



The Spirit of God and the Church

I want to greet you on behalf of Namikango. It is difficult to believe that this year is passing us by so quickly. The Education Department at Namikango has been busy the last few months visiting different communities around Malawi who are hosting camp meetings. This year's theme for the camp meetings has been "Living and Walking by the Spirit." Those of us at Namikango have been meditating and studying what it means to live and walk by the Spirit of God.

What does this look like? How can we do this every day? What changes will this cause in our lives? As we have been asking these questions, we have been looking to the Scriptures for answers. Jesus talked a lot about the Spirit of God and how it interacts with us, how it is a helper that lives and moves alongside and within us. Paul talks about the Spirit of God all the time, describing to us what a life lived by the Spirit looks like, and how it has the power to change individuals, churches, and whole communities. In fact, it seems that the Spirit of God constantly shows up throughout the Bible! From the very first verses of Genesis, to the very last verses of Revelation, the Bible is full of God's Spirit, interacting with humanity and guiding us closer to the heart of God.

In this Liu, you will find several teachings about the Spirit of God and what it means to live and walk by this Spirit. There is an article from Ryan Hayes, Development Director at Namikango Mission that dives into Paul's teaching in Galatians 5. You

will also find a wonderful article from Stanley Mkwanda, English Bible School Coordinator at Namikango that takes the whole Bible's perspective on the Spirit of God and what it means to live with that Spirit. Finally, you will find a practical application of what it looks like to walk with the Spirit as Faith Somanje, CHE Trainer at Namikango talks about the exciting ministry of Community Health Evangelism and how it brings hope and sustainability to individuals and communities throughout Malawi and the surrounding countries.

I hope that as you read this Liu and meditate on the scriptures inside, you will learn something amazing about our God, and be prompted to walk by his Spirit. Walking by the Spirit of God allows us access to the very heart of God, and when we go into the heart of God, we discover his deep love for us, and his deep desire that we love each other. I hope that you will be encouraged to live by God's Spirit, and to share with others how they can do the same, for the glory of God in Malawi!

- Eric Gephart

Freedom in Christ

Read Galatians 5:13-16

The purpose of this article is to use Paul's words in Galatians 5:13-16 to remind us that in Christ, there is freedom. Also, it is helpful for Paul to remind us all what it means to walk with the Spirit.

So, while Galatians chapters 1–4 might be characterized as “life through Christ,” chapters 5–6 might be characterized as “life in the Spirit.” God's people, Paul argues, are the People of Christ (Christians) because they walk by the Spirit of Christ, not because they follow a list of rules and laws. Galatians 5:13-26 is concerned with the significance of freedom for battling the flesh. It may be broken into four units. (1) Paul calls us to the life of freedom from the flesh (vv. 13–15): living in freedom means not indulging the flesh but living in love (cf. v. 6). (2) He restates his call to freedom by a call to a life in the Spirit against the flesh (vv. 16–18). (3) He expounds on the life in the flesh (vv. 19–21). (4) He expounds on the life in the Spirit (vv. 22–26). These four sections help us to understand this passage more clearly.

1. Freedom in Christ (vv. 13-15)

Paul begins chapter 5 by stating: “For freedom, Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1). In Christ, we are freed from: all sin, all guilt, freed from living in fear of God, from having to follow the Jewish laws or any man-made law of any kind, free from principalities and powers etc. (Colossians 2, Galatians 3). In short, the way of life in Christ is freedom – not bound by external rules or laws but to walk with the Spirit of Christ in us, guiding us every day. For Paul, the purpose of freedom is love (Galatians 5). The reason we are freed is not that we can sit at home and watch football while enjoying having our sins forgiven, but that we can actively show our freedom by living a life free from fear, hatred, un-forgiveness and actively love people around us every day.

Most people are afraid of freedom because they think it means that “we are free to sin in any way that we want”. Of course, you can choose the

Galatians 5:13-16

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh.

foolishness and slavery of sin all you want. But if you do, you show that you don't understand freedom and that you are not free. To choose to sin is to choose the bondage of the sin. Is that what you desire most? Do you desire to walk with sin or to walk with the Spirit? That is your choice.

