

Galatians #11 - The Flesh vs The Spirit

- Oh. Thank you. All right. Well, the expectations are high. And I'm afraid I'm gonna disappoint. But it's good to be here, nonetheless. Love you, always love coming here. Been coming to James River, and seeing the Lindell family for a very long time. This is a special place in my heart. And every time I come, they take me somewhere new. Yesterday we went to this, this little new startup that I think has got real potential. And I got something for my son. I don't know if you guys have heard about it. I think it's called the Bass Pro Shop. It's a little spot they got here in town. So we went to this little startup called the Bass Pro Shop. And my son, Gideon is with me. He loves James River so much. He walks around wearing Stronger Men gear, literally. He got off the plane here in Missouri, Stronger Men shirt on, put a Bass Pro cap hat on. He has accepted James River into his heart. He loves coming with me. And so my son, Giddy and I, we were at the Bass Pro Shop and he's like hey Dad, I found something I want. I was like, okay, what is a little buddy? He's a really good shot. And he said Dad, I found this scope. I really want this scope. I asked him well little buddy, what do you want the scope for? He said Dad, I want to be able to extend my vision. I want to be able to see further and clearer. And I thought okay, little buddy. That's a good reason. So I bought them the scope. And last night we're in the hotel room, and he's like figuring it out. Today, as we get into Galatians five, I want to do that same thing for you. We're gonna look at Galatians five. The Trinity Church in Scottsdale, Arizona is live streaming with us. We're in the middle of a series in Galatians. But to help focus you, to help scope you in, let me give you a big overarching context. Before we jump into Galatians, chapter five, verses 16 through 26. And if you've got a Bible, feel free to find that place. The first thing I want to share with you is the reality of an unseen realm. That you were a person in two parts. You have a physical body that is material and visible. You have an immaterial, invisible part of your being. That is your soul. And you were made to love God with both parts of who you are. We live in the natural world. We see the physical. But there is another world just as real as our world, and it is connected to, just on the other side of our world. And for God, his reality is both realms. Now what the Bible tells us is that in Heaven, there was unity, and love, and joy, and worship, and deference to authority, until there was a cosmic rebellion. And what happened in that cosmic rebellion is that Satan decided that he would cause some to side with him and to war against God. What happens is that ultimately God, and his divine family of angelic and other beings, they defeat Satan and the demons. They push them out of Heaven. So all of that demonic, rebellious culture gets pushed out of Heaven and then it comes to the Earth. And Jesus says, I saw Satan fall like lightning from Heaven. And ultimately Jesus is gonna come back a second time, and he's gonna push that culture down to Hell. But ultimately you and I, when we start seeing addiction, strife, conflict, when we see people biting and devouring one another, to use the language that will come up in Galatians, you need to remind yourself, this is an old war that started up there. And that the conflicts that we have, are little battles in the midst of this big war. That's the unseen realm. Number two, God creates Satan counterfeits. Satan doesn't create anyone or anything. All he can do is counterfeit, co-op, corrupt what God made. And so as you and I are living our life, we've got to keep asking the question. Is this created by God or a counterfeit from Satan? So God creates angels. The counterfeit is demons. God

