

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Gal. 5:22-23

Paul concluded in the previous verses with a stern warning - they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. We now come to the opposite of the flesh -- fruit of the Spirit. How different it is when men live the life of the Spirit. They grow like the harvest. Paul's concept here maybe misquoted, as fruits or as spiritual gifts. This is a natural expression, in character of the Spirit at work in a life. You notice the word here is fruit. And this nine-fold fruit springs from the new nature.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life after conversion is like cultivating the new life in Christ. It is a beautiful catalog of the graces of God. The flesh has been ranked as works, as weeds. Which produce no fruit.

When the life is yielded in the direction of the power of the Spirit, there are going to be certain qualities that are going to naturally develop in that life. This is abundantly clear.

It is interesting that he chose the word fruit. To describe the results of the Holy Spirit's work.

Jesus earlier, Matt. 7:20, thus you will know them by their fruits. "One's heart is revealed by the fruit he bears. The tangible, outward expressions which anyone can examine.

The fruit of the Spirit is a positive replacement, of the sinful works of the flesh. It is the quality and the marks of the life of Jesus.

One of the greatest verses in the Bible (God is love) And Paul is going to expand upon that statement. As he tells you what Christianity will do in its final victory when love becomes the sole of life and conduct. He is going to win the final victory when love masters and love moves in that life.

In one brief sentence, he is going to give you the difference between the works of the flesh, and the fruit of the Spirit.

Christianity, in its use of the word fruit, may speak in several different ways. Fruit of the Spirit is love. And fruit presupposes that there is life. There can be no fruit apart from life. It also indicates that there is cultivation. And finally, it says there is some substance. Fruit is a food.

Samuel Chadwick said this - "the word works suggest the factory. The word fruit suggests the garden."

Works - the works of men are always in the realm of death. That of degeneration.

Fruit always operates in the realm of life. The finest work which a man has ever

wrought is ultimately in the realm of death.

Man's work always operates in that way. You take this building in which we meet today, and we are gathered. It is wonderful, necessary, useful. It was erected when man handled dead materials. The trees in the forest, was cut. But it must die - the tree, before man could even begin his work in the realm of this. All of the elements in this building, as it was being erected, and when the final brick had been put in place, with all the rejoicing. Old Mother Nature, with her mossy finger immediately set in to put it down. There are facts, we have to keep re-constructing this building. Mother Nature is destroying it at this very moment. As quickly as a man works his works, they begin to crumble and pass away. Now that is what Paul speaks of in the realm of the flesh. Something that is decaying, dying, and can have no part in the kingdom.

Now the word fruit is something that we have said, works in the realm of life. And this is a mysterious fact. Life is of God. Just as much as that little daisy that blooms in your yard. It owes its origin to God. Just as a sparrow that hops about. Fruit is God's work.

Now an artist can sit down and paint fruit. But it fades, upon the canvass as he mixes his colors. Though he has the skill of a famous painter. You may make fruit of wax and it perishes. You may make fruit and put it under a glass case, and it does not have the properties to perpetuate life. The tree bears fruit, wherein the seed thereof, after its kind.

Christianity is a thing of life. It cannot be manufactured. It must grow as

a principle of life. Now fruit implies cultivation. Here is a tree in the garden. If you let it run wild, you never prune it, you'll never get the fine quality of fruit. The fruit of Christianity is based on love. When your heart is in trouble and you are passing through some sorrow. You come in the church, perhaps today, and you say - has God forgotten me! Why has God been pruning my life. For the perfection of character, for cultivation, etc.

And fruit suggests substance. It is substantiated through God's love. Does not your heart hunger after love. The Christian's heart is one that can only be satisfied through love. Now this is the cry of the human heart. The prophets experienced this. How shall I give thee up Ephraim! That was the cry for love. Gen. - God said to Adam, where art thou. That was the cry for a lost child.

The plain meaning of this text then is that it is based on one word which grows into nine words.

Now we would say fruits of the Spirit are. That would be grammatically - and would read smoothly. But we have here the fruit of the Spirit is. What we need to find out really is - the fruit of the Spirit is (really one). And not nine. The one thing in the Bible that punctuates everything else - if you have love, you have all of these things. If you lack love, then you lack all of them. It is an inclusive word - this word love.

And love heads the list of the fruit, of the Spirit.

Let us now see what this has to say to us.

