

**Introduction:**

- In 1903, a man named Jack London published a book titled *The Call of the Wild*. This book went on to become a great success, and is rightly considered one of the greatest books ever written by an American author. In the book, a dog named Buck is stolen from a ranch in the Santa Clara Valley in California. He is taken to Yukon, Canada to pull a sled during the gold rush. While in the Yukon he begins to revert to a wild state -- by the end of the book, he's no longer the calm, domesticated dog he was in California but becomes the leader of a wolf pack in the Yukon, fully wild. Buck was originally a domesticated pet -- fully content with his place in life. He belonged to his master, and he was OK with that. Buck's master in California made the rules. When he was stolen, he was beaten and mistreated -- sometimes starved, sometimes overfed to the point where he couldn't run or pull a sled anymore. His life became chaotic. The only rules that applied to his life now were hurt or be hurt and never disobey the humans. His main focus shifted from obeying his master to looking out for himself. About two-thirds of the way through the book, Buck is rescued by a man named Thornton. Thornton loved Buck, and treated him well. Buck no longer had to worry about protecting himself -- he had a good, loving master again! For the first time, Buck knew what love was -- because he could compare how Thornton treated him with how his previous masters treated him. The book says, "Love, genuine passionate love, was his for the first time." But the call of the wild was too strong. Buck made friends with a wild wolf, and began spending more and more time with the wolfpack. One day Buck returned to the camp where he lived with Thornton to discover his master was killed by Indians. Buck snapped, killed the Indians, and ran off to join the wolfpack, completely removing any last traces of civilization in his life. **Application:** Buck's life is more than just a story about a dog -- it's a parallel to our own lives. Like Buck, we are thrown into a world of violence and heartache, and it often feels like our master is far away, never to be seen or heard from again. But then something changes -- we start going to church, or we make friends with a strong Christian person -- and for the first time, we really understand love. We get saved, we rest in the love and peace of our Savior -- but the call of the world is strong. What makes us different than Buck is that when our Master was killed, He came back! That means the choice becomes ours -- do we answer the call of our Savior, or the call of the world?
- This is the topic of today's message; *This Life in the flesh*. In Gal. 2:20 I pull out this phrase from the passage: "...*the life which I now live in the flesh...*"
- My goal is to connect the dots for you from this life in the flesh to following Holy Spirit.

**I. The Life In The Flesh**

- A. In the Christian community the 'flesh' really gets a 'bad rap.' I understand what people mean when they speak about the flesh. Or they speak against the flesh. Or they are fighting against the flesh. We actually see way to many people in the flesh and not H.S.

1. As I have been staying focused on the Spirit, I read those words from Gal 2:20 and realized my flesh is not my enemy. I actually get to live this Christian life in this body! How else would we ever get to express Christ in us the hope of Glory?
  2. Paul is actually saying as the NLT states Gal 2:20, "...so I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God." Another way of saying this is, "I am living for Christ in this body and I do it by faith."
  3. Most people see the flesh as a negative thing because it seems we are always fighting against what it desires. We are like Paul in Romans, "that which I do not want to do I do. And that which I want to do, I don't do."
- B. What is the flesh?
1. Gr. *sarx* - denotes the flesh of humans and animals. Made up of the muscle, blood, skin, etc. our body. So Paul is saying I have a life and I get to live it in this body.
  2. The flesh is often the term that is used to compare and contrast faith in God versus trusting in ourselves or our own strength and abilities. Ie. 2 Cor 10
    - a) "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh." (2 Corinthians 10:3, NKJV) We also see Paul do this quite heavily in Romans.
    - b) "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption." (1 Corinthians 15:50, NKJV) "The point of the phrase in 1 Cor. 15:50 is not to differentiate a part of us that cannot inherit the kingdom from a part that can, but to show that humanity as a whole cannot inherit the kingdom without transformation." Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985).TDNT (p. 1004). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans. We can't transform ourselves that can only be done by the new birth and that takes faith!
  3. The flesh is also used as the subject of sin or as the fruit of sinful desires:
    - a) "When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness," (Galatians 5:19-22, NLT)
    - b) "Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires." (Romans 13:14, NLT)
  4. *The Flesh also speaks of The War Within*
    - a) "The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions." (Galatians 5:17, NLT)
    - b) The problem is not our bodies it is something else that is at work within us. IE. It is an Alien Covenant! IE. Like Buck, the call of the wild/this sinful nature

creates in us a war that we have to fight. But we cannot fight it in our human strength and human ways.

- c) *"For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love."* (Galatians 5:13, NLT)
- d) By Faith we have to connect with Christ in us/with the Holy Spirit.

## II. The Life of Faith

- A. *"This life which I now live in the flesh (this body) I live by faith..."* NKJV I live by faith.
  - 1. So the battle is live by faith vs. live by works.
  - 2. The battle is live by faith in the Son of God vs. live by trusting in myself.
  - 3. The battle means living by what I cant see vs. living by what I can see.
  - 4. To live the christian life in this body I must have faith in the Son of God! This life can only be done by faith in the Son of God.
  - 5. Faith in the Son of God therefore becomes the great differentiator! It makes all the difference. IE. What makes us different than Buck is that when our Master was killed, He came back!
- B. Our very life hangs on Jesus! Something has been revealed to us. IE. Mt 16:16 Peter says, "You are the Christ! Son of God!" Jesus then says, "This is revelation from the Father to you Peter!"
  - 1. Revelation challenges this world and therefore it is an offense to it.
  - 2. Revelation is also a challenge to our flesh and is an offense to it to.
- C. Offense! So what am I to do? I am to live by faith!
  - 1. Everything about the Holy Spirit is by faith.
    - a) As we saw last week the disciples were in the upper room by faith (Jesus told them to wait there).
    - b) They had studied the scripture about Holy Spirit prior to Acts 2 to find out what they were looking for. That was faith! The Holy Spirit came as a result of their faith! Their faith is seen in their obedience to wait in Jerusalem.
- D. Faith removes the stress of trying to win salvation. It removes the stress of trying to win God's favor. We only have His favor by faith. Eph 2:8,9 *"As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God."* (1 Corinthians 1:29, NLT)

## III. The Life In The Spirit

- A. *"You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ."* (Gal 3:2).NLT
- B. *"I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ."* (Ga 3:5) NLT.
- C. Life with the Holy Spirit. (Please note: is there ever a time you can do the following with out faith?)

1. Led by the Spirit. "*For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.*" (Romans 8:14, NLT) Gr. *Ago* - to be led. IE. "*Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go near and overtake this chariot.'*" (Acts 8:29, NKJV) Phillip was listening to Spirit. He had his mind set on things above. Therefore he could be led by the Spirit. (takes faith)
  2. Directed by Holy Spirit "*But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.*" (Galatians 5:18, NLT) Gr. *ago* - to lead, bring, carry, be directed.
  3. Guided by Holy Spirit. "*So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.*" (Galatians 5:16, NLT) Gr. *Peripateo* - movement.
  4. Walk in the Spirit "*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*" (Romans 8:1, NKJV) *Peripateo* - to walk, to have movement.
  5. Be filled with Spirit. Eph 5:18 to be overly, amply supplied.
  6. Praying in the Spirit. Eph 6:18
  7. Worship in the Spirit. Phil 3:3
  8. Love in the Spirit Col. 1:8
- D. Again I ask, can any of those things be done without faith.

**Conclusion:**

- "*No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by the Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people.*" (Romans 2:29, NLT)