creates truth. The counterfeit is lies. God wants you to be Spirit filled. The counterfeit is to be demon possessed. And what you're going to see today is that God wants you to live in freedom, and Satan's counterfeit is slavery. And it all comes down to this issue. Are you living by the Spirit? Or are you living by the flesh? You were built, made, created to live by the power of God, the Holy Spirit, the same power that empowered the life of Jesus. And Satan's demonic counterfeit for that is the flesh. Thirdly, You and I are in the place between the times. God already won his war in Heaven. Now satanic, demonic evil forces at work in the world are wanting us to rebel against God and to harm one another. And ultimately when Jesus comes, he's gonna push that culture down to Hell. So Hell has the culture and Heaven has a culture. The culture of Heaven, you'll see it today. Love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self control. In addition, the works of the flesh, that's the culture of Hell, unforgiveness, bitterness, addictions, self righteousness. And every moment of every day, you and I are making a decision. And that decision is, am I going to pull Hell up into my life, or will I invite Heaven down into my life? And Jesus taught us to pray thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. And now the scope in the shot right. To focus our attention, in Galatians five the situation is this. The war in Heaven has come to the church. And this is what happens. The war in Heaven comes to the church. And it also not only comes to the church family, but it comes to your family, and your relationships. It's very practical. And there is a conflict, and Paul here is writing to clarify what God creates and Satan counterfeits. And the first thing that he tells us is that rebellion and religion are Hell up, not kingdom down. Now we tend to think of rebellion as being Hell up. But what they have in Galatia is two teams, two factions. There's a conflict and a controversy between the religious people and the rebellious people. And they're both arguing and fighting. And the question is well, which one is the counterfeit? They both are. You need to know that because you're in the South. I come from the West Coast. We're all rebellious. But in the South. Right, I mean just look at California. California is the Greek word for rebellion. I mean, just look at it. It's unbelievable. But in the South, the proclivity can be not toward rebellion, but toward religion. This manmade human religion is such that God made laws and judges people, so will make laws and judge people. Only problem is you're not God. And that's Godless because that's God's job. He says for you were called to freedom brothers. And the freedom here is the freedom to walk in the destiny that God has for you, to walk in the will of God to become like the son of God. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the what? The flesh. He's not, here, just talking about your physical body, but a predisposed fallen part of you that is rebellious, sinful, and nefarious. The flesh is you without God. The flesh is you all by yourself. The flesh is you before the Holy Spirit does a work in you. He says God gives you freedom, but not to indulge the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit. The desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. For, oh sorry. You were called to freedom brothers. Chapter five, 13 through 15. Do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. The whole law is fulfilled in one word, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. But if you what? Bight and devour. You know what that is? Religion. I criticize you, I judge you, I attack you, I control you. If you bite and devour one another, watch out that you're not consumed by one another. What he's saying is that when Satan shows up in a family, relationships, christian ministry, community, or church the goal is to get people to act like savage animals, and for a dog fight to erupt. And next thing you know,

everyone is attacking everyone else. Now, what he's talking about here is the difference between the faction that is religious, and the faction that is rebellious. You need to know that when Satan brings a Hell up counterfeit into your life, it's going to pull you in one of these two directions. So let's start with the religious people. How many of you, if you had to pick between the two, how many of you, if you had to pick between? And if you don't know which one you are, ask your spouse, they'll tell you. They already got this pegged, okay. For those of you who are more religious, would you just raise a little hand? Say I'm a little more religious. I think my Spiritual gift is condemning. That's me. That's my thing. How many? No, I won't ask you to raise your hand. Because you rebellious people, you don't do what you're told. But how many of you—How many of you are more rebellious people? Or you were that rebellious kid growing up? How many of you were more rebellious? Like you make a rule, I'll break the rule. That's how it's gonna work. How many of you have noticed that in the same family, let me take it from the church family to your family. How many of you found in the same family you can raise two kids, one religious, the other rebellious. Have you noticed this?

- [Congregation] Yes.

- Is it just me? I got five kids, I've seen this. And sometimes the fight between the religious, and the rebellious kids is a little picture of what can happen in the big church family. That's what he's getting at in Galatians. I'll give you a story how I came to know this. I got a revelation at Olive Garden, to give you an example. So Grace and I, we got five kids. And the kids wanted to go to Olive Garden, 'cause they liked the breadsticks and the alfredo sauce. And so I liked the kids. And so I take them to the breadsticks and the alfredo sauce. And we pull up to the Olive Garden and it's packed. There's not one parking spot. I keep driving around the parking lot, no parking place. And I think to myself, okay we should just leave. Olive Garden has failed me. I am a victim. I have nowhere to park my family. And then I notice there were a few spots right up front, very convenient, the kind of thing the Holy Spirit would provide. Temporary parking places, 15 minutes for takeout. And I thought, well thank you Lord. You hear and answer prayer. I'll park right there. So we were gonna dine in, not take out. And I parked in the takeout spot. And I'm more rebellious so I jump up out of the car, and I'm like hey kids, let's go. And I'm holding the door at the Olive Garden, and a couple of my kids walk in, but a few are missing. So I was like, where are my kids? So I go back over to the cars like, what do you guys doing? They're like Dad, this is the takeout parking. This is not the dine-in parking. This has a 15 minute limit. We will be here for more than 15 minutes. Dad, I refuse to get out of the car until we abide by the Olive Garden rules. I was like, what kind of weird anti-alfredo, breadstick Pharisee am I raising? My kids, I had a literal, I had a sit in protest at the Olive Garden. And I'm like, well that's fine. You could just sit in the car. They're like oh, we will. And I'm like they're little, it's hot, it's illegal. They've called my bluff. So I had to re park their car. And then they're like, thank you Dad. And they got out of the car. We go in, my other kids are already done eating. I mean it's been that long. How many of you are more rebellious? How many of you more religious? And what oftentimes happens is some of us live religious lives, some of us live rebellious lives, and some of us gravitate between the two. So we'll be very religious for awhile. And then what? Very rebellious. Or some of you have been very rebellious, and then you become very religious. The

