**Walk in the Spirit**

**The Word**

Read together Galatians 5:13-26

**The Big Idea**

Walking in the Spirit is a journey of ever deepening friendship in which we invite him into every aspect of our lives to experience his freedom and transformation.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Consider the basic image that the Holy Spirit is your walking companion on this journey towards transformation. What does that image stir you in, and how does it prompt you to live differently?

2. Read Ephesians 2:8-10 together. Paul states that we are saved by faith apart from works, and then he states that we are saved for works. How necessary are works to authenticate the life of a Christian?

3. Paul states that “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires” (5:24). Similarly, in Romans 8:13 Paul says, “by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body.” Practically speaking, how do you put to death the sinful nature by the power of the Spirit? And how is that different from just trying really hard not to sin, if at all?

4. In this ongoing conflict between the flesh and Spirit, what is a specific area of your life where you’ve seen the Spirit do a significant work of transformation over time?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Walking as a metaphor for life (v. 16, 18, 25)

 A. There’s something entirely ordinary and mundane about the analogy of walking

B. There’s something extraordinary: our walking companion is none other than the Spirit of the living God

II. Walking in the Spirit is journey into freedom

 A. A life of freedom (v. 13) in which we are no longer under the law (v. 18)

B. It’s easy to slip back into a mindset in which we are “under the law,” God viewing us through the lens of his commandments, and his love and approval ever changing based on our obedience to his commandments. We are on our own to try our best to obey.

C. The gospel (See Ephesians 2:8-10) is that God is no longer “up there” watching us, but he is “within us” through his Holy Spirit, and his laws are no long above us, but rather laid out in front of us as the good works that he’s prepared for us to walk into with his help. We walk from his approval, not working for his approval.

III. Walking in the Spirit is a journey into conflict

 A. The flesh and the Spirit have conflicting desires (v. 16-17)

1. Flesh: that independent, prideful streak in us that wants to be in charge

a. Based on the lies that I can’t trust God so I’m on my own to find happiness

 b. Gets expressed in “works of the flesh” (v. 19-21)

 2. Spirit: God’s own personal presence within us

b. Fills us with trust that I can trust God and so I can depend on him for my happiness

b. Gets expressed in the “fruit of the Spirit” (v. 22-23)

B. This will be a conflict we experience our whole lives, yet the Spirit has the upper hand in this conflict

1. We are a new creation in Christ, yet we have these formed habituated responses and patterns of behavior from the old life that die hard

2. Over time we should expect significant transformation in our lives if we are walking in the Spirit on a daily basis.

IV. Walking in the Spirit is a journey of ever deepening intimacy with God

 A. The Spirit is our walking companion

1. Many of us have walking friends with whom we regularly walk and share our lives

2. The Spirit wants us to walk with him and invite him into every aspect of our lives

B. Our first move in that inner conflict should always be to invite the Spirit into the moment

1. So often our gut response is actually to pull away from the Spirit. We anticipate his disapproval of the thing we’re being tempted towards, so we pull away, hunker down and do our best on our own. Sadly, this leaves us isolated from him at the very moment we need him most, and if we fail the temptation, then we are further isolated from him and sitting alone in our guilt and shame.

2. Instead, in the moment of temptation we should actively invite the Spirit into the moment, right into the full mess and complexity of what we’re experiencing, trusting in his love and grace for us and willingness to help. And even if we fail the temptation, we remain more connected to him throughout.

IV. Conclusion

A. “The journey to spiritual wholeness is found in an increasingly faithful response to the One whose purpose shapes our path, whose grace redeems our detours whose power liberates us from the crippling bondage of the prior journey, and whose transforming presence meets us at each turn of the road.”—Robert Mulholland

B. This week, abandon the self-improvement project and invite the Spirit to be your walking companion.

 C. What is one area of your life you want to invite the Spirit into this week?