The use of freedom that Paul wants to show us is a way of life (walking with the Spirit of Christ) that helps us to choose love instead of hate, envy, anger and adultery. Indeed, the proper use of freedom is to fulfill the whole law summed up as “loving your neighbor as yourself” (Galatians 5:14). Living with fleshly desires such as lust, hate, gossip and anger is not choosing freedom, it is choosing slavery. Is someone who chooses to gossip against people free? No, they are in bondage to the fleshly desires of hatred, lies, retribution and judgement towards others. Only living with love – seeing people as God sees them and acting with kindness towards them – is real freedom.

Jesus shows us how to live in freedom when he says “love God, love your neighbor as yourself”. Now we can see that I am only free to do something if it blesses my neighbor and is an action that reflects Jesus to others. Freedom = living in Christ = which is living with the Spirit of Christ = which is reflecting the kindness, mercy and love of Jesus. Are you living in the freedom of Christ today? Does your life reflect Jesus' concern, kindness and mercy for all people?

2. Freedom is walking with the Spirit of Christ (vv. 16-18)

Paul helps us to understand that what our flesh works for is self-benefit and self-preservation. We elevate our self over other people. This is because each one of us are mostly concerned with our own lives, our own food, our own success and notoriety. As people, we tend towards taking care of ourselves before thinking of others. These are the motives associated with the flesh, which is contrary to the Spirit. Why? Because the Spirit of Christ provides the Truth that God loves us, that we don't need to fear God or anyone else, that seeing other people as God sees them (with mercy, forgiveness and love) is the way Jesus lived.

But also associated with the flesh is the need to follow rules and the Law. It is easier to follow rules than it is to walk with the Spirit. Because with rules, actions can be seen. Someone can compare with other people and see who is following rules and who are not. We generally see ourselves as the best rule-followers, and so we judge other people for not following the rules as well as we do. But "if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law" (Galatians 5:18). So we are not under the Law as Christians. We are not under any law, except for the law of love. God's love for "sinners" is not dependent on following rules. We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2). Pure mercy and love is what we have received, even when we did not deserve it or follow the rules (Romans 5:1-5). So now, giving love to everyone just as God has given to us is what the Spirit of Christ in us tries to do.

3. Understanding slavery of fleshly desires (vv. 19-21)

But the problems of the flesh are not only the "big sins" that we often talk about. We often speak only of "big sins" that are visible actions: committing adultery, getting drunk, murdering someone, or stealing. Those are sins to be sure, but Paul makes clear that living "in the flesh" is also: envy, gossip, witchcraft, idolatry, jealousy, anger towards anyone, and dividing relationships. Even as Christians, do we not all have anger or gossip or envy in our heart, if we are honest? How many of

us have been hurt by someone and refused to forgive them? This is also living by the flesh. The ones who are living with these types of motives and actions are not inheriting the "Kingdom of God". The Kingdom of God is, in Jesus' words, within us, near us, around us. This means that people who are choosing the slavery of the flesh, they are not enjoying the freedom that comes through mercy, love and forgiveness.

4. Fruit of walking with the Spirit (vv. 22-26)

Finally, Paul explains what the alternative way of life would be like. These are the results of living like Jesus, filled with that same Spirit of Christ who allowed Jesus to see people as God sees them – with compassion, mercy and love. It is important to say what the Fruit of the Spirit is not. It is not speaking in tongues, or prophesying, or seeing visions, or speaking with wisdom (1 Corinthians 13:1-5). The fruit of the Spirit are actions from motives such as: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control. Does your life exhibit these motives and actions? Or are you still living with anger, unforgiveness, envy or jealousy towards other people?

But "those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24). Those who "belong to Christ Jesus" are those who have received the good news of God's love and forgiveness and have made a decision in faith to be "in Christ". Those people have "died and raised with Christ" (Romans 6), which is what baptism signifies – going under the water is like death and raising up out of the water is new life – being raised with Christ.