question is, which is God's way? Neither. God's way is not religion, it's not rebellion. It's relationship. It's relationship, where you walk with Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. And Jesus is not religious or rebellious, and he keeps you from religion and rebellion. Number two, feed your deepest desires. Galatians five. But I say, verse 16, walk in the Spirit. The language here of walk, it's relationship. One of my favorite things to do with my wife, Grace is hold her hand and go for a walk. That's one of my favorite things. God wants to hold your hand and walk with you through life. For those of you who are parents or grandparents, there's a little person you love, right. Anywhere you're going hey, hold my hand. God's a father. You're his kid no matter how old you are. And he wants to hold your hand, and walk with you through every season and circumstance. He says, I say walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. Now we're gonna get into the desires of the flesh. But how many of you, you're like, there's things I struggle with, there's a lot of things I need to work on in my life? There's some bad habits, some addictions I need to overcome. There are some struggles that I need to have victory and deliverance. Where do I start? It's overwhelming. Sure. A story from my college years. I was in college, and I got a job at a hotel. And I was a bellhop, and I was a shuttle driver, and I'd take people to and from the airport. And then they would give me stuff to do. Hey, take these bags up to my room, or go pick my bags up in this room, or bring towels to this room. Next thing I know, I keep going to the front desk to get the key to this room, and get the key to that room, and to go get the towels out of this room, and to drop the luggage into that room. And I'm exhausted. And I am running as fast as I can. And I can't keep up with all the demands. I feel overwhelmed. So at the end of the week, my supervisor sat me down, and said hey, how's the job going? I'm like, I can't do this. This is an impossible job. I said, I run to get keys for this room. I run to get keys for this room. I run to get keys for that room. He says oh, did we not give you a master key? I was like oh. I didn't know there was a master key. Explain to me Yoda. What is a master key? He said oh, it's a key that unlocks every door in the whole hotel. He said once you get that, that's all you need. Walking in the Spirit is the master key to the kingdom of God. Walking in the Spirit is the master key to the kingdom of God. Some of you are like, I got sexual pressure, emotional problems, I've got financial struggles. Where do I start? You need the master key. And once you're filled with the Spirit, once you're led by the Spirit, once you're walking in the Spirit. And this is exactly, friends, how Jesus Christ walked and lived. He was filled with the Spirit. He was led by the Spirit. He was empowered by the Spirit. He lived in the presence of God, that the Bible says that the Holy Spirit abided or remained on him for all of his ministry. How did Jesus stay out of religion? How did Jesus stay out of rebellion? How did Jesus live kingdom down, not Hell up? How did Jesus always choose what was created by God, and not counterfeited by Satan? He had the master key. He had the person, presence, power of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit comes into you, if you are a child of God, to connect you in relationship with Jesus. And your personal relationship with the Holy Spirit will connect to your personal relationship with Jesus. And they will keep you out of the twin terrors of rebellion and religion. That's amazing. That's amazing. I say walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the sins of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit. There's only two ways to live your life, in the flesh, or in the Spirit. The desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to one another to keep you from what? Doing what? What you want to do. This is why a sinning Christian is miserable. You're working against your deepest desires when you sin. But

