



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor  
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## **GALATIANS 5:16-21**

Galatians Series

[PRAYER] What a gift, Father, the Son of God coming to earth to be our Savior. It's an awesome event. It's so much meaning in that that sometimes we get lost in the busyness of the season. But this morning we just want to thank you for that gift. We treasure our relationship with you. We know that it's because of that relationship that we're able to enjoy life, that we're able to move forward with your leadership in life in some good ways.

Lord, I ask that you would teach us and lead us. Grow us together as a church. We're grateful for what you're doing among us. We thank you for your Spirit that draws us together in unity even though we're very different people, different ages, different stages in life, different backgrounds. You bring us together and we worship together in a magnificent way. Thank you for the encouragement, Lord, that we experience together as we enjoy our relationship with you and then enjoy the relationships that we share together.

So Lord, I pray right now for those who are struggling at this time of year with the emotions that surround Christmas. Maybe the emotions of anxiety around the whole gift giving process or receiving them. But others just with the memories of maybe disappointment or pain. I pray that you would encourage each one of us that we would go away today with a sense of hope, peace, love, joy in our hearts because we've met with you today and you are the reason for this season. We thank you. In Jesus' name, amen.

Where does God want you to be down the road, maybe a month, a year from now? If you are a Christian that God has placed you at a point, Point A we're going to call it (as I often do), and God is moving you along to Point B. Where is He going to take you in the next few months? Where is He going to take you in the next several months as you go forward?

Now some people at this time of year make resolutions that determine where they're going to be a few months. You can do that. There's nothing wrong with that. But I want to talk about a different way of moving to the next place that God would have you in this next year. This is a time off and at the end of the year we're evaluating where we are, where we want to go, where we've been, and what we want to be.

So today as we look at this passage we're going to find some very important truths about how we move to the next stage in our lives. I don't know what that looks like for each person, but God is moving us in a particular way. If we follow His leadership and His guidance it takes us into a path, a place where new things happen. It's an exciting place. It's a place of freedom.

As we talk about the book of Galatians, we see freedom all through the book. Now freedom sometimes comes when we recognize that there are things that we can participate in that God has allowed us to do and we don't have to worry about what other people think. Sometimes it's the freedom of salvation. We have Jesus Christ in our lives, so we're free and we enjoy that freedom from the penalty of sin.

But today we're going to look in Galatians 5 at a passage that talks about how we can have another kind of freedom. The freedom that comes when you move in your life toward that goal of Point B. How does that take place is what we're going to ask today. What does it look like as we move forward?

Some people view God as kind of a cosmic Santa Claus. That He's there evaluating every person, checking the list twice to see if you've been naughty or nice. If you've been naughty then He gives you a little trial here or there, and if you've been nice then He gives you some kind of a blessing. I think that's a rather shortsighted few of God and probably not a very accurate way that life takes place.

I would suggest that many times as we look at life, God has created our universe with certain principles and rules that govern it. When we live in tune with those principles that God has designed then things go okay and then if we don't then we get into trouble.

If you text and drive you're likely to get into an accident. That's not because God's up there saying, "Oh he's texting and driving. Let's give him an accident." That isn't how it happens. It's because there's a principle about life, about distractibility and when you're distracted you get into trouble. So it's an unwise thing to text and drive because there's a principle there.

If you spend a lot of time criticizing your mate and being angry with your mate for years and then you get a lash back of some kind, well that's a principle about relationships. When we live in harmony with the principles God's created, good things happen and when we don't we have a problem.

If you touch a hot stove, you're going to get burned. It doesn't make any difference whether you believe that you're going to get burned or not. Your beliefs don't determine whether a stove is hot or not. There's some people you tell them, "You know, living that way is wrong," and they say, "Well I don't believe that way." Well that doesn't mean you're not going to get burned if you touch the stove. There's certain ways to live that God designed our universe to embrace and if you violate those then bad things happen.

If you look at Galatians 5:13 we're going to talk there starting in that passage about a way to move from Point A to Point B. Notice it says in 5:13 (this is the verse we looked at the last time I was teaching), *You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free.* Free. Yes. I like that word. Free.