I. First, Love.

It is no surprise that this is the central thing of Christianity. The most basic thing that can be said about God is in John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Love made the supreme sacrifice. I John 4:16 - he said, "God is love." From a human standpoint, there is nothing more basic than this which is found in the new life in Christ. God's love kindles a blaze of love in our own hearts. Love, because he first loved us. I John 4:19.

Matt. 22:37-40 - Jesus coupled two great commandments. Love is what the prophets are about.

It should be no surprise then that Paul declared that love is the number one fruit of the Spirit. Jesus earlier declared this. John 13:35 - "By this, all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love and have love one for another.

This love does not come naturally in the human heart. It is specifically a work of God's Holy Spirit in us. We must put forth honest effort to follow, the Spirit.

Paul gave the greatest possible emphasis to love. It is the first. And I Cor. 13 states it beautifully.

You could take and notice how the works of the flesh are reversed from the fruit of love.

This is a God-like quality. It is a love that is caring, a love that never seeks anything but the best in the life of Christ. Love is the very essence of divine nature. Everything begins with the love of God. 2 Cor. 13:11. Christian love is the reflection of God's love. And this love is completely undeserved, but it is proof that while we were still sinners that Christ died for us. As Paul speaks of the love of God, so he also speaks of the love of Christ. For these are one in the same thing. It is a love that passeth all knowledge. Eph. 3:19. Love is always a mystery. And is always amazing to man. Love is the atmosphere of the Christian life. And the Christian, says Paul, must walk in love. Eph. 5:2. Every life must be carried in this atmosphere of love. It is the universal motive in life and it is the secret of all Christian unity that we have. It is the main thing in life. It is not an easy sentimental emotion - but love is something that is strong, and speaks of God.

II. JOY

This is a wonderful word that may be translated simply (greetings). As a person expresses - greetings. (Joy be with you). It is put in a way that it is an ingredient in the Christian life. And this is a common place word - but it indicates more than

just an ordinary experience, of cheerfulness, gladness, common delight. It is a life that has music in it and it sings all the day long. Sadly, it is absent from many lives. It is the kind of joy that sings in the middle of January and February, as well as in the beautiful days of June and July. It is the kind that can sing when you have to button up your coat on a cold day. And it continues to ring forth. It is the theme of the Bible. More than 150 times, this word and other similar words like rejoicing, occurs. Whatever else Christianity may be - it is not a long-faced religion. It declares that joy is one of the basic fruits of the spirit. It is something that - it is not like our culture says - that we need a thrill a minute. By some television exploit, or some drug abuse, or entertainment oriented, or emotional release. That takes bigger and bigger charges to keep bringing satisfaction.

Now the Bible concept of joy is something that is more significant. It has a deep sense of satisfaction. Of living in relationship to God on a level of satisfaction with God. It arises out of the experience of conversion. It frees us from the burden of the old life. And we rejoice in what the Spirit is making of us. Sin, that was once attractive is now revolting.

It not only puts a smile on your face but a song in your heart.

The joy that is the fruit does not need some constant external stimulation. It springs from within. If joy lags in your life, you may know that you have neglected your relationship to God. The spiritual life needs to mature in Bible study, in worship, in regular prayer, in fellowship with Christians. And Christians get into trouble when they cease to cultivate these.

You remember the Psalms prayed that the joy of his salvation might be restored.

So here is a word that designates the fruit. It is joy that is the recipe for Christian living. The joy of the Gospel, the new discovery of the Gospel story that never grows old. The angels brought this message to the shepherds. The wise men rejoice when they saw the star. So in the beginning, there was joy. On the resurrection morning, the women returned from the tomb to account that the risen Lord had dispelled their fear and there was great joy. When Jesus came into the midst of his disciples, they were glad. They saw the Lord. And at the very end of the Gospel story, Luke tells us that he ascended and the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Luke 24:52.

The Gospel story begins, continues, and ends in joy.) The joy of believing.

It is a wonderful thing in the New Testament that this joy can be with you even in tribulation. Col. 1:24, Paul rejoices even in his sufferings. Even in the afflictions that he has in his body. There is the joy of Christian work and witness. The sight of God in action.

Now the sermon that is preached and leaves a man in dark despair is not a Christian sermon. Every sermon ought to be able to lead a man to a place where he can hear the joy bell ring.