if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. What he's talking about here is your identity, which then opens up your destiny. And what he wants you to know is that God has changed you. And as a result, your life can start changing, if you belong to the Lord, Jesus. Oftentimes when you ask people, okay, if you had to pick one word to describe yourself, what would that be? Many Christians would say, sinner. We do sin. We need forgiveness of sin. Jesus died and rose for sin. But ultimately that defines some of your activity. It's not the totality of your identity. Over 300 times, the New Testament refers to people as sinners. There's only possibly three occasions where that concept of sinner is applied to a believer. And those three are all debated. Paul's gonna use this language over and over. I think he uses it 216 times in the New Testament, in Christ, that you are in Christ. So your identity is not, I am a sinner. Your identity is, I am in Christ and he will help me overcome my sin. Now what he is saying here, as well, is that when you meet Christ, God does a fundamental work in you at the core of your being. You're a new creation. Old things have passed away. You've become new. You have a new birth. You have a new power of the Holy Spirit. And what he says here, you have new desires. What this means is that the non-Christian and the Christian desire completely different things. So how do you know if you are a Christian or a non-Christian? Just ask yourself, what are my deepest desires? Your deepest, strongest desires. If they are for the flesh, then you do not know God. If they are for the Spirit, then you do know God. There is a conflict continually between the two, but the key to overcoming your temptation is to feed your deepest desires. How many of you have experienced a radical change in your desires since meeting Jesus? See, this is where the non-Christian will look and say, why do you guys do that? What do you mean? Why do you go to church? Why do you pray? Why do you read your Bible? Who wants to do that? We do. Because the Holy Spirit in us has given us an appetite for the things of God. So we don't have to pray, we get the pray. We don't have to be with God's people, we get to be with God's people. And we don't have to learn the word of God, we get to learn the word of God. It's not force feeding something to someone that has no palate for it. It's feeding those who have the palate given them by the Spirit of God. I'll give you an analogy of this change. And some of you, this is important for parenting, because you're trying to change their behavior, and God's trying to change their nature. The want to proceeds the how to. Once God changes the nature, the want to is forever altered, and now the how to is possible. When someone meets God, they change in desire at the core of their being. I'll give you an example. So when I was a little boy, my grandpa was rebellious. My grandma was religious. Does this sound like anybody else's home? My grandma, I love her. I'm sure she's with Jesus today. She's doing great, but she wasn't very fun. My grandpa, the rebellious one, was awesome okay. He did not have a lot of self control. He was a big man, to the degree that at some point he stopped wearing pants, and all he wore was overalls. And it was just his way of like, I'm not even working on this. I mean he just kept increasing the square footage on the house, and so. He loved to eat caramel apples, black licorice, all this stuff that my grandma forbade, she forbade it. So they would tuck me in bed at night. My grandma would be like all right, stay in bed, don't get up, sleep in tomorrow, don't make any noise. Religious grandma, you gotta have rules. My grandpa would look at me and he'd wink. And what that meant was, we're gonna get up later. Fake like you're sleeping till grandma's asleep. And then we would sneak up and rebel. This is what we would do. And we would watch fake wrestling.

- [Congregation] Come on. Yeah, come on!

- Some of you are like, it's fake? I'm sorry to break it for you. It is fake. But this was old school, big time wrestling. Jesse, The Body, Ventura! Rowdy Roddy Piper, Andre the Giant, The Iron Sheik whoo! Nature Boy, Ric Flair! I just feel like putting a leotard on just saying it.

- [Congregation] Let's go!

- Okay.

- [Congregation] I'm ready!

- This guy's ready to, get saved, okay so. My grandpa and I would sit there and watch wrestling, but we had to do so, quietly 'cause Grandma will wake up. And we'd eat caramel apples, and black licorice by the pound. I'll never forget the night I looked at my grandpa. I ate way too many caramel apples, and way too much licorice. I mean the amount of sugar I consumed versus my body. I became a diabetic in an instant. That's where I was. So I look at my Grandpa George. I'm like Grandpa George, I don't feel good. I don't feel good. He's like do not throw up. You're gonna wake Gram up. You're gonna ruin everything. We'll never get to do this again. Okay Grandpa, okay okay. I went to throw up, and I. And I kid you not. I blew all the black licorice out my nose. I blew all the black licorice out of my nose. At that moment, there was a fundamental change in my being. I loved black licorice. And now I don't want to smell it ever again. Amen? When the Holy Spirit comes into your life he's like that. You're like, I used to love this. I don't anymore. Now I love this, and I have no appetite or desire for that. I could still remember. I was a brand new Christian. I'm in college, it's Friday night. I'm in a state university, where everyone minors in alcoholism. It was not a great place. And it was Friday night and the guys in my dorm, they come up to me, they're like Mark we're gonna go out and drink and party and have fun. Do you want to come? I said, no. I couldn't believe I said it. I'm a brand new Christian. I couldn't believe I said it. They said, well what are you gonna do? I said, I dunno I'm gonna stay in and read my Bible. When did I turn into Ned Flanders? What happened in my life? And they looked at me, they're like, why would you stay in the dorm and read your Bible? I said, I have no idea. That's just what I really want to do. See the problem is that we take the get-tos and we make them have-tos. So he's gonna talk about the works of the flesh, the old desires, the tempting desires. And you need to know that the world is like gravity, always trying to pull your sinful flesh down toward Hell. Galatians five. Now the works of the flesh are evident. He's gonna give us three categories, sexual sins, spiritual sin, social sin. Does anyone not struggle with these categories? How many of you, your struggle is sexual. He talks about sexual immorality. The original Greek word is porneia from which, which word do you think we use? Pornographic. It's at the top of the list. Our struggles are not new. They're just now plugged into the internet. Impurity, that's any sexual sin. God created our first parents naked without shame. This is impurity that brings shame, and condemnation and guilt, and also sensuality. That's lack of restraint or decency. So the first category of works of the flesh are sexual, are sexual. God

