

## Session 2: Transformed In Christ

### Objective

To understand that genuine transformation is only possible in Christ, by the Holy Spirit.

### Biblical Texts

Galatians 3:14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:4-6 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. 5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Galatians 5:16-18 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

Galatians 5:25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Romans 8:13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

### Observations

1. The principle blessing of the OT prophets was that God would dwell among and in his people by His Holy Spirit. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws" (Ezek 36:26-27). The good news (gospel) of the NT is that this promise fulfilled in Christ, and that the Holy Spirit is received by faith in Christ.
2. In Galatia the believers had fallen away from grace; i.e., they had ceased to live by faith in Christ, in dependence on the Holy Spirit. "Mortification from a self-strength, carried on by ways of self-invention, unto the end of a self-righteousness, is the soul and substance of all false religion in the world." [John Owen, *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1967), p. 7]
3. The Holy Spirit himself is at war with the sinful nature. Life is by the Holy Spirit. Communion with God in Christ is the key to genuine transformation. To be *led by the Spirit* (5:18) is to be drawing upon Him personally for life, grace, strength, guidance, power and understanding.
4. Of his Roman Catholic Contemporaries Owen wrote: "Because those things that are appointed of God as means are not used by them in their due place and order,--such as are prayer, fasting, watching, meditation and the like. These have their use in the business in hand; but whereas they are all to be looked on as streams, they look on them as the fountain. Whereas they effect and accomplish the end as means only, subordinate to the Spirit and faith, they look on them to do it by virtue of the work wrought... Duties are excellent food for an unhealthy soul; they are not physic for a sick soul. He that turns his meat into his medicine must expect no great operation. Spiritually sick men cannot sweat out their distemper with working. But this is the way of men who deceive their own souls... That none of these ways are sufficient is evident from the nature of the work itself that is to be done; it is a work that requires so many concurrent actings in it as no self-endeavor can reach unto, and is of that kind that an almighty energy is necessary for its accomplishment" (Owen, p. 18).
5. Owen further observes, "He works in us and with us, not against us or without us" (Owen, p. 20).
6. In Romans 8:13 Paul is also clear that putting sin to death is to be done by the Holy Spirit.

### Discussion and Implications

1. Do you think that a life led by the Holy Spirit will lead to greater passivity or greater action? Greater guilt, or greater consolation? Greater awareness of sin, or greater awareness of God's Holiness?
2. How can we as a church lead people to greater communion with Christ's Spirit, while not leading them to a self righteous pursuit of God's standards or their own personal growth agenda?