Rufus Mosley was a most bubbling Christian. And someone said the first time

they heard him, they thought he was crazy. But the second time they heard him, they knew he was crazy. And someone once asked Mosely if he thought that Jesus ever laughed. He says, "I don't know that he did. But he certainly fixed me up so I can laugh."

It may be that in the end of the day - the greatest of all, will be the joy of the people, whom we have brought to Jesus Christ. What great joy in leading someone to know Christ. Phil. 4:1, I Thess. 2:19-20.

For man, the greatest joy is the joy of love reborn, and a love restored. And getting the joy of God.

III. PEACE

This is a term that occurs over and over again in the Bible. Peace as a fruit of the spirit. This brings us into the right relationship of God. No longer are the enemies of God. Peace means that there is the absence of struggle. That we have freedom from the problems of difficulty. It means that we have come to a time when everything else has been swept out of the way. And peace prevails.

Peace is the security that comes from trusting God. No matter what happens to us, we have confidence that we had better move in his presence. It is a bond that holds us together.

Peace is more than just getting rid of the negative. But it a positive development in the life and in the presence of God.

We think of peace as that which follows a battle. And harmony is wrought between opposing forces. You take up the newspaper and you read that this nation or that nation has declared peace. You hear of two people who are at strife in the church and they forgive - and settle their business. They have agreed that it can be settled. There are others who agree that they have buried it for awhile. And then they will dig it up sometime later. They sort of bury the hatchet for awhile. But the kind of peace here is life at its best. The search for peace was a universal search. And peace that can only come - not from self, but it describes a tranquility - a perfect contentment. That he lives as the Psalmist says - will lie down in peace and sleep. Where it is God who makes him to dwell in safety. Psalm 4:8. Jeremiah contrasts the land of peace. With the swelling of the Jordan. Jer. 12:5. The word was calm and serene.

We think of peace as a human friendship. A man of peace. A word or relationship between nations. Or between man and God. And peace comes from believing. It is Paul's prayer that these people will grow and have love, and joy, and peace. Peace comes from God. It is a peace that passeth all understanding. Phil. 4:7. It is a gift of Jesus Christ. Peace be with you - he greeted his own people. John 20:19. John 14:27.

We need this relationship within the home. I Cor. 7:12-16.

We need this relationship in the Christian church. Eph. 4:3. The God of peace

should rule our hearts. We need this relationship between man and man. Between man and God.

This is the complete relationship with Jesus Christ - and without this, we can never really bear fruit.

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Singular woman luka 7:46 - Jesus sat at dinner in a Pharisee's house - woman came in, anointed feet, & wiped them around his feet, your sins are forgiven go in peace.

IV. LONG SUFFERING

We could put this down, and say that this means people of long temperedness. You very seldom find people who easily understand that word. You might give short temperedness. But here is a quality. Long suffering is kind. It is - that most long suffering people in the world are mothers. I believe because they love. Men tell you that love is blind - that there is nothing like that. Look at a woman - here is her son who goes wrong. We have seen it for a long time. She seems to be blind to it. But is she blind to it. Let me tell you - she saw that he was going wrong before he did it! And then, you say, why doesn't she heed this - what we are trying to tell her. Because love beareth all things. Believeth all things. Hopeth all things. Endureth all things. That is the story of a mother's love. Long suffering. And that is the quality of endurance. Steadfast, unmoveable. It is quiet and it is strong. It is like 2 Tim. 2:3 - take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Endure hardness.

There are no short cuts to become a strong Christian. The Holy Spirit equips. And these fruits come forth.

Remember this - you can do precious little to hasten the ripening of fruit in the

orchard. There is little, likewise, that you can do to hasten the ripening of fruit in Christian maturity in your life.

You simply must wait for the Holy Spirit to do his work - across the unfolding years. We can obviously age the Spirit in giving him opportunity to work. And the right atmosphere - to help the harvest to come. So we need to pray, Lord, give us the matter of long suffering.

Now Woody Hays was a successful football coach at Ohio State for 28 years. But he was fired because of his uncontrolled emotions and his lack of this fruit. His problem was that he had temper fits.

And the problem was with his uncontrol. Think what this does to individuals - and to us.

He even called up the boy that he had slapped on the side-line, and the reporter asked the boy, did Woody Hays apologize to you. And the boy said, the only thing I remember is - that he asked me how I caught the ball. He didn't remember him apologizing. Now here is a long suffering.

