

Three Exhortations For Those Who Desire To Walk In The Spirit.

Text: Gal 5:25-6:10

Suggested Hymns:
373, 129, 344, 364, 378

- 1) We Should Not Desire Vain-Glory
- 2) We Should Restore Those Who Are Overtaken
In A fault
- 3) We Should Not Become Weary In Well-Doing

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Galatians 5:25–6:10, ²⁵ *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* ²⁶ *Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

¹ *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.* ² *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.* ³ *For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.* ⁴ *But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.* ⁵ *For each one shall bear his own load.*

⁶ *Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.* ⁷ *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.* ⁸ *For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.* ⁹ *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

¹⁰ *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

These words are the beginning of our Epistle, which is the continuation of the text of last Sunday, when we heard the admonition to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

Christians live in the Spirit because they are endowed with the Spirit of God. Their heart is the temple of the Holy Spirit who has called them by the Gospel, who enlightens them with His gifts, sanctifies them, and keeps them in the one true faith.

“Christian,” the word translated literally into English, is a person anointed, that is, anointed with the Holy Spirit, as Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit, who is the oil of gladness. And how happy we should be to know that the Holy Spirit dwells in us! Where would we be without the Spirit of God!

We would never have come to believe in our Saviour if it had not been for the Holy Spirit’s work; for we cannot by our own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord, or come to Him.

And not for one moment would we be able to keep the faith if the Holy Spirit did not dwell in us; *For we know that in us (that is, in our flesh) nothing good dwells.* It is the Spirit of God who leads us to live in daily repentance, and who continually applies to us the great work of our blessed Redeemer, of the Lord Jesus Christ, who bled and died on the cross for our sins.

Thus we live in the Spirit, the Spirit dwelling in our hearts, applying to us the salvation through Christ, and urging us to do the will of God.

As long as a Christian is in this world, he is in danger of losing the Spirit, and if he loses the Spirit, he will not only be deprived of salvation, but also increase and augment his damnation.

Much greater will be the punishment of those who tasted of the good Word of God and of the powers of the world to come, than of those who never knew what it is to be a Christian. And to avoid this terrible doom, to keep the Spirit with us, we must walk in the Spirit, as the Apostle says.

We must obey the voice of the Spirit, and do those things which the Spirit urges us to do. In our text St. Paul sets forth three exhortations for those who desire to walk in the Spirit. The subject of our discourse shall be, therefore, with the help of God’s Holy Spirit: *Three Exhortations For Those Who Desire To Walk In The Spirit.* May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. We Should Not Desire Vain-Glory.

If we desire to walk in the Spirit, we must, in the first place, not be desirous of vain-glory. The Apostle says, ***Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*** Conceited means having too high an opinion of oneself or one's ability. It means smug, egotistical, self-important and vain-glorious.

There is a great difference among people as to their desires, inclinations, and aspirations. Some are after wealth. The desire which is uppermost in them is to make money, to get a fortune, and to be rich. Others are after pleasure. Their great aim is to enjoy their days and always to have a good time.

Others, again, are after honour. What they want is to stand high in the estimation of others, to excel, and to have a great name. The Apostle refers to these people when he says ***Let us not become conceited.*** If this is a Christian's natural disposition that he would like to be honoured and be above others, he must watch his own sinful heart.

What havoc has been created in Christian congregations by members who desired vain-glory, who felt grieved and vexed and caused disturbances because they thought that they were not honoured as much as they should be, and that they had nothing to say!

And how do they show that they desire vain-glory? By ***“provoking one another, envying one another.”*** There are always two kinds of people in a congregation, the strong and the weak, the more and the less advanced in Christian knowledge, those who take a great interest in the church, and work doing all that they can, and those who are less active.

Now if you belong to the strong, to the advanced, to the zealous workers, be careful not to provoke others, that is, not to challenge the weak, and to treat them with an air of superiority, as if you considered yourself above them.

Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 4:7, ***And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*** What this means is that everything we have comes from God, so let us not boast.

And if you belong to the weak, if you are less advanced, less gifted and talented than others in the congregation, be careful not to envy them and to feel

indifferent toward them because they have been endowed with gifts which you are lacking.

Both faults, provoking and envying, are traceable to the same root, the excessive wish to be thought greatly of, the desire for vain-glory. But if you walk in the Spirit, you will not put yourself forward and think a great deal of your own self; for He is a Spirit of meekness. Remember that ***“God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”***¹

2. We Should Restore Those Who Are Overtaken In A fault.

The second exhortation for those who desire to walk in the Spirit is that, in the spirit of meekness, they should restore those that are overtaken in a fault. St. Paul says, ¹ ***Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.***

When any one has done a wrong, we are tempted by our sinful flesh to exalt ourselves above the wrong-doer, to judge and condemn him, and to think that we are so much the better because we are innocent of the wrong which he committed.