But also, Paul says that "because Christ died for all, all have died..." (Colossians 3:1-3). For Paul, we have already died to our flesh because we have already accepted that God loves us despite our flesh. We are now "new creations", already "reconciled to God through Jesus" (2 Corinthians 5:16-22). But, even though we are reconciled to God, and are "in Christ", we still must practice walking with the Spirit every day, because still, we have anger and hatred and envy in our hearts. So, Paul is saying: your flesh has already been put to

death with Christ, and you are raised with Christ, so act like it! Act like this is true, today. But many are not acting like this is true. With that same Spirit of Christ in us, let us now also give that same grace to people around us. How can we not act like the Christ if the same Spirit is in us and walking with us? As the Spirit of Christ revealed to us through Jesus' words: "they will know you are Christians by your love" (John 14).

1. With Paul's words above, have you lived in accordance with the flesh in the last month (hatred, un-forgiveness, jealousy, gossip, factions, lust or drunkenness)?
2. Today, do you believe that your fleshly desires has been put to death and that you are raised with Christ as a new creation?
3. How can you begin practicing the fruit of the Spirit in your life today?

-Ryan Hayes

Living and Walking by the Holy Spirit

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Genesis 1:2). Many of us are troubled when we think about the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of God. Questions come, is the Spirit of God the same Holy Spirit? Here we are realizing that before the world was created, the Spirit of God had already started the work of hovering. When we are saying hovering we should have in mind a picture of a chicken which is hatching eggs with hope that after sometime something will come out. The Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit took part in creating the world and all that is in it. When man was being created, it was said "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness" (1:26). These words shows that the idea of creating man was from the oneness of God though it is not explicitly said.

When we are reading the Old Testament we see that the Spirit of God worked through the Prophets, kings and just simple people with the aim of warning but also saving his people when they depart from his presence. The Spirit of God

was also working in people with the aim of fulfilling the work which God wanted to be done for that time. In the book of Judges we have been given an example on how the Spirit of God came upon Othniel in order to lead the children of Israel to fight the king of Aram when he heard the cries of the children of Israel because of their sins (Judges 3:10). Here we can see that the Spirit of God was helping in delivering his people when they cry to him and were being delivered. But after sometime, God promised that the Spirit would come and be upon everyone. Joel said. "And afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit on all people..." (2:28). The purpose was that the Holy Spirit would be on everyone and make man be the one whom God designed him to be. All these depended on the coming of Jesus Christ. In the first three gospels, it shows clearly that their purposes were to show Jesus not just a teacher of the Holy Spirit, but a man full of the Holy Spirit as the Prophets foretold. All of us know that in many places where Jesus is found in the gospels the Holy Spirit is present like, during his birth, on his baptism, when he was being tempted, on his first preaching, when he was casting out demons but also on the cross. By looking in all them we can

John 14:16-17

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

see that all these books of the gospel were showing the life of Jesus Christ, his ministry but also that his ministry was being led by the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit was in Him.

God came to be with people through Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:19). Being someone who came with a purpose, a time came for Jesus to fulfill that purpose and return back to the Father. This brought fear among his disciples because they previously had courage because of the presence of Jesus among them. He knew what was in their hearts and so he needed to encourage them. Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told

you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.” (John 14:1- 2). The disciples showed their lack of faith by the questions they were asking and also their actions. But Jesus knew that he wouldn’t let them alone. Many times we too do have fears because of the the many things we meet with daily. When sickness comes we worry, we lack things needed for this life and we worry a lot, when our loved ones depart from us our hearts are broken thinking we are alone. Jesus already saw this among his disciples and so he asked his Father in heaven to intervene. “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth.....” (John 14:16 – 17). When Jesus says I will give you another Counsellor, it is obvious that he is equal with himself for him to accomplish the work he had been doing. Had it been that Jesus did not ask the Father to send the Counsellor, his disciples could have been orphans because they could have lacked help in times of trouble. All of us knows that children who do not have someone to look after them when their parents die they are orphans and are filled with worry and are unhappy. But when there is someone looking after them they become courageous. Jesus asked the Counsellor to be taking care of the disciples, even us today we are being taken care of by this same Counsellor for being christians. “But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (vs. 26). There are other duties that the Holy Spirit (Counsellor) does in us. Jesus has explained that will teach, the purpose of teaching is to give discernment so that an individual knows what is proper to do in due time. On our own we cannot know anything, we need the Holy Spirit to teach us what the will of the father is. Many times we do our own will leaving the will of God in so doing we are contrary to God. The disciples of Jesus learnt a lot during the time of Jesus on earth but they could not remember everything because they needed the Holy Spirit to be reminding them.

