

[Slide 1: Series cover slide]

Good morning, New City. About five weeks ago, we started the current series called “Life Change from the Heart”. Kevin kicked off the series by explaining that deep life change starts from the heart and begins to happen as we begin to live by the Spirit.

To explain this he referenced Galatians 5:16-17 which says

[Slide 2: Galatians 5:16-17 & Romans 8:13]

¹⁶ *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.—Galatians 5:16-17 (NIV 1984)*

But what about those of you who aren’t really looking for life change?

What about those of you who believe you don’t really have any troubles with gratifying the desires of your flesh? Is this really a sermon series for you too?

Well, it turns out it is because Galatians goes on to explain that when we begin to learn what it means to live by the Spirit; not only are we able to put to death the misdeeds of the body, but we also get to have a deeper spiritual experience.

Galatians 5:22-23 explains that as we live by the Spirit, we experience the byproduct of- or fruit of- the Spirit.

[Slide 3: Galatians 5:22-23 The Fruit of the Spirit]

²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

²³ *gentleness and self-control.—Galatians 5: 22-23 (NIV 1984)*

Ultimately, this is a series exploring what it means to live by the Spirit,

[Slide 4: the ultimate goal of this series]

recognizing that when one does so there are two ever-increasing byproducts:

1. The ability to put to death the misdeeds of the body, to avoid gratifying the desires of the sinful nature, and
2. An ever-deepening experience of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control

As we explore what it looks like when one lives by the Spirit, we'll be using the 12 step framework written by Bill W and Dr. Bob, the two cofounders of Alcoholics Anonymous. When we kicked off this series we scrutinized the Biblical origins of this program to recognize that it is nothing more than a practical application of what it means to work out the gospel in one's life.

This presents us with a very significant challenge. You see, 12 step programs use a word which tends to send the brains of non-addicts and non-alcoholics into autopilot mode. This autopilot mode leads people to believe that this word is irrelevant to them.

The word is recovery.

[Slide 5: The Pepsi Challenge]

So the challenge is to divorce yourselves from any addiction related association your brain may want to make with the word recovery. The challenge is to reprogram the brain to associate the word recovery with its actual usage in 12 step context. In the 12 step context, the word recovery is simply used to describe the effects of a spiritual experience—a spiritual awakening. Can we do this?

Wait a minute. I know just the thing to help you with this. A flow chart!

[Slide 6: "What is Recovery" flow chart]

So in 12 step lingo what does the word recovery represent? A Spiritual Awakening Step 12 says that the result of the steps is a spiritual awakening. It's the objective of the first eleven steps, something you experience so that you can carry it on to the next suffering individual.

Now, you may recall that I said we were going to reverse engineer the 12 steps back into their Biblical roots, so that we can encounter them in the same way they were encountered by the co-founders. A way that was so powerful it delivered them from the deadly clutches of alcoholism.

We begin by searching the Bible for something that describes an *awakening to the Spirit—an experience of the Spirit—a spiritual experience.*

[Slide 7: Biblical equivalents to recovery]

It turns out that the Bible describes the experience of the Spirit in a number of different ways, but I like to focus on four—the fruit of the Spirit, Bearing much fruit, life to the full, and Being saved.

But how does 1 become awakened to the Spirit? What does one do?

[Slide 8: Bible source—Living by the Spirit, Being in the Vine]

The Bible describes the means to this awakening as living by the Spirit, Being in the Vine, and entering by the Gate

In John 10:9-10 Jesus says

“I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.... I have come that they may have life and have it to the full”

And in John 15:5 Jesus says,

I am the Vine, you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

12-step literature, on the other hand, refers to the 12 step framework as the means to a spiritual experience

[Slide 9: Steps source—Steps 2-12]

The book Alcoholics Anonymous says

“The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life.... The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives.”—**There is a solution, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. 2001, 25-26**

You’ll notice of course that the flow chart skips step one. And if you were here for the sermon on step one; you’ll recall that I said,

This step appears to the left of the question about recovery.