*But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh.* I want to spend some time talking about that flesh because the flesh causes you to be in bondage again. I want you to understand what the

flesh is because we're going to see today a contrast between the flesh and the Spirit. If we understand this dynamic, we'll be able to move from Point A to Point B more effectively. Let's talk about the flesh and understand what it is.

Let me just go back in history to the very beginning when Adam was created. God created Adam as a unique person, different than the other animals. But when Adam sinned, something happened to him. Something happened to him that affected everyone else, all of us, as well that he obtained a sin nature.

A sin nature is the same thing as the flesh. It's a propensity toward sin. It's a magnetic pull, a magnetic pull to selfishness. The goal is pleasure and self-seeking and I want to be first and best. It has contrary desires that want to be gratified. So the sin nature that we have has this flesh, this flesh inside of us that wants that. We all have that in our lives. That's the flesh. So he says in the verse in verse 13, *Do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh*, because when you indulge the flesh bad things happen.

Now when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He died to free us from the penalty of sin, but we still have the flesh. We still have that magnetic pull towards selfishness and towards sin. But God has given us something else. When we accept Him into our life He's given us the Spirit and the Spirit allows us to overcome the flesh. The Spirit overcomes the pull towards selfishness, keeps you in sync with God's plan and requires yielding or walking in step. Now if we're going to move from Point A to B there's a very important concept we need to understand and that is how to be led by the Spirit.

Look at verse 16. Verse 16 in Galatians 5 says, *So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

Now these two things are pushing against each other. You're either going to be fleshly or you're going to be spiritual. If you're one, it's going to inhibit the other. So both of those concepts are out there. If we're going to move from Point A to Point B, we need to understand this because we want to submit to the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and not gratify the desires of the flesh. That's the idea that we have here.

I like to think of it like gravity. When you think about gravity you think about the pull that gravity brings. It brings you down and the same thing is true in our lives with the sin nature. There's this pull that brings you down.

So I just got to tell you, whether you are in Bucharest, Romania or you're in the United States, when you jump off a building you're probably going to get hurt because gravity is true no matter where you are. It's not culturally different because you live in a different place.

But when you get into an airplane (a 747 is what I flew in to fly to Romania), you defy the law of gravity with another law. It's the aerodynamic law of lift. When the plane is going fast enough, then lift takes over and that plane is able to rise and fly and get to Romania. The same thing is true, I think, about the Spirit because when we allow the Spirit to work in our lives and we walk

in the Spirit, it defies that law of gravity or that sinful nature so that we can make progress in our lives.

Now when I'm flying in a plane to Bucharest, there are people inside the plane who obviously don't believe the plane is going to make it because they have white knuckles holding on and they're shaking to death. Why? Because they are afraid of what is happening in the plane, especially when the turbulence starts happening and things start bouncing around.

Now I want to ask you a question. Does it make any difference to the principle of lift and gravity if the person's anxious? No. The emotions don't change the reality of what's going on. If someone doesn't believe the plane is going to get us there doesn't mean the plane isn't going to get us there. See, we don't believe in God to make Him exist. We believe in God because He does exist. There are some people when you say to them, "That's wrong," they say, "Well I don't believe that." Does that make it not wrong for them? It's still a problem.

Now we're trying to move from Point A to Point B and we have to understand that when we do, we're trying to fight a war. And this war that takes place in us is a very important war. It's the flesh versus the Spirit. You wrestle with that; I wrestle with that in my life. What is that going to look like as I'm trying to move forward?

I want you to see. Look at verse 16 and following. I just want to read the verses and then I'll comment about them. Verse 16 says, *So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit (we're getting the elaboration here. They're contrary. You can't bring them together), and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict (there's a war going on inside) with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. You don't just get to do whatever you want because you have freedom in Christ. No. You have to be careful about the flesh because the flesh can get you into trouble. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

The point is the Christian life isn't a playground; it's a battleground. There's a war going on inside of us. Now in order to understand this, in order for you to get to the next level, wherever you want to be in your life, then you have to understand what this dynamic looks like.