wants you free of that. God wants you to nurture the deepest desires. God wants you to live in the grace that he provides, and to follow in the character of Christ. The second category is Spiritual sins. This is idolatry and sorcery. Idolatry is where anyone or anything is the gravitational center of your universe. Let me be careful with this, but say that oftentimes an idol is something that we love too much. An idol is usually not a bad thing. It's a good thing in God's place. So, some parents worship their kids. Some guys worship fishing or golf. That you and I can worship work, or our reputation, or our own convenience and comfort. We could say, this is the center and everything revolves around it. Only Jesus should be the center of your life, all of your decision making and desiring. That's what he's talking about. And sorcery, he's talking here about spiritless spirituality. We live in a day when people are very spiritual, but they're not talking about the Holy Spirit. They're talking about demonic spirits. Some people are like well, I'm not religious, I'm just spiritual. That's another way of saying I'm not religious, I'm demonic. You need more than just to be spiritual. You need the Holy Spirit. The third category are social sins. And what this is, that the flesh is always trying to ruin relationship. If I could just give a big overarching narrative of the Bible, God is relational, father, son, and spirit. One God, three persons, relational. God said, it's not good to be alone. We're made for relationship with him, relationship with each other. When Hell comes up, and the counterfeit shows up, it affects the relationships. The war in Heaven shows up in your family. The war in Heaven shows up in your church family. He talks about enmity. That's hatred and unforgiveness. Somebody offends you and you don't forgive them. Let me just tell you, that's demonic. There are two cultures. Hell is a culture of unforgiveness. No one in Hell is forgiven of anything. Heaven is a culture of forgiveness. Everyone there has experienced complete forgiveness. The culture of Heaven, all forgiveness. The culture of Hell, no forgiveness. When someone sins against you, and you choose not to forgive them, you're pulling Hell up into your life, rather than inviting Heaven down into your life. That's why life gets so painful, because we've invited that which is demonic and dark into our relationships. And the war in Heaven continues in all of our relationships. This includes strife, which is conflict or drama. Jealousy, which is coveting. Coveting is the counterfeit of contentment. God made you and provided for you. And what happens with jealousy, and ultimately coveting, we want what other people want. And let me just say this. Social media exists in large part for the flesh to operate in the spirit of jealousy and coveting. I mean, how many of you and you're like, what the heck they got a new car, and I got a beater car. They lost 50 pounds, and I found the 50 pounds. This is not fair. I don't like what I'm seeing. They got a big house. They got a nice car. Their kids aren't demon possessed, and have pants on. How come we couldn't be like that, Tony? What's wrong with us? And so what happens with jealousy, all of a sudden I can't celebrate God's grace in your life because I'm jealous of God's grace in your life.

- [Congregation] That's good.

- How about this one? Fits of anger. Some of you right now are like, I hate this. Great, we've arrived at yours. Okay. In a fit of anger, there are certain occasions where anger is reasonable. But fits of anger, you're like ah, this is inappropriate. And you went zero to 60. And you are like a grenade with a pin pulled. Some of you had a dad like that. Everybody's like how's dad today?

