

Sermon: Walk in the Spirit

Good morning church, I don't know if any of you remember a few months back Pastor Darin said that there were 2.5 Pastors on staff at Oakwood. Hi, I am the .5, No you don't need to get your eyes checked, it's not Pastor Darin or Pastor Jason, It is the ½ of the group. My name is Matthew Martinez, I am 23 years old, I am a senior at Trinity College of Florida. I graduate on May 14th, and even though that is a great accomplishment, that isn't the best thing that will happen to me in May. On May 28th I get to marry my best friend, she is sitting right over there, everyone say hello to Miriam! Sitting next to her is my Theology Professor, David Miller. He helped me prepare this message, so if it bombs, we can blame it on him. Like I said, my name is Matthew Martinez, and I have the privilege to serve here as the Pastoral Intern. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to Pastor Darin and Pastor Jason for giving me the opportunity to bring the message this morning. I want to take the next few moments to pray, I firmly believe that we should pray first, pray often, and pray always. So let's pray.

If you've known me for longer than 5 minutes, then you know that I love sports and movies, so my favorite movie is *Remember the Titans*. Has anyone here seen that movie? I think it is probably one of the best films ever. It's certainly the best sports film ever.

Well, a movie that I recently re-watched was the movie *Gridiron Gang*. ([Poster of the movie](#)) Has anybody seen it? If you have not seen this movie, let me give you a quick summary of the movie.

Sean Porter works for Kilpatrick Detention Center in Los Angeles. He becomes frustrated at not being able to help the kids get away from their problems in life when they are released from the center, such as street gangs and drug dealings. He decides to create a football team so the kids can feel like they're part of something. Porter believes that football will teach the teenage inmates what it takes to be responsible, mature, and disciplined winners.

His phrase was "You do it my way, not your way. Your way got you here and you're here because you lost. Right now you are all losers, but if you accept this challenge and stick with the program, you are all going to be winners at the end."

I believe that the plot of this movie paints a perfect picture of my message this morning.

You see, their end goal was to win and grow as people in the process.

I tell you the plot of the movie to say this. Our end goal is freedom in Christ and as we can see in today's verses that the law is no longer able to get us to our end goal. Just like being a good athlete didn't get the Kilpatrick Mustangs a win at first.

Romans 8:3-4 says;

"For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

What was the law? The law that is being referenced in these verses is the Mosaic Law that was talked about in the old Testament. It contained the Ten Commandments and other rules and guidelines for us to live by.

Today we would see the law as legalism, we would see it as a list of boxes that you have to check off each day to say that you were a "Good Christian" that day.

What is the purpose of the law? The purpose of the law back then was to be a way for us to be right in the sight of God. Our flesh made it impossible for the law to do so.

Well Matthew, if the law could not fulfill the righteous requirement, then why have it at all? God always knew that the law was not going to fulfill the requirement, but

He placed it there to be a placeholder until the Son of Man came and fulfilled the prophecy.

There are two Gospel realities and a Gospel response that I want to present to you this morning.

The first reality that I want to present to you this morning is one that I can't stress enough. That is the fact that you can't save yourself.

I. You can't save yourself

"For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do." Romans 8:3a

If we take a quick look at Romans 7, which you can do on your own time, we see that Paul has built a clear case that the law of Moses cannot save those who live under it. Instead, the law simply shows that we cannot keep the law.

The law was made to show that we can't keep it perfectly, We cannot escape our sinfulness and make ourselves acceptable to God. He had to step in to save us, and He did. He did what the law truly, our inability to keep the law could not do.

In the movie Gridiron Gang, we see a Kilpatrick Mustangs struggling at first. All they wanted to do was win a football game, they realized that it was going to be a lot harder than just suiting up and playing without working together as a team. That was going to be hard to do because even though they had a lot of athletes on their team, they didn't work together because of their gang affiliations.

Two characters portrayed in the movie are Willie Weathers and he is from a gang called the 88's and Kelvin Owens is from a gang called the 95's.

The reason I point this out is because the respective gangs are enemies of each other, and since God has a sense of humor, they both got put in the same detention center.

Then Sean Porter puts them on the same team. Both kids are great athletes but they were not willing to work together to achieve their goal. They thought they could be selfish and “Put the team on their back” to try and win the game themselves, obviously they couldn’t do that. Or else this would be a really bad illustration.

I tell you guys that to say that even though Willie and Kelvin were good athletes, it was not enough. Just like us following the law is a good thing, it is not enough to help us get to our end goal of being right in the eyes of God. Well why not?

We could not make ourselves acceptable to God because.

A. Our Nature is Sinful

3 "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do." Romans 8:3a

In the movie Gridiron Gang, the goal was to win games and grow as men. Sean Porter started this program to try and give these kids a way out. He thought the football program would teach them to be winners. Naturally, when you have people from rival gangs, they are not going to work well together. Their pride, affiliations, egos, and pretty much everything about them got in the way. It weakened the team.

Just like us with the law. Our sinful nature tarnished the law to a point where the law could not do its job anymore. The law was no longer good enough to make us right in the sight of God.

Our nature isn’t the only thing that is sinful.

B. Our Habits are sinful

3 "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do."
Romans 8:3a

In the movie Gridiron Gang Sean Porter had a phrase. His phrase was "You do it my way, not your way. Your way got you here and you're here because you lost.

Right now you are all losers, but if you accept this challenge and stick with the program, you are all going to be winners at the end."

Their way got them put in the detention center. If they got out of the detention center, they went back to doing the same thing and then got put right back in there. Sean Porter's phrase is a perfect example for us.

Our way got us nowhere and the fact that we keep doing it shows how insane we truly are. I am not saying that we shouldn't follow the mosaic law that was told to us, obviously I don't want nobody here stealing anything and I surely don't want anyone murdering anybody. But if we are only following the law just to check off the box that said I was a good person today, it means absolutely nothing.