Now if you start thinking where does God want you to be next year or you could ask this question, what do I want to do in my life next year to be different? That's okay. You can ask that question, but I would encourage you to lay it out before the Lord and say, "Lord, of all the things I'd like to do next year, which ones would you like to put your finger on and I'll work on those." So that the Spirit is leading you in a particular direction.

Eighty percent of the resolutions that are made in the next couple weeks will not be kept. We're not talking about making resolutions unless the resolution is to be led by the Spirit. Because what we're saying is "I want God to lead me and wherever He's leading me I want to go." That's what we're saying here.

As we start understanding the flesh, you've got to understand this very important concept. The flesh has an ally. The flesh that's inside of each one of us has an ally and the ally is what is

called the world system. The world system is outside of us, you and me. It's outside where we live. I'm not talking about creation; I'm talking about the system of the world that purports a philosophy of life and those kinds of things. The Bible talks about this world system.

I'm going to read you these verses so that you can see there's a world system he's talking about. Not about the cosmos, the cosmos that is the creation of the world, but the way that the world operates.

John 16:33 – Jesus says, *“I have overcome the world.”*

James 4:4 – *Friendship with the world means enmity with God.*

1 John 2:15 – *If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

1 John 5:4 – *Our faith overcomes the world.*

Do you see the world he's talking about there is not the creation, he's talking about the system that's out there made of our politics, of entertainment, of just the way that we live that attracts the flesh. So the flesh and the world system are attracted together. They are allies and create a problem for us.

1 John 2:16 says, *For everything in the world (that is the world system)—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.* Wow. The goal here is to walk in the Spirit and that's what he's saying in verse 16 if we're going to move forward in our lives.

Now moving forward might be for you developing a character quality more like patience or being organized. Or maybe it's a skill that you're trying to develop that has to go with work or something at home. Or maybe you're trying to overcome a habit. Or maybe you're trying to have a goal with your exercise or diet or finances or something like that. Maybe it's a relationship goal that you have or a work goal.

All of those things fit here. We take Jesus home here. We don't say we live one day on Sunday and then all those other things we just handle a different way. We're taking Jesus home in every area of our life and when we do we're recognizing that God wants to use the Spirit to work in our lives in any of those kind of areas that we move into.

Look at these two verses that talk about the walk that takes place. Because the freedom that takes place in Galatians is illustrated here.

First of all, in John Jesus says *then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.* So there's something about knowing the truth that's going to help you as you're moving from Point A to Point B. If you know the truth, the principles that make the world run, that make them work, if you know those principles you'll be able to navigate carefully through the process. *The truth will set you free.*

How are you going to know that truth? Jesus continues in John 16 when he says, *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.* That's why it's so important for us to be guided by the Spirit of God in our lives. What does that mean – guided by the Spirit of God in our lives? What does it mean to walk by the Spirit?

The word used in verse 16 (walk) is the word *peripateó* in the Greek and it is in the present tense. The present tense in Greek is different than the present tense in English. Present tense in Greek has to do with continual action. In other words, it's continuing to happen. The idea is that you're continuing to walk in the Spirit – not just a one-time thing, but you're continuing to do that in your life.

It's also in the imperative, which implies that it's a command. It's not optional. It's something that we need to do. And walking implies progress. Going from where we are to where we need to be.

The idea of moving from Point A to Point B is we're following the Spirit and He's leading us, we'll see in verse 18 that He leads us. But here it's we're walking. That's the idea.

I spent some time trying to think about this idea of walking because the word *peripateó* is used other places in Paul's writing. I looked up a bunch of them and as I looked them up I found four principles about walking that I think would be helpful for you in understanding what does it mean to walk in the Spirit.

Let me show you what it means to walk in the Spirit. These come from various places in Paul's writing. This comes from Ephesians 5:15-16. The principle is be careful. Walk carefully. Notice what it says. *Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.*

*Be careful.* You want to be careful because there's a lot of bad stuff out there. Here's the thing: the flesh inside of you wants you to stay at Point A or get worse. So does the world system that's out there. The world has a system that's communicating what's right and wrong. That if someone is violating you, you should get back at them. That's what the world says. Make all the money you can. Because the world says money is of high priority. The world has all kinds of things within its system that talks about things like finances, and sex, and right and wrong, and so on that are dangerous. So if you're not careful, you're likely to get distracted and find yourself moving along with the flesh inside.

