God." And I believe that leading is a unique and marvelous thing. I have often prayed what David prayed in Psalm 143:10, "Teach me to do Thy will, oh God." I have to know, what is it You want? In Psalm 119:35 he said, "Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments for therein is my delight." In other words, show me how to go. In Psalm 119:133 he says, "Order my steps in Thy Word and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." I want to go the way You want me to go, lead me, guide me.

In that tragic expression of confession that David gave in Psalm 51 as he poured out his heart to God, asking God to forgive him for the terrible sin of adultery and murder, he says in verse 6, "Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being," and then this amazing statement, Psalm 51:6, "In the hidden part, Thou wilt make me know wisdom." David says, "God, this I know about You. You'll show me in the inner part of my being what I am to do."

The apostle Paul knew that experience. He knew that experience because the Spirit of God worked on him many ways. He says in Romans 9:1, listen to this, "I'm telling the truth, I'm not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit moves the conscience to guide you in life. So many people are paralyzed, you know, and so many people can't solve their problems. And so many people don't know where to go and what to do. And you say to yourself, "Whatever happened to the Holy Spirit? Whatever happened to the Holy Spirit?"



People who live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit are guided by the Spirit as He works through their conscience to lead them into His will. Why would you back out of that to try to live on a plane below that by your own energy, or the energy of others who are trying to do the same thing?

A.W. Pink described this...this kind of leading of the Spirit subjectively as He moves you toward the will of God in these words. He says, "Those who are directed by this divine Spirit are moved to examine their hearts and take frequent notice of their ways, to mourn over their carnality and perverseness, to confess their sins and earnestly seek grace to enable them to be obedient," end quote. What he is saying is if you want to get in touch with whether you're really led by the Spirit, ask yourself this: Are you moved to examine your own heart? Do you find yourself always wanting to examine your heart to be sure your motives are right? Do you take frequent notice of the way you're conducting yourself? Do you pull yourself up short, yank the chain once in awhile and say, hold it, you've gone too far? Do you mourn over your carnality? Do you get tired of your perverseness? Are you weary of the sins of your life? Do you confess them eagerly to God? Do you earnestly seek the grace of God in your life so that you can be obedient? If you do, that's evidence that you've yielded your life to the control of the Spirit, you're moving in the Spirit. And that's the way you're going to know the will of God.

What does God do for you through His Spirit? First of all, you began in the Spirit. He convicted you of sin. He produced repentance within you. He energized faith and response to the hearing of the message of the gospel. Then He regenerated you. Then He came to indwell you. Then He baptized you into the body of Christ by means of the Spirit. Then you were gifted by the Spirit, made secure in the Spirit forever; and not only that, you were separated from sin and death by the Holy Spirit. He had the power to do all of that. Will you now back away from that and try to perfect what He began by living in the flesh? How absolutely ridiculous!

What are the resources which we have in the Spirit? Intimacy with God, understanding of the Word, the majestic vision of the glory of Christ and the promise of personal guidance into God's will. There are three more. Now I'll have to save those for next time. Let's bow together in prayer.

We are reminded, Father, of the words of the apostle Paul in writing to the Galatian Christians as he says it twice, once in verse 16 and once in verse 25, he says, "Walk in the Spirit." Walk in the Spirit. And he's telling those Galatians, who were so prone to go back to the flesh and try to work out their own sanctification, he's telling them this is wrong. You started in the Spirit, now keep walking in the Spirit. Lord God, help us to get on that spiritual plane and live there that we might know the fullness of all that the Spirit has. If we live in the Spirit, and we do, we do by grace, then let us walk in the Spirit. And we will never fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

Lord God, call us all to a fresh commitment, to a Spirit-controlled life, which means that we confess our sin and ask that the Spirit of God take over control of our lives, which means that we have to pick up our spiritual weapons, the Word and intense and faithful prayer if we're going to live on that level. We must commune with You through the Spirit. We must commune with You through the Word. We must see the vision of Christ clearly and therein in the purity of those exercises will we find the Spirit leading us and guiding us into Your will. Make us spiritual people, for then we know that all is well and the One we love is honored. We pray in His dear name. Amen.

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