If we can't save ourselves then who can? I'm glad you asked.

II. Only **Jesus** can save us

3 "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do."

Romans 8:3a

We have been so busy trying to save ourselves that we fail to realize that its not going to happen. Only Jesus has the power to actually save us. If we look at the start of verse three. Notice that it says "God has done" not "We have done."

What did God do?

A. He **Represents** Us

3 "By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin..." Romans 8:3b

He sent Jesus, His Son, to earth in a human body just like all the other human bodies.

Notice the word "likeness" in this verse. What does the word mean? It means kind of but not really. It means that when Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh.

Except Jesus' body was not full of sin. He never sinned. God sent Jesus in a body so that He could condemn all sin through the punishment of that one sinless body.

In the Old Testament, to be made right in the sight of God, they had to make an animal sacrifice for their sins. When God sent Jesus, He sent Jesus to Represent us to get us to our end goal which is be right in the sight of God.

There was a saying that went something like this: "When we stand before God, instead of giving an account for all of our sins, Jesus will represent us and say don't worry, they are with me."

Isn't that so reassuring, Jesus comes on our behalf to be the ultimate sacrifice, and to represent us in the sight of God.

How did He represent us?

B. He Died for Us

3. "He condemned sin in the flesh." Romans 8:3c

God sent His Son to die for our sins. Through the suffering and dying of Jesus's physical body, God put the final stamp of condemnation on sin.

John Piper said it this way;

*"In other words, "God condemned sin" means God found sin guilty and sentenced sin to be finally punished and carried out the penalty of suffering in the death of his Son." -John Piper
(Desiring God)*

Jesus came to earth lived 33 years and died a death that was our price to pay and when he did that he fulfilled the righteous requirement that the law could not fulfill.

He made it possible for us to be right in the sight of God when Jesus died on the cross.

C. He gave us His Righteousness

4 "In order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us..."
Romans 8:4a

What does that mean? It means that the righteous requirement is fulfilled in us through the Holy Spirit.

Anyone who calls themselves a Christian has the Holy Spirit living in them. We all know that. The Holy Spirit is what gets us the rest of the way.

You see the law only got us so far, then Christ dies for our sins. Then, based on our faith, the Holy Spirit is bestowed onto us and then we are right in the sight of God.

The goal never changed. Just the method of how we get to that point does. It is definitely a continuous process.

Since we have the Holy Spirit,

III. We must live differently

A. Following His way and not Ours

"...who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." Romans 8:4b

What does that mean? That means that those who walk according to the spirit and not the flesh will experience the freedom that Christ offers because of the condemning of it by the death of Jesus.

The goal of the death of Christ is to fulfill the just requirement of the law which the law by itself could not do. The Holy Spirit produces the righteousness of the law in the believer's life.

What does it look like to follow His way and not ours?

There was a time in my life where I thought I was following God's way but in reality I was doing my own thing.

If you don't know, before I came to Trinity College I went to another Bible School in Florida. Coming out of high school, it was my dream to go to that school. I got accepted, and I spent three years there. At first it was amazing, I loved it. The first semester of my last year, I felt God tell me to transfer out. Since I was doing my own thing, making my own decisions, really a baby in my faith, I didn't listen and because of that I spent my last semester miserable, my prayer life and other spiritual disciplines were non-existent.

I was depressed, and so I finally listened after staying longer than I should have. Then God led me to Trinity College of Florida. Now I am at a place where my prayer life has never been better, and I am on track to graduate in May.

I have been trying to actively walk in the Spirit. Obviously it has not been easy, it has had its ups and downs, but I know I am not walking according to my flesh. My goal was always to graduate. I thought it was going to be at the first college I went to, but God had other plans. The goal didn't change but how I achieved that goal did.

His way is realizing that we are not capable to fulfill the requirement of the law on our own. We have to rely on Christ who has already fulfilled the requirement for us.

B. Filling our Mind with the Spirit

"...who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." Romans 8:4b

To not walk in the flesh, we have to start by filling our minds with the spirit. The way we do that is by strengthening our spiritual disciplines. The more we talk to God, the more we are in communion with God, the more we are willing

to do what the Lord says.

We need to fill our minds with the Spirit by building a strong prayer life and having the spiritual disciplines of worship, fasting, among others.

But Matthew, that sure does sound legalistic, didn't you just say that doing all of that does not put us in a right standing with God?

Doing those things by themselves don't do anything for us, if we do them just to check the box saying I was a good Christian today, then yes that is legalism. That does not get us to the end goal.

Only Christ can. All of that while in Christ gets us to the end goal. Without Christ it does not matter. Without Christ, there is no point in my worship, there is no point in having a strong prayer life, there is no point in reading my Bible. A person outside of Christ does not do any of those things.

But because I have a relationship with Christ, because I have been transformed by the death of Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, I am wanting to strengthen those areas to better my relationship with Him.

You see the end goal for the Kilpatrick Mustangs really was not to win games, it was to grow as people. Sean Porter made the challenge really clear with the infamous quote at the beginning of the movie.

Sean Porter said: "You do it my way, not your way. Your way got you here and you're here because you lost. Right now you are all losers, but if you accept this challenge and stick with the program, you are all going to be winners at the end."

By the end of the movie the teenage inmates grew to become better men, some of them which got out of the detention center and lived different lives. Kelvin and Willie became brothers from being enemies. They achieved the ultimate goal.

We were losers to think that we could do it on our own, that the law could save us.

The goal was always the same and that is to be in right standing with God. The method of getting there switched when Christ came and condemned sin by dying on the Cross, and now, we must live differently because of the Holy Spirit living in us.

Let's Pray