Jesus knows our weaknesses, on our own we cannot be courageous but we need the Holy Spirit to be with us all the time. The problems we meet like insults, false accusations, being persecuted because of religion, orphanhood, floods, being sidelined, problems in marriage, oppressed, in our human capacity we cannot endure but through the Holy Spirit who lives in us

helps to overcome these problems in our lives. Some people when faced with big challenges they turn to other ways of making them forget these challenges like getting drunk even engaging in drugs. But we need to know that the Holy Spirit who is in us helps us to overcome problems that come in our lives. By being Christians we need to walk but also to be in the Spirit because this is the only way for us to live a victorious life. All the time our sinful nature desires to rule us and do things contrary to the Spirit but Paul is reminded the Galatian Christians. “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:25). Here we see that many of us profess that we are of Christ Jesus but the way we live shows that we are being ruled by our flesh not the Holy Spirit.

Most of the times when we want to do something, the Spirit tells us we shouldn’t do that thing, but the problem is that the devil is clever and shows us the goodness of the fleshly desires but not the problems associated with it. And the flesh wins when we listen to the desires of our flesh. Many people have fallen into different problems because of listening to their flesh. We need to realize that the desires of our flesh are in contrary with the Spirit. On our own we cannot. Paul, being human saw the battle that happens within every individual. “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.” (Romans 7:15). All the times there is a struggle inside us and if we do not walk and be in the Holy Spirit we will fail because in ourselves we are weak. The Holy Spirit is not far from us he is in us, there is a question that can help us, “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you”? (1 Corinthians 3:16). We need to be hearing this question in our minds all the times so that we should always be reminded and realize that our bodies are special because the Holy Spirit lives in us and the devil just wants to deceive us, we need to be listening to the Holy Spirit. Paul reminded Timothy that “For God did not give us a Spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7). If every Christian realizes that in him there is a powerful Spirit, whom God gave us we will be courageous Christians and we will not be easily taken up by anything because the Spirit will be ruling our lives.

-Stanley Mkwanda

CHE Blesses Lives

CHE is one of the many ministries which Namikango Mission is doing in Malawi and neighboring countries. Its aim derives from John 10:10 in which Jesus talks about people having life in abundance. CHE has various components of programs that are implemented, one followed by the other with regards to successfulness of the first implemented program (in chain form). CHE aims at helping people realize the truth about being physical and spiritual persons through biblical teaching and practical activities, and also helps them extend the teachings to their neighbors (Mark 12:31 & 2 Timothy 2:2). Namikango Mission provides knowledge, skills, and at times resources that can enable trained stewards to practice what they learn; these resources include training material and trainers. CHE drives at prevention not cure, a sense of ownership not dependence, full participation not watchers, spiritual leadership, sustainability, and development not relief and multiplication.

In the continued effort to enhance relationships and lives of people in Malawi and neighboring countries, the community health evangelism program has so far trained a lot of people on top of the 85 lead farmers that the program has worked with this year. Our efforts have not gone in vain, as the scripture says in Mathew 25:14-30, we have seen three characters in our lead farmers and trainees, some have done well with the talents we gave to them, some did best and some did nothing but always complaining over nothing. The good stewards will be entrusted with the continuation of the program to enable them to continue with the good work they are doing and pass the knowledge to many souls.