He's upset. Okay, great. Let's go to our friend's house. Right? And this kind of anger, it's ungodly. Now what tends to happen is we now live in a day when we explained the flesh away with personality. Right? I'm not angry. I took the test and I scored out as a J-E-R-K. That's just my personality. That's my personality. That's just, don't judge me. That's my personality. Well, your personality needs to be surrendered to the Holy Spirit, as well as your will. Some wives are laughing. Some husbands are not, okay. Apparently that was a healing moment for some of your relationships. Rivalries, that's ladder climbing, competing. That leads to dissension, us versus them, this group versus that group, which ultimately results in division. Division literally means two visions. In Heaven there was no division until there was satanic rebellion. If we live kingdom down, not Hell up, ultimately we will share the same vision. God, what do you want? Not what do we want. God, what do you say? Not what do we say. And Jesus says that a house divided against itself, falls down, can't stand up. So if you're going to have a family, and a church family that remains and abides, it needs to have one vision. Because two visions is literally the beginning of division. And again, I'll just reemphasize it. There was no division in the history of the world, until it started with Satan. And he had a different vision. There's a throne. I feel like I should be on it. And there we go. Envy, drunkenness, that's any kind of addiction, orgies. Sexual sin, debauchery, dating related fornicating, flights to Vegas, all of that. Some of you are like Mark, if you had to summarize this in one word, what word would you choose? America. America is consumed by the works of the flesh. And some of you say, pastor Mark, I didn't hear, I don't struggle with any of those. I must be one of the good guys. No, then he's got this little line, and things like these, it's a junk drawer. It's miscellaneous, et cetera. So some of you are like, I have never been drunk, and I wear two pairs of pants just to make sure that I don't fornicate, you know. Okay, great. Great. I shouldn't have said that, but it's you know The Holy Spirit just showed up. He was little late, he's a little late, little late. Must have got stuck in traffic. Okay, so. But sometimes we can look at people who are struggling and have sin and say, thank you God I'm not like them. And he said, well that's pride. That's demonic. That Satan's core issue. You are not a good person. Now let me say this. There's an old Puritan named Thomas Brooks. He wrote a book called, he wrote a great book called, "Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices." And he uses this analogy of fishing. And I know we're in the Ozark. So can I use the fishing analogy? How many of you guys fish? Fish? Okay I don't, because to fish you got to get up in the morning and go to the lake. And I like to sleep in and go to the store. So I don't do any fishing. I prayed about it, and that's where the Lord led me, so don't judge. Now nonetheless, for those of you that are fisher men, fisher women, fisher person, welcome all of you. For you the key is, if you're gonna go to a certain body of water, and fish for a certain type of fish, what do you need to know? The right bait. Different fish take different bait. The works of the flesh, Brooke says, are ways that Satan baits your hook. Some of you it's sex. Some of you it's money. Some of you it's addiction. Some of you it's emotional. Some of you it's spiritual. And what we can't do is look at somebody and say, I can't believe you. Why are you tempted by that? Why do you struggle with that? Because you've got your own thing too, right? You got your bait. He's got his bait. She's got her bait. We've all got our bait. And the key is to know that under the bait is always a what? A hook. The works of the flesh always are bait on a hook to reel you in and destroy you. So is there any other way? Yeah. The fruit of the Spirit. Galatians five, 22 through 26. But the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit starts with love. That's God's

