

Eastside Community Baptist
Sunday, October 18, 2020
Galatians 5:16-26 : Is Your Fruit Ripe?

You have heard and answered Jesus' call to follow Him. You have counted the cost and made Jesus Lord and Saviour. Now we are obedient through the waters of baptism, recognizing the important necessity for this step. It is more than just ritual, but rather it is the normative path to union with Jesus and to our baptism by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, the local church.

When we join with Christ we are filled with the Holy Spirit and the Spirit gives us gifts that enable us to build up and encourage the body of Christ...gifts that allow the body, when the gifts are used, to strengthen the body and allow us to fulfill our role as ambassadors for Jesus, doing our part to see the Kingdom of God grow and multiply.

But did you know that there is something even more important than the development of your spiritual gifts? It is the development of spiritual fruit.

As we look into whether our fruit is rotten or ripe...let's look at what Paul has to say about it in Galatians 5:16-26:

Living by the Spirit's Power

¹⁶ So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷ The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. ¹⁸ But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

¹⁹ When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, ²⁰ idolatry,

sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

WHAT IS THE "FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT"?

First, we want to recognize that spiritual gifts and spiritual fruit are two very different works of the Holy Spirit. Several weeks ago, we spent some time looking at the gifts of the Spirit. For all true disciples who want to actively be part of the work of the body, the Spirit equips you with unique gifts. You might have one, you might have several, but your gifts make you a valuable, unique presence in the body of Christ. You are important! The world may seldom recognize the importance of the individual, but within the Kingdom of God, you are important to God, he knows you intimately, before the beginning of time, and He has planned good works for you to do! Paul tells us in Ephesians:

¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

While not everybody has every gift, the fruit of the Spirit should be demonstrated in every Christian life! Also take note that the term is properly "fruit of the Spirit." The phrase is singular, not plural! What does that mean? It means that the "fruit of the Spirit" are a package deal. It is a matter of all or nothing! We don't pick and

choose the ones we like or find easy to practice...and ignore the rest. The “fruit of the Spirit” is to be cultivated and seen in the lives of believers.

What is the “fruit of the Spirit”? In our scripture reading Paul lists the fruit:

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

We have learned that when the Spirit fills us, we have all there is to have. The Spirit gives us his best, but how the Spirit’s best is used is dependent on our obedience and willingness to turn our lives over to Jesus! We won’t be forced into service for the kingdom. It is this obedience and willingness to give control of your life and even your temperament to the Holy Spirit that allows the fruit of the Spirit to develop within you. This development is what allows you to become more and more like Jesus daily!

Jesus actually told us this would happen in John 13:34-35:

³⁴ So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. ³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

QUICK DEFINITIONS

So what should you expect to see in your life as the fruit of the Spirit ripen:

LOVE – Agape love, self-sacrificial love that seeks God’s highest and best for every person you with whom you come in contact.

JOY – Happy contentment because of your assurance that God is in control of life and all that happens.

PEACE – a serenity because a believer knows that they belong to God in Christ and that God is in control of everything that happens. Paul summed up true peace in Romans 8:38-39:

³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. ³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

PATIENCE – sometimes listed as forbearance or longsuffering. Being slow to anger. We choose to show this to others because God has always been patient with us.

KINDNESS – compassion in attitude and action, based on God's kindness to us.

GOODNESS – grace and agape love towards others, even if might cause pain at the outset.

FAITHFULNESS – the quality of being consistent, steadfast, and completely trustworthy. Someone who can be relied upon.

GENTLENESS – also known as “meekness.” The world often shows meekness as being wishy-washy. The picture you get when you look at the Greek is the idea of “power