[Slide 10: Why do we need recovery?]

It answers the question as to why this sermon series applies to everybody here, why everybody needs a solution in the Spirit at all. Step one echoes Paul's emphasis that we are all under the power of sin, that we are all powerless apart from the Spirit. Step one emphasizes that we all suffer from the dooby dooby doo. In Romans chapter 7 Paul writes in the present tense to describe his own battle with powerlessness—suggesting that maybe we don't just get zapped into perfection after we surrender to Christ. He writes:

Romans 7:15-25 (dooby dooby doo)

¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. ²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law;²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.

In the following sermon, Kevin explored two questions in the context of the 2nd step, which is essentially about coming to believe that God is the solution

[Slide 11: Can we trust that the solution is Christ? Does it work?]

1. Can we trust that the solution is Christ? and
2. Does it work?

Recognizing that it is logically sound to believe in Christ; and having considered the testimony of others who have done so,

we can continue the reverse-engineering process into the Bible

[Slide 12: What are the basic elements?]

We do so by searching for what the Bible describes as the basic elements for living by the Spirit, being in the Vine, or entering by the Gate?

In 12 step language these elements represent the essence of the 3rd Step—surrendering to God.

[Slide 13: John 10:9, 10b]

As we consider these questions? John 10:9-10 becomes convenient because it describes being saved as the byproduct of entering by Christ—the Gate.

⁹I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.... ^{10b} I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

This is convenient in that there is another verse in the Bible which uses really simple language to describe the basic elements of being saved.

Romans 10:9 says

[Slide 14: Romans 10:9]

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

This gives us our next clue for reverse engineering the 12 step framework into its Biblical foundation for living by the Spirit

So the basic elements are

[Slide 15: The basic elements]

1. Confessing with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and
2. Believing with your heart that God raised him from the dead

So does this imply that the solution is as simple as:

[Slide 16: I say a prayer]

I say a prayer **and**

[Slide 17: ZAP!!!]

[Slide 18: I'm healed!!!]

Earlier in the same letter to the Romans from which this simple solution came, Paul seemed to suggest that this business of powerlessness was still an issue for him, even after he surrendered to Christ.

This means we need to take a closer look at Romans 10:9

[Slide 19: Taking a closer look at Romans 10:9]

As we do so, we're going to divide the verse into three pieces and then look at them in reverse order. Those three pieces are

1. God raised him from the dead
2. Believe with your heart, and
3. Declare with your mouth that "Jesus is Lord"

Considering first the expression, "God raised him from the dead",

[Slide 20: God raised him from the dead]

This expression refers to God's act of Grace—Christ's sacrificial death on the cross so that in His being raised from the dead, we could be made right with God.

In the last sermon of this series, Kevin described this act of grace through an analogy. In the analogy, there is a person drowning in a river who is certain to die barring some outside help. In the analogy, someone throws him a lifesaver. Kevin likened this act of throwing out the lifesaver to God's act of Grace.

As Kevin described this, he referenced Ephesians 2,

[Slide 21: Ephesians 2:8-9]

where verses 8-9 read

⁸ *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—*⁹ *not by works, so that no one can boast.*—Ephesians 2:8-9

In the analogy, the drowning person could not be saved without the lifesaver first being thrown. Similarly, we cannot be saved without God's Grace—without Christ's death and resurrection—without God raising Him from the dead.

Consider the next piece of Romans 10:9—believing w/your heart

[Slide 22: Believe with your heart—Faith]

For now we're going to call this type of belief—faith and we'll talk a little bit more about why in a minute. The element of faith is emphasized in Ephesians 2:8-9 as a dual requirement for being saved. Though it is by God's act of Grace that we are saved, we are saved through our faith that the Act actually saves.

In the analogy of the drowning person, God's act of Grace was symbolized as the lifesaver being thrown out to the drowning person. Though the lifesaver is what truly saves the person, it does so through his faith that it will really save him.

I like that Romans 10:9 tacks on the words “with the heart” after the word believe. It makes me wonder if belief “with the heart” is different than some other type of belief, belief with the mind.