V. GENTLENESS

Now this is the spirit of (kindness). It is right at home in the list of Christian

virtues. It is closely related to love - isn't it? And it is the natural man that grasps after things. But here is something in the matter that is active. As a principle of fruit. It would be almost that Paul wants to emphasize here. And what better word could he use - than to chose gentleness or kindness. This is the thing the people do - little things for others. That is, they are not forced into it. But it is the service of kindness. The useful things. The small things. You see something that needs to be done and you do it.

This is what Jesus meant when he said - you give a cup of cold water - and it costs you nothing. Just the trouble of seeing that it is given to some person who wants it. And that gets recognition in Heaven.

This is a great word. And it speaks a great deal to us, of the goodness of God. The kindness of God. And how that it is the kind that in the New Testament - it speaks and leads to repentance. It is the characteristic of the good life.

Christian kindness is a lovely thing.

VI. GOODNESS

Now this sixth virtue in the fruit of the Spirit, is defined as exactly what it

means. (Goodness.) I wish we used the word more than we do. Sometimes we talk about holiness. Not too much. Once in awhile, we talk about righteousness. These things have to do with character and conduct. But what is goodness. It is the greatest of all of these words. There is a hymn - There is a green hill far away. Outside a city wall. Where the dear Lord was crucified. Who died to save us all. He died that we might be forgiven. He died to make us good. That we might go at last to Heaven. Saved by his precious blood. "

There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin. He only could unlock the gate of Heaven and let us in.

What is the inspiration of goodness. "It finally dawned on me, why don't you
Reason nothing 1st think Norman - go out & do something good instead of being frustrated by all of the evil"
you went about doing good -
Rom 12:21

We leave this word to the nursery. We tell our little children - be good. Be good. Now you may keep your boy good in external things - but you want to bind him to goodness through the years to come, so that when he comes up and comes to this city that we have filled with sin - that he will say, no, I cannot do it. The love is the only sufficient inspiration of goodness.

If you love me - ye will keep my commandments. So goodness is a love quality. A love quality. It has a broad meaning.

The children of Israel are said to have feasted upon the goodness of God.

As they entered the promised land. Now remember this - the opposite meaning of this word is evil or bad. So God makes his sun shine on the evil and on the good. Matt. 5:45.

VII. FAITH

This is another fruit of the Spirit. Faithfulness is the act of being true to one's faith. Exercising trust and a commitment. To something or to someone. It does not flow with the tide. But faithfulness is something that you depend upon. It is not hot - nor is it cold.

The best translation of the word used here - is faithfulness - fidelity. Of being true to what you have said and to your duty. What is equal to keeping a man true, or faithful. (Nothing but love) Love will do this for him and will enable him to do it. This describes a man's loyalty - which will enable him to do it. This describes a man whose loyalty will enable him to die for Jesus Christ. Rev. 2:10, 3:14. We have reached a peak of this word - as it is used to describe Jesus. He is the faithful witness - the faithful and true in Rev. 1:5. A man can stake his life on the truth. Of what Jesus said and of what Jesus is.

VIII. MEEKNESS

What is meekness - it is active humility. It is the modesty that flavors the fruit. The man who is humble - does not know he is humble. It is the ability here as Jesus illustrates it. To leave the carpenter shop - to go out and face the crowd. And then to bear a rugged cross. And to climb the hill in the sight of the world.

And say, I am meek and lowly in heart. This certainly is what it is all about. This is a word that sometimes a person uses in reference to an animal that has been tamed or learned to accept control and discipline. Such as an obedient horse. He is meek. Controllable.

This word was used in reference to Moses. He became a great example. Who was a man who one time bore the marks of anger. And yet, became a man of great strength and gentleness. In the true spirit of Christ, under God's control.

IX. TEMPERANCE

This is the last grace in the fruit of the Spirit as given here. This, we might say, is self control. In the light of the list of works that a natural man - it would appear that maybe this should have been put at the head of the list of fruit. And certainly none is more needed than this one. It may be the last in the list but it is not the least.

This means that the whole body is held in subjection to the Spirit of God. How marvelous it is that we have this work going on in the Christian life. There ought to be a motive for temperance and self-control. For example, here is a man or a mother, a grandmother or a grandparent, you have little children who are coming after you. And what you do - they will do. That ought to be motive enough for self-control. That is the secret in which temperance is love's victory.