The main reason we had these lead farmers was to have community champions who will be able to train and help others in the church and community with all the CHE components. These were meant to be torch bearers, to be the immediate information providers on CHE interventions and they are. Farming God's Way is one of the components of CHE intervention which aims at restoring the relationship between people and the environment (getting back to Eden). This

relationship can be achieved only when people understand the beginning of life and activities surrounding life. Most of human activities aim at food security and financial sourcing, they overlook the sustainability of these two. This is why people have wantonly cut down trees for financial gain, used fertilizer and chemicals in farming just to produce food that only take them to the other farming season. Farming God's Way, in the past two seasons has proved to us and the lead farmers who adapted well to program that it can help many homes to be food secure but also sell the surplus for financial sustainability. Just imagine a 50/50m degraded piece of land **giving out up to 20 bags (50kgs) of maize in the first year of compost manure usage!** Farming Gods way encourage usage of locally and naturally available resources; this has reduced the farming cost and improves crop production. It also is improving the soil in many ways; restoring texture, retaining organic nutrients, regulating soil temperature, balancing the soil PH, bringing back life into the soil and maintaining moisture. This is happening by following the simple five key principles of farming God's way; Minimal tillage, Organic farming, Soil cover, Crop rotation and Agro-forestry. All these principles are guided by the scripture to strengthen the basis of it all.

CHE has also helped much in building the physical and financial capacity of approximately 160 people by changing the way they think and the way they look at things around them. It has also changed their spiritual being, enabling them to view those that are not in the church as people who also received grace but don't realize it. In a number of non-Church of Christ members have adopted the program and are working hand in hand with the lead farmers, some have even joined the church as an appreciation of the holistic teaching through the CHE program. This is good news! The program has also helped improve the giving act through its teachings, (it is more blessed to give than to receive, Acts 20:35). In every blessing that the Lord has given, people were advised to follow the scripture in giving to the church and the needy. Almost 25 lead farmers have testified that God has done great things for them after giving to him and to the needy. We believe if this tendency of giving spreads to all the people it will bring a positive change to the church, community, and country at

large. It will help (as it has already started) to build a self-dependency spirit and make the communities and churches self-sustaining.

CHE has helped build and strengthen a good relationship between Namikango Mission and the Church of Christ congregations in Malawi, part of Mozambique and part of Zambia through the HIV/AIDS and the Church program, with a number of training of trainers it has enhanced the information availability about HIV/AIDS to the churches. Despite all the efforts, there is still more to do and a lot of congregations and communities to reach, we believe through multiplication all will be possible. We also believe that an abundant life is possible through Community Health Evangelism.

To sum it all up, CHE has helped in teaching people to understand their relationship with fellow humans, God's creation (nature) and God himself. It is helping people to realize the problems that have been caused by us humans since the sin in Eden. All the efforts have been to give knowledge to as many people as we can to help improve the environment for people to have all resources for a better life to enable them serve God better. It is encouraging love among churches and communities. We believe that through the good stewards we have trained and the ones to be trained, we will be able to reach out to as many people as possible. We appreciate all the people who support this ministry that it should progress, to God be the glory.

-Faith Lewis Somanje

Announcements

Education

- Preparations for the new Bible School program are underway. We urge all prospective students and other stakeholders to continue waiting until everything is finalized.
- We would like to inform all church leaders around Lilongwe District that Namikango Bible School will conduct leaders training at Chinsapo Church of Christ on 9 November, 2019. The training shall run from 8 am to 3 pm and leaders are invited to attend. For any further details you can ask the leadership of Chinsapo Church.
- 2020 Bulawayo SAIL: Brothers and sisters, you are reminded that registration for SAIL 2020 in Bulawayo is in progress. Registration fees remain K35, 000 and transport is K65, 000, in total its K100, 000 per person. Let us register and start paying transport fees to avoid the stress that comes in the last minute.

Praying for the sick

- Let us continue remembering the following sick brothers in our prayers.
- Bro Misomali a long time preacher at Zomba Central Church of Christ.
- Bro BS Mbewe who hails from Liwonde Machinga.
- Bro John Katete who comes from Ntaka village in Chingale.
- Bro Bvuta a long time preacher from Zomba East.

The Deceased

- Bro Tsonga died on 14 September and he was buried on 15. For many years he has been serving as a preacher in Chikwawa area.
- Bro Matchado a long time preacher from Masalani Church in Chiradzulu died on 14 and buried on 15 September, 2019.