If we're really going to consider what Romans 10:9 means I think it's important to pay attention to this little detail. Elsewhere in the Bible,

the book of James also distinguishes between belief with the mind and faith

[Slide 23: How does belief with the heart differ from...?]

James 2 is pretty direct about this matter, suggesting that with faith there will always be an observable byproduct. James says that this natural byproduct is some type of action.

Verse 19 is one of my favorites. It reads,

- a. ¹⁹ *You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. – James 2:19 (NIV)*

James seems to make a distinction between belief with the mind and belief with the heart. Whereas belief with the mind is knowledge at best, belief with the heart is conviction. And he suggests that conviction always leads to some type of action. I also like verses 15-17

- b. ¹⁵ *Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. – James 2:15-17 (NIV)*

In Kevin’s analogy, the drowning person’s faith that the lifesaver would really save him was made complete by his action to reach out and grab it. That’s a cute analogy and all, but what kind of action are we talking about in the context of believing with our heart that God raised Christ from the dead?

**This takes us to the 3rd piece of Romans 10:9—calling Jesus Lord
[Slide 24: Calling Jesus Lord—Obedience]**

When we consider the third piece of Romans 10:9, declaring with our mouths that Jesus is Lord; we have to consider what it means to call someone lord. To call someone lord implies that they have authority over you, that you will do what they say. Consider what Jesus asks in Luke 6:46

Why do you call me, ‘Lord Lord,’ and not do what I say?

[Slide 25: Taking a closer look at Romans 10:9]

So the first piece of Romans 10:9 is about God’s saving Grace—He is our Savior
The second piece is about having faith—something which naturally leads to action
And the third piece is about proclaiming He is Lord—which implies we will obey what He says.

Great! So where does one begin?

[Slide 26: Today's topic – updated flow chart?]

This brings us to today's topic. To consider that calling someone Lord implies obedience should sound a little scary. It sounds like we're talking about a heavy and cumbersome load—such as memorizing the Bible and devoting ourselves to rigid adherence to everything it says.

If I were to tell you to do that, wouldn't it make me the type religious hypocrite that Jesus dueling it out with in the book of Matthew? There's no way anybody could ever do that, so how could I possibly put such a load on another person?

So what do we do? Where should one begin? Thankfully, Jesus gives us a clue. In the gospel according to Matthew, as Jesus is dueling it out with the religious people, **the Pharisees test Him.**

[Slide 27: The greatest commandment]

³⁴ *Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.* ³⁵ *One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:* ³⁶ *“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”*

³⁷ *Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’* ³⁸ *This is the first and greatest commandment.”—Matthew 22:34-38 (NIV)*

What is amazing about Jesus' response to their question is what Jesus decides to tack on as extra credit. That is, Jesus doesn't stop there. He goes on to offer them the second greatest commandment. And He doesn't stop there either. He then hits them with the significance of the two commandments—their relationship to the rest of Scripture.

In verses 39-40 He says,

[Slide 28: The secret sauce]

³⁹ *And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’* ⁴⁰ *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”—Matthew 22:39-40 (NIV)*

For me, reading this wasn't just "Yuge", it was "Biggly". Ladies and gentlemen, this is the secret sauce. It implies that obeying Jesus as Lord is a matter of the heart.

It implies that we should devote ourselves to a journey

[Slide 29: The Journey]

We should devote ourselves to a journey of perpetual growth in understanding- and application of

1st) what it means to love the Lord with all one's heart, mind, and soul; and

2nd) what it means to love one's neighbor as himself

However, it is imperative that we recognize that this is a journey.

[Slide 30: Emphasis on Journey]

1st, Nobody is capable of loving the Lord with the entirety of her heart, mind and soul—no matter how hard she tries; and

2nd, nobody is capable of loving his neighbor to the same degree he loves himself—no matter how hard he tries.

So we can continue updating our flowchart

[Slide 31: updated flowchart]

with the journey of the two greatest commandments, but as we do so, we're going to split them up because one is identified as greater than the other. This means we're going to first consider the greater of the two.