love for us, in us, through us. Joy. God you love me, and I'm walking in your will. And your grace is sufficient. Peace. Thank you, Lord I know where I'm gonna go when I die. I have peace with you, so I have peace from you. And I have peace to live the life that you have appointed for me. Patience. God, you know what? Your timing not mine. I am not going to pretend that I am in the driver's seat. I'm in the passenger seat of my life. Kindness. That's considerate, not rude. Nice, generous. Goodness is also generosity. You're a person who gives encouragement, and money, and love, and affection, and appreciation. Faithfulness. Your dependable. You're trustworthy. You're reliable. Gentleness. You're not domineering. You're not overbearing. And self control. Self control is counterfeited by those who are out of control. Tragically, some people need a jail cell to control them. And the Holy Spirit would have been a much better choice for self control. What he's talking about here is the character of Jesus Christ. The character of Jesus Christ can show up in a fruitful way in your life. Two things I want to say quickly. Number one, do not be a fruit inspector. Be a Gardner. Sometimes when we read these, the religious people turn everything into a law. So maybe their like love? I don't see love. Joy? I'm not happy being with you. Peace? We're gonna have an argument. You and I were not created by God to be the fruit inspector in their life. We're only to be the fruit inspector for our life. So instead we should be the gardener. Let me say this. Parenting is gardening. Marriage is gardening. Ministry is gardening. It's why God started everything in a garden, because everything requires gardening. Got to plant the seeds, gotta pull the weeds. You gotta wait. You gotta reap the harvest. And what he's talking about here is he wants the character of Jesus Christ. And this is the character of the kingdom of God. And this is the character of its King. His name is Jesus. And Jesus wants a relationship with you that gets you out of rebellion or religion. Jesus wants a relationship with you where he doesn't just tell you what to do. He puts his power in you through the Holy Spirit so that you can live by his power, not just telling you what to do, but helping you to do it. Furthermore, Jesus wants a relationship with you where he changes your deepest desires, so you can live your most passionate life by following your deepest desires. Now let me say this as well. I just want to close with something that I hope will be of service to at least some of you. When I heard that I had the honor to come preach here at James river, I prayed and I said Lord I, this was my heart. I said Lord, I love these people. I don't. God has given me just a love for you. He must love you, 'cause I show up and I just kind of get caught in the backdraft of his love for you. I was like Lord, these are dear precious people. They're under good Bible teaching in a healthy church. I'm going to a Pentecostal church talking about the fruit of the Spirit. They probably heard that before, 75 times at youth camp. Is there anything you would want to share with these dear people? And in that moment, it was really weird I just, I heard the voice of God in my spirit say, speak to the crushed. I was like, okay. I don't even know what that means. So I prepared the sermon. Last night, Gideon and I are in the hotel. And the Holy Spirit prompted me. I was like oh, okay God I'm praying that you would reveal to me what you want me to share with the dear precious people at James River. And he said, speak to the crushed. I was like. I'm sitting in my bed, my son's next to me. He's like, what are you doing, Dad? I said I'm listening. And then the Holy Spirit brought to mind a verse, John 15. Jesus says that the father is the gardener, that he is the, vine and we are the, branches. And if we abide in him and he in us, that's the Holy Spirit. We will what? Bear much fruit. And I was sitting in my hotel last night and I thought, okay Lord, that's great. What does that have to do with crushing? Then he reminded

me. Those words of Jesus are part of something called the discourse in the upper room. It was in the context of Jesus' final hours before he would be betrayed by Judas Iscariot, a counterfeit disciple. Before he would be wrongly accused, before he would be falsely condemned, before he would be brutally crucified. The most fruitful person in the history of the world is Jesus. If I could just make this real practical, how many of you love to feed your kids, your grandkids? Hey, I got fruit for you. It'll make you healthy. It'll make you strong. It tastes sweet. It's pretty awesome. And it is, amen? How many of you like fruit? I do too. Want you to wake up tomorrow, say Holy Spirit how can I, how can I feed my spouse's soul today? Holy Spirit, how can I feed my children's soul today? Holy Spirit, how can I feed my friends soul? Holy Spirit, how can I feed my enemies soul? God wants you to be a source of life, and health, and healing, and nourishment. Lastly, I am the vine, you are the branches. Right after Jesus goes to the cross. He's the most fruitful life ever lived in the history of the world, one thing that Christians and non-Christians agree on. And what happens to Jesus here? He is ripe on the vine. He is absolutely mature, and altogether sweet. And his life is nothing but perfect fruitfulness. And he goes to the cross, and what happens? He was crushed. Some of the choicest fruit of the vine is sent to the wine press. In the wine press it is crushed. The form that it had no longer exists, but God brings something beautiful out of it, that if you give a little time, it's called what? It's called wine. God loves you. You may be in a season that is very difficult. He is not punishing you, but circumstances might be crushing you to reveal the character of Christ in you, and to birth some sort of beautiful, glorious, tasty, new wine on the other side of this crushing. That's what he did for Jesus. We are part of Jesus' first fruits. The church of Jesus Christ is called the new wine skin. And all of us are enjoying the sweetness that came out of the crushing of Christ. I'm sorry that you're being crushed, but I'm excited for what the crushing will produce through you by God's grace. Father, thank you for an opportunity to teach people that I love very much. Father, I want to thank you that the word of God is opened here, and the people of God are welcomed here, and that the Spirit of God is present here. And Lord God, I just pray for each of us, for those that are rebellious, for those that are religious, they would look to Jesus for relationship. Holy Spirit, please show us the ways where we need to feed our deepest desires, and starve the longings of the flesh. And God I pray that we would be healthy, life giving people to those around us. And lastly, for those who are being crushed. Thank you that we worship Christ who was crushed, and we see the sweetness of his character come out through the pain of his crushing. And I pray for those dear saints, that right now today, Lord God, they're being crushed. If they give it a little time, they'll be a new wine, something sweet, something great. In Jesus name, amen.