

INSIDE OUT

Becoming the people God calls us to be, inside and out

The series looks at what it means to *become*; changed and transformed by the Spirit as we follow Christ.

Introduction

Last week we learned that Love is the foundation of the Christian transformation and service.

This week we learn that to manifest God's character and action around us (manifesting the fruit of the spirit) we must be in step with the spirit (5.26).

Read Gal. 5: 1-4

The Christians in Galatia were mainly non-Jewish people, who had received the good news that Jesus incorporates us, bringing us into the family of God, through his death and resurrection when received by faith. Now a group called the "Judaizers," were teaching quite convincingly that faith and walking in step with God's spirit were not enough. They were bringing back certain elements of the law, esp. circumcision, food laws and festivals. Paul says that if one wants to be justified by the law, then he/she is obliged to obey all of it and good luck with that. It does not work, it never did and never will: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free" (5:1)

- What kind of freedom is Paul talking about?
- Can you think of "laws" creeping in our lives or in the church that endanger the freedom we have received in Christ?

Read Gal. 5: 13-26

For Paul the antithesis flesh/spirit represents two successive modes of existence. In other words, you cannot be in both at the same time (5:16-18). Therefore Paul urges the believers not use their freedom to indulge in the "flesh," (5:19-21a, 24) but serve one another humbly in love (5:22-23).

- Comment on the phrase: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires"

Paul speaks of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (singular). He does not envisage that someone might cultivate one or two, but insists that when the Spirit is at work you will see all nine varieties of this fruit.

Go through the list in 5:22-23 and mark what needs to develop in you (self-control, gentleness, faithfulness, etc.)

Remember, Paul does not envisage specialization! All aspects of the fruit need to grow.

Suggested quiet activity:

Living by the spirit has two movements. It requires leaving things behind (works of the flesh) and embracing our new life in Christ (fruits of the Spirit). Meditate on Romans 6:1-14

What do you need to leave behind?

What do you need to embrace?