So, what the heck does it mean to love the Lord with all one's heart?

[Slide 32: What the heck does it mean?]

Well Jesus' duel with the religious people in Matthew 22:34-40 was really helpful in simplifying obedience into being a matter of the heart. So why don't we take a look to see what happens next?

Well, the chapter concludes with verses 41-46 in which Jesus finishes the duel with the religious people. He does so by responding to their test with a little test of his own. And by doing so, he silences them.

This takes us to chapter 23, which begins with warnings against hypocrisy.

[Slide 33: Warnings against hypocrisy]

It reads,

¹ Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ² "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. ³ So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. ⁴ They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them."—Matthew 22:34-38 (NIV)

Now this catches my attention because I'm not interested in what hypocritical religious people have to say. You might say, it represents the opposite of the way Jesus would have us honor His commands. As you read on in chapter 23, Jesus eventually gets to the seven woes. Of these, one really jumps out at me because it not only expresses the hypocritical way that the teachers of the Law and Pharisees approach obedience,

but it also expresses the way it should be approached

[Slide 34: Clean the inside of the cup]

²⁵ "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean."—Matthew 23:25-26 (NIV)

Fortunately, I recognize that I'm a hypocrite. I'm a prisoner of sin. I just can't seem to do what I know is right. Instead of doing what I know is right, I do what I know is wrong. And this I keep doing. On the outside, I do things so that others think I'm a pretty alright guy, but if you could see me inside, you'd see that I'm full of greed and self-indulgence.

I think I found the scripture to update my flow chart.

[Slide 35: Updated flowchart]

Two weeks ago, Kevin talked about what it means to surrender. As he did so, he said that being saved is a matter of changing the hearts position. That to change the hearts position is justification. He then commented that though we have changed our heart's position, we have done nothing about its condition. To address the heart's condition is called sanctification.

I think that cleaning the inside of the cup is the start of this process. Having surrendered the care of my life to God in step three, I next need to do something about my heart's condition. I need to clean the inside of the cup.

This cup cleaning process, then, consists of four elements:

[Slide 36: 4 elements to cleaning the cup]

- A.** First, you have to look inside the cup to see what's dirtying it. To do this, it's probably a good idea to ask someone to teach what these dirtying elements look like so that you can take inventory of them.

- B.** Next, once you've finished taking inventory, it would probably be a good idea to share your findings with your teacher so she can sharpen your examination and help you figure out how to keep the cup clean. As you share it with her, you're also going to be sharing it with the only person who can actually clean the inside of the cup.

- C. Now, as you're learning how to examine the inside of the cup and as you're sharing your findings, you're also going to stop doing the things which got the cup dirty in the first place.
- D. And when you're done sharing your inventory with your teacher and the only one who can clean the inside of the cup, with as much humility as you can possibly muster up, you're going to ask Him to clean it.

So what do all of these things represent? And most importantly, what do they have to do with loving the Lord with all of one's heart?

Is everybody still awake out there? Are you still with me? Alright, I'm going to ask you to bear with me for a moment. As we get into this business of what it means to clean the inside of the cup, we're going to switch things up a bit, and I'm going to ask you to play along with me. That means I'm going to ask a question, and you have to shout an answer back to me. Are you alright with that?

Question 1

[Slide 37 Question 1]

1. What does the inside of the cup represent? *The heart*

Question 2

[Slide 38 Question 2]

2. What does the outside of the cup represent? *Behavior*

Question 3

[Slide 39]

There are 4 elements to the cup cleaning process:

Looking inside the cup to see what's dirtying it, Showing your findings to your teacher and the Only One who can clean it, Stopping doing the things that got it dirty in the first place, and humbly asking the only one who can clean the cup to clean it

3. What does the first element symbolize? *Examining the heart*

Question 4

[Slide 40]

4. What do the dirtying elements represent? *Idolatry*

Question 5

[Slide 41]