“Well there's nothing wrong with it,” you say. But the question is it being led by the Spirit? Because if our flesh is getting in touch with what's going on in our world, we start getting sucked into that, then we not only stay at Point A, but we move backwards and we get ourselves into all kinds of problems.

Number one – be careful how you walk. Ask the forty-year-old man who would like to move forward in his life, but at thirteen years old was introduced to pornography, finds it hard to move forward. Or the forty-year-old woman who wants to move forward but has an addiction to alcohol. Be careful how you walk in your life. Be careful. That's principle number one.

Principle number two or walking truth number two is to choose the path wisely. Notice Ephesians 2:1-2. I chose the English Standard Version for these next few verses because it uses the word *walk*, whereas the New International Version used the word *live*. So here we have the word *walk*.

*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world.*

There is a path that leads the wrong direction, so you want to choose your path wisely. You're going to make decisions over the next several months over what you're going to do. Choose wisely where you're going in order to allow the Spirit to lead you in the right direction.

The third principle is to walk with purpose. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

We walk purposefully. We choose our steps. We're not asking the question, "Well what path could I take? What's wrong with it? How far can I get off the path and still not get in trouble?" That's not what we're asking. We're asking the question, "Where is the Spirit leading me?" Because I want to walk in the Spirit, I want to follow the steps that the Spirit puts out. I want to be purposeful in my movement forward.

Walking truth number four. *Walk by faith, not by sight.* You don't know where the path is going over to the side. You don't know sometimes. As you're following the Spirit you don't know exactly where it's leading.

You might think that your goal is to arrive at this certain place, but it's like passing along a river and you're going down the river and you have your mind set on something that's on the bank. You're lining up the boat so it's going towards that rock on the bank. You're never going to get there because when you get down there, you see the stream turn or the river turn and you go a different direction. Because the Spirit leads us a different way. So we want to be careful how we walk as we're moving forward.

Those are four principles that can guide us in our walk in the Spirit to move forward in our life today. Be careful, choose the path wisely, walk with purpose, and walk by faith.

If we look in verse 19 we're going to see a list in verse 19 and following of fifteen things that describe the flesh. You want to know this because this is going to help you understand the world system. And not only the world system but the things that our hearts tend to move toward. Fifteen words. I'll describe each one as we go through just briefly so you can understand what they are and be aware of them and recognize them as you see them show up in the world system. They're there, but as your flesh starts being attracted to them, that's where you really want to be careful and on guard.

Verse 19 says, *The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality.* Sexual immorality is any sex outside of marriage between a husband and a wife. That means living with someone before

you're married is wrong. It violates the standards of God, the principles that God designed to make things work. Homosexuality is wrong.

The world system makes light of such things and even when we live in the world we start questioning ourselves and saying, "Wow, everyone else is doing it. Everyone else seems to not have a problem with this," whatever it is, and we start finding ourselves saying, "Wow. I wonder if it's true or not." Remember, it's not true just because someone believes it or not. It's true because that's how God designed it. The world system has a parade about immorality or they throw it in your face. That doesn't make it right.

The second word is *impurity*. It refers to anything dirty. Sometimes sexual, but sometimes not. Toilet language, for example. Just dirty. Whatever makes you feel dirty or it does something that is impure inside of you. Those are acts of the flesh.

The third word is *debauchery*. We don't really understand what that is, but let me explain to you what it is. It's anything that is unbridled, a gratification of the senses. Maybe having a bowl of ice cream is fine, but if you take a gallon of ice cream and try to eat it all at one time, that might be debauchery. That's what it's saying here. It's gratifying, unbridled gratification of the senses. Debauchery.

The next one is *idolatry*. That's worshipping anything else besides God. We're not talking about little idols that might be in your house (although that certainly would be wrong), but anything that gets in the way. It could be good things. It could be a car could be an idol, it could be a TV, it could be a family. Your family can become an idol and rob you of your relationship with God. It could be any good thing or bad thing that can become an idol and it's acts of the flesh. The flesh is drawing attention to self. Selfishness. Wanting something for me.

The next one is *witchcraft*. Witchcraft is wrong. You've got to stay away from horoscopes, Tarot cards, fortunetellers. Stay away from that stuff. Anything that has anything to do with the occult or witchcraft is bad.

*Hatred*. Wow, isn't that interesting. All those bad ones and then we throw hatred in there. Sometimes we don't think hatred is all that bad. It's in there. It's part of the flesh, designed to distract us from what the Spirit wants for us. That word distraction is a good word for the flesh. It distracts us from where God wants us to go. Hatred.

*Discord*. There are three words in here that describe creating tension in relationships. One is discord (that's quarrelling). We'll go on to another couple in a minute.

The next one is *jealousy*. Hateful resentment. I'm jealous about someone. That's not fitting. That's something that's fleshly. *Fits of rage*. Those are outbursts of anger. That's fleshly.

The next one is *selfish ambition*. That's wanting to be first or best or wanting to compromise your integrity or relationships to get there. Wanting to be first or best and be willing to compromise your integrity or relationships to get there. Selfish ambition. I want something and

I'm going to do it selfishly to get there. It's not saying ambition is wrong. It's the selfish part of that ambition that's a problem.

The next one is *dissensions*. That's another one of those words that's creating tension in the environment and relationship. Dissensions.

Another one is *factions*. Factions is organized dissension. Where we get groups together so we can be organized in our way of having dissension against one another. You know what that looks like. Students in school sometimes organize these dissensions and factions.

The next one is *envy*. Envy is jealously coupled with evil will against someone.

The next one is *drunkenness*. Literally means intoxication.

The next one is *orgies*. Wild drunken parties often including sexual immorality.

Well, that's a pretty good description of the flesh, one side of the battle that we face.

Go back to verse 16. I want to read those verses again because as we look at verses 16-18 we understand the key to moving forward. I think this is such an important concept, the idea of walking in the Spirit. It's actually an adventure. There's actually some excitement about it. It's a walk by faith so you never know what's going to happen. Certainly we plan. We set up goals of where we want to go down the road and we start moving that direction, but we always have to be led by the Spirit in order to move that direction.

Notice in verse 16-18 this key that helps us move forward because if we're not careful we're going to find ourselves distracted by the flesh. Look at verse 16-18 again. *So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

You see there are two words. One in verse 16 that says *walk in the Spirit*. That means here I am at Point A and I'm going to choose carefully the steps I'm going to take to walk in the Spirit. But the last verse in 18 says be led *by the Spirit*, so there's this sense in which the Spirit is out there in front of me moving me in a direction so I know where to go.

I have some goals for this year for myself. I submit that to God and I say, "God, here's what I believe you're leading me to do." I don't think God hides those things from us. If you lay out for yourself "here's some things that I'd like to do in my life," then maybe out of that God will speak.

This last month two different people came to me for counseling, coaching, and they came to me because they're unhappy with their lives. They don't know exactly what they want to do. They just want to move forward in their lives somehow.

I didn't say to them, "Okay, here's what we do. Let's analyze you. Let's find out what your strengths and weaknesses are." Here's what I said to them: "Take a piece of paper and write down on one side all the things that make you uncomfortable about yourself right now, you'd like to change right now in your world. And on the other side write some things you'd like to do differently. Then I want you to take it and lay it out before the Lord, and then I want you to ask God to speak to you and tell you what He wants to do in your life right now. Those are the things I'll help you work on. I'm not going to tell you, I'm not going to give you a test to evaluate yourself. You tell me what God is saying to you and then I'll help you get there."

I think that's the kind of thing we're trying to do when we're walking in the Spirit and being led by the Spirit. There's this war inside of the flesh and the Spirit. Your spirit wants to pay the bills or clean the house; your flesh wants to watch that sitcom. Your spirit wants to forgive; your flesh wants revenge. Your spirit wants to study for the final; your flesh wants to go to sleep. Your spirit wants to reach out and help someone; your flesh wants to let someone else do it. Your spirit wants to save money; your flesh wants to spend. Your spirit wants to love; our flesh wants to hate. Your spirit wants to go to church; your flesh wants you to just stay in bed.

What I'm suggesting here is that this flesh and Spirit wrestling that takes place is a daily thing. It's something that we all experience every day, this wrestling of the flesh with the Spirit. I would suggest that God wants to do some important things in our lives to move us forward. In order to do that, we have to walk in the Spirit. The flesh is a constant distraction. There's a battle, there's a fight going on inside of us.

If we go back to Galatians 2 earlier in our passage that we're studying, it says these words: *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* This is the King James Version. I just happen to like the way they crafted this verse a little bit better than the other versions as I was studying this.

The point here is that when we're crucified with Christ, God did something inside of us. He gave us the Spirit so that now we have a choice. Instead of just gratifying the sinful nature inside of us, the flesh, we now have a choice to walk by the Spirit. It's practical. It's a walk. It's *peripateo* is the word.

There's an Indian story I really like. It was told to me when I was a teenager. You probably heard the story before. It's the story when the Indian leader was saying that I have two dogs inside of me, a black dog who's really mean who beats up on the white dog inside of my heart. They're always fighting. One to do the wrong thing (the black dog), and the white dog to do the right thing. There's continual fighting going on inside and he was asked, "Which one wins?" The answer to that question was this: It's the one I feed the most.

I would suggest that in our Christian life we have a choice of what we're going to feed. Are we going to feed the flesh because if you gratify the desires of the flesh you stay at point A or get worse. But God wants you to move forward in life. He wants you to move ahead and that's going to take place when you walk by the Spirit and you're led by the Spirit.

I wanted to stop here in our passage today because next Sunday when we look at the next verses we're going to look at the fruit of the Spirit. I'm going to tell you several stories from my life and from other people's lives about how the fruit of the Spirit is so practical to move us along this path. This is where God wants to take us and it's all about the Spirit.

So the question I think we have to ask ourselves is which dog are you feeding today?

If we're feeding the Spirit and moving forward then we start to experience new freedom in our lives. For some that freedom is simply going to be the ability to live within the crunch of life right now, not adding anything new, not changing anything, but to be able to live within it with a little more grace, a little more joy, a little more peace inside of their hearts. There are others that are on the edge and they're ready to do something completely different. It's God's grace that will lead any of us to move forward.

The beauty of this is that we can all be free today. We are free first by accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. He removes the penalty of sin providing that freedom inside of our hearts to enjoy relationship with Him. Then we can also experience that freedom that comes by giving our hearts to Christ. And when we do that and allow the Spirit to lead us, then He leads us into new areas that we haven't been before. It's amazing. It's actually fun. It's the adventure of the Christian life. I like talking to people about it, hearing what goes on in people's lives.

Last week when I worshipped with Calvary Chapel Bucharest on Sunday morning I was just so touched by their worship. I couldn't understand any of it. It was all in a foreign language. It was all the same songs we sing, but they weren't singing the words I know. I couldn't even remember the words I know because they were confusing me with their words. But as I was quiet I was just amazed at what God is doing around the world and the beauty of His plan.

God's plan is designed in this universe. I want to be moving along with what God is doing, but it's not just a universal thing that we kind of tie into the yin and yang of life. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about a personal God who cares about me and He wants to lead me and He wants to guide me and He wants to help me develop personally, just like He wants each one of us to.

I don't know what God is going to lead you to in the next year, but I do know this: It starts with being led by the Spirit of God. Let's stand and pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, I thank you for the privilege of the Christian life. I just enjoy the adventure of it so much. I don't know what's going to happen this year. I don't even know what's going to happen today. I never lived this day before and so I thank you for it and ask that you would guide me today. Help me to be able to face the challenges that I may face later in this day. Pray for each of us as we meet people along the way, that we be able to respond in a way that represents your Spirit and not gratify the flesh. I pray, Lord, that you would guide us and lead us. Teach us. Help us to become more Christ-like. Move us along in that process of sanctification. Become more like your Son, more Spirit-directed in our lives. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.