But have we any cause to exalt ourselves above the wrong-doer? Have we no sins to repent of? How can you institute a comparison between yourself and the sinner and consider yourself better than he is? Are you not as much a sinner as he is?

If you have not fallen into the same sin which he has committed, have you not committed other sins, and perhaps even greater sins? And may not the day come when you shall be guilty of the same wrong at which now you stand aghast?

[Consider] yourself says the Apostle, ***lest you also be tempted.*** In a Christian congregation the members should remember that every one has his own faults, and when any one has been overtaken in a fault, or has done a wrong, they should not deal with him haughtily, and treat him as an outcast, or expel and excommunicate him forthwith, but, as the Apostle says, ***“you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.”***

All should be done that can be done to restore the erring, to set them aright, to convert them from the error of their ways, that they may repent of their sin and keep the faith.

They should not be spoken to harshly, but kindly, in the spirit of meekness, and should be admonished according to the general rule which Christ has laid down in Matthew Eighteen, where He says, ¹⁵ *“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ ¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”*²

In church discipline it is highly important to approach the offender, not in a proud and overbearing spirit, but in the spirit of meekness. The Apostle therefore adds, ² *“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. ⁵ For each one shall bear his own load.”*

We should bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. The law of Christ is to be our method in restoring the erring, and the law of Christ is LOVE. This was the purpose of His life and death to bear other people’s burdens — the burdens of sin. Of course, Christ could deal with sin in a more radical way than we can. He was sinless, He was divine, He could atone for the sins of others, which we cannot do.

But we can sympathise with the erring; we can approach them with love, and show them that we mean well with them and do not cast them aside in haughtiness.

We can assist them to the narrow way that leads to eternal life. And thus we shall restore them in the spirit of meekness, and receive the blessing thereof, as we read in James 5:19–20, ¹⁹ *Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, ²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner*

from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

3. We Should Not Become Weary In Well-Doing.

The third exhortation for those who desire to walk in the Spirit is, that they should not become weary in well-doing. Our text says, ⁶ *Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.* ⁷ *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*

⁸ *For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.*

⁹ *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.* ¹⁰ *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

In these words the Apostle speaks of well-doing in a twofold sense, of well-doing in contributing to the support of the ministry, and of well-doing in assisting those who are in need, whether they be Christians or not Christians.

If you desire to walk in the Spirit, you must support the ministerial office. Has not God given to us the ministry of reconciliation that there should be men in the Church who would preach the Word and administer the sacraments, who would be ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, and ambassadors of Christ?

Did He not say distinctly that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and that those who preach the Gospel shall live by the Gospel? But how shall they live by the Gospel if those to whom they preach the Gospel do not support them?

The Apostle therefore says, ⁶ *Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.* If you get the benefit of the church, you are supposed to do your part and your share toward the support of the church.

And if you obey the voice of the Spirit, you will not give for the Lord's cause as little as possible, but as much as you can spare, and do so freely and willingly, remembering that God loves a cheerful giver.

Often complaints are made when a collection is to be taken up for the church, and as a rule those who do the least for God's kingdom are the greatest grumblers. They can spend money lavishly for their own amusement, and will let

twenties and fifties of dollars fly for such purposes, for luxuries and worldly enjoyments, but when the church calls upon them for a contribution of a few dollars, they talk as if the church was robbing them and making them poor.

⁷ ***Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*** Do not let your sinful flesh suggest you that you are doing too much for the church. Contribute to the support of the ministry according to your ability, and pay your dues to the church regularly, and do not let them sum up to a high amount which you cannot pay.

And do not become weary in well-doing when you are called upon to assist those who are in need. The Apostle says, ¹⁰ ***Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all.*** There is so much misery, poverty, and starvation in the world that is beyond our power and cannot be remedied.

But often poor Lazarus is cast before our very door, and sad cases are brought to our notice where we can help and do good. It is then that we have opportunity.

Let us avail ourselves of such opportunities for doing good, and not draw back and refuse assistance because the one whom we find in misery is a stranger to us, or an unbeliever, or an unworthy person who does not deserve our help.

And let us be the more willing to render assistance if the person in need is a Christian, as the Apostle says, ¹⁰ ***Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.***

Let us remember Christ's words in Matthew 25:40, ***'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'***

May the Lord, then, grant to us all, His grace to walk in the Spirit by heeding these three exhortations which we have heard, that we should not be desirous of vain-glory, that we should in the spirit of meekness restore the erring, and that we should not become weary in well-doing. And if thus we sow to the Spirit, we shall thereby prove that our faith is true and genuine, and through the faith obtain life everlasting. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ James 4:6

² Matthew 18:15-17