5. In particular, what type of idolatry are we looking for inside the cup? *Self-indulgence*

Question 6

[Slide 42]

6. What does the second element symbolize? *Confession*

Question 7

[Slide 43]

7. What's the point of sharing it with your teacher? *Sharpening your examination*

Question 8

[Slide 44]

8. What does the third element represent? *Repentance*

Question 9

[Slide 45]

9. Who is the Only One who can clean the inside of the cup? *God*

Question 10

[Slide 46]

10. If you had to think of one word to define the topic of the final element, what would it be? *Grace*

Question 11

[Slide 47]

11. What does the cup cleaning process have to do with the greatest commandment? How does it help you love the Lord any more than if you hadn't cleaned the inside of the cup?

To answer this one, I'm actually going to use a little demonstration. In order to understand how the cup cleaning exercise helps one love the lord with more of his heart, it helps to literally visualize a cup. We already said that the inside of the cup represents the heart. Well, you might say that the things inside the cup represent the things we love. Now, when you first change the position of your heart to be for God—you know, when you first begin to believe and surrender in prayer—you've actually done next to nothing about the condition of your heart. On the inside, you're likely still full of greed and self-indulgence. In the most academic of theological circles self-indulgence is also referred to as *my kids' play dough*.

So you just did your 3rd step prayer, your heart is full of self-indulgence, and you've committed to this journey of devoting more and more of your heart to God—i.e. the greatest commandment.

Now you've never really devoted any time to this, so you don't know what self-indulgence looks like. So you find someone who does, so they can teach you not only what it looks like, but where to look.

Well, the greatest commandment suggests that we should love the Lord with all of our hearts. So this means I'm going to devote some serious time to finding as much self-indulgence as I can. And because I really want to fill my heart with the love of God, I'm going to share my inventory with my teacher so he can scrutinize it.

And as I work through this with my teacher, I'm also going to be sharing it with God, because He's the Only One who can remove what I find.

And to show God that I'm really ready to fill my heart with His Love, I'm going to try to stop filling it with more self-indulgence. Instead I'm going to ask that He fill it with His Grace—represented by this holy water that I took from the Catholic church down the street.

So the more that I clean the cup, the more room there is to devote to God's love, which is exactly what it means to devote yourself to pursuing the greatest commandment.

So, I now have some material with which to update my flowchart. I can replace the box that said to clean the inside of the cup with the four elements of the cup cleaning process.

[Slide 48: flowchart updated with 4 elements]

I can replace the box that said to clean the inside of the cup with the four elements of the cup cleaning process

And, it turns out I got really lucky, because it turns out that these four elements sound a lot like steps 4 through 7:

[Slide 49: Added steps to flow chart]

So steps four through seven are really nothing more than a practical application of what it means to love the Lord with more and more of your heart. They are no more than a practical demonstration of how to devote yourself to the journey of pursuing the greatest commandment.

Now, some of you are probably noticing that this step is backward looking. This gets addressed when we get into step ten many, many, many, many months from now.

Next week we're going to talk about the first of these four elements, about the inventory process—the self-examination.

This fourth step inventory is basically an inventory of your past for all the times that you worshipped the various idols of self-indulgence. Bwhaaaaaaa?

What the heck does that mean? How the heck do you search for the various idols of self-indulgence? And how can you possibly be thorough about something which sounds so abstract? Ni madre, estas loco.

Well, back in the atomic laboratories of AA in Akron, Ohio; they discovered a lethal technique for doing this. You might say they found a back door. It's called "resentment". That's what we're going to be talking about next week.

So, if later this evening someone were to ask you tell them what church was about today; you might go into anaphylactic shock. So I'm going to try to give you a hand.

If someone were to ask me what this sermon was about, I'd tell them it was about four things

1. It was about learning what it means to live by the Spirit
2. I'd tell them that it was about recognizing that living by the Spirit isn't about memorizing the Bible and striving for perfect behavior
3. I'd tell them, that instead it's about first focusing on what's inside the heart
4. I'd tell them it was about cleaning the inside of the cup