

Fruit of the Spirit – Part 2

The last time we were together, I was speaking about the fruit of the Spirit, and in John chapter 15, Jesus said that He is the vine and we are the branch. And then we see in Galatians 5:22, it says, ²²*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,* ²³*Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

We saw how that the husbandman or the keeper of the vineyard, as such, is God Himself. We are like someone who is going out and we're seeing results in our lives as children of God, and the result that we are to see is that, of course, of Galatians 5:22, the fruit of the Spirit.

Once again, let me remind you, the fruit of the Spirit is not soul-winning. We often get that mixed up and we think that we are winning souls. Once again, it's not only God we look to to have this fruit of the Spirit. He is the One who gives us this ability to produce fruit, to have the fruit that's mentioned in Galatians chapter 5, but He is the One who saves people. We don't save anyone.

I'm not telling you not to witness and not to give out the Word of God as a saved person. That's how people get saved. We give out the Word of God. Remember, the Bible says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. You as a saved person and I as a saved person, we are to give out the Word of God, and when a person gets saved, bless God, the angels rejoice in Heaven, and we rejoice because that person has gotten saved. But that's not the fruit that Jesus is speaking of in John chapter 15, and it's not the fruit that's spoken of in Galatians chapter 5. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, and so forth as we've read.

Now, as we look on about the fruit of the Spirit, we need to understand that good fruit is produced by a healthy tree. Once again, I'm comparing this to what we have around us in our daily lives. I live in Florida and I see these trees. I see the orange trees and things growing. I have an orange tree in the back yard and that tree has recently been hit by a blight. Well, that tree is not healthy and it's not bringing forth good fruit. The secret of fruit bearing is to stay healthy. That orange tree that I have must be healthy in order to bring forth fruit.

Why do not some trees or vines produce good fruit? I've just told you my tree has a blight, and there could be a number of possible problems... frost, disease, caterpillars and other harmful insects, and so forth... but a healthy tree produces good fruit.

In contrast and in relation to that, the believer must stay spiritually healthy and in a right relationship with the Lord. The believer must resist such diseases as legalism. Now, legalism is when a person thinks he can please God by his own works.

In Galatians 3:1-3, it says, ¹*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?* ²*This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* ³*Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*

There's nothing a person can do to earn salvation. There's nothing a person can do to stay saved, and that's what Paul is speaking of in Galatians 3:1-3. Legalism is when a person

thinks he can please God by his own works, and that is a blight upon the Christian life.

Another one is formalism. This is when a person thinks that outward acts of religion can cover up a lack of inner power and reality. In II Timothy 3:5, it says, *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

I recently heard a preacher say that we have a Sunday smile. In other words, we put on a good show on Sunday or when we go to church, but then when we leave, we have that sour look and we have that sour inside us. And having a form of godliness, we need to be in love with Jesus Christ. Then, first of all, you've got to be saved, of course. You've got to love the Lord and realize what He did for you. He died on the cross for you and because He died you can have eternal life. The good news is that He's alive today. He shed His blood on the cross of Calvary, and because He's alive today, you can have eternal life. And we do have eternal life if we've trusted Him as Savior.

The diseases can come in many forms for a Christian... legalism, formalism, and other things, but these diseases choke out the life of Christ and dim one's view of the cross. We let things get in the way. We let things get in the way of our lives as Christians; then the cross becomes dim, the view of that cross that Jesus died on for us.

The believer must abide in Christ and stay connected to Him. In John 15:1-5 it talks about this. We must stay connected to Him because being connected to the true vine is the only healthy place to be for the Christian.

I want you to notice something else with me. The nature of the fruit is produced quite naturally for the Christian. Once again, let me

compare this to something that we see naturally in our everyday lives. You may not see pear trees, but let me use this as an illustration. The pear tree does not strain and toil and exert itself in an effort to push out pears, nor does it worry and fret as to whether or not the pears will appear. It's quite the contrary. The pear tree just stays healthy, getting proper nourishment, and the pears naturally are produced.

Think about a tomato vine. Do tomato vines struggle and sweat and labor and say, "Oh, we need to somehow squeeze out a tomato"? No, God brings forth the tomatoes quite naturally and the fruit of the Spirit does not come as a result of man's thought, efforts, or traditions. In Colossians 2:8 it says, *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

And then we read in Colossians 2:18-19, *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.*

What does that mean? That means that we need to depend upon the Lord; He is the vine; we are the branches; and we need to stay in His Word. We need to have the thoughts of God in our minds and in our hearts, and the way we have that is through His Word. We don't let the cares of this world choke out the things that we need to be exhibiting in our lives as Christians.

Fruit is God's doing, and He is the expert at producing the best fruit. We need to let God. Some people try to force the issue. They try to

be Christians. Well, you don't "try" to be a Christian. You're either a Christian or you're not. You're either saved or you're lost. As a Christian you can't force things. You cannot force the fruit of the Spirit that we read about in Galatians chapter 5. We must let the fruit of the Spirit appear through the vine through us and let that Holy Spirit work in and through us. We must submit ourselves to God as Christians.

Revelation 4:11 says, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* We're not to have this fruit or look forward to having this fruit to please ourselves to bring honor and glory to ourselves, but we are to look forward and strive... maybe the word "strive" is not the right word, but we need to let God work through us so that we can bring honor and glory to Him.

Ephesians 2:10 says, *For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* Let God work in and through you. You can't force it. You must submit to Him. And once again, stay in the Word and let God lead you through His Word.

And then we also see that fruit helps to identify. What does the fruit help to identify. Our Lord said, *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them,* Matthew 7:20. If you see apples hanging on a tree, you can be sure it's an apple tree. If you see a vine-like plant growing in your garden, you may not recognize it but once you see a watermelon growing on the vine, then, identification of the plant is easy. If you see tomatoes hanging on a plant, you can be sure it is a tomato plant. If you see the genuine fruit of the Spirit being manifested, then you can be sure that the

Spirit of God is working in that person, and people need to see that in us.

Sometimes the question is asked: How can a person give evidence of the fact that the Spirit of God dwells within? The great evidence, the greatest proof is not that the person speaks in tongues, as some believe, or has had some emotional experience. The greatest evidence is fruit, the fruit of the Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit is the outward and visible evidence of that inner life and power and person that lives within, namely, God, the Holy Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law.

Next time we're going to pick up here and we're going to continue our study about the fruit of the Spirit. Now, some of this may not seem like it's making sense to you at this point, but if you'll stay with me, we'll look at this together and it will start making more sense as we get into the Word of God. I pray that you are in the Word of God as a Christian, and you need to stay in the Word of God and you're going to grow in His grace and knowledge that way. Remember, when we get saved... Remember, it says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Our faith increases daily by the minute as we stay in the Word of God.

Get in His Word. Read His Word. Study His Word, and He's going to comfort you and guide you. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for this time. I pray for those people listening, Lord, for that person who does not know you as Savior. I pray that person would receive You right now.

“Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive You as Savior.” If you’ll pray a prayer like that, God will save you.

And Father, I pray for that person who is saved, that person, Lord, who knows you as Savior. May that person continue to grow in Your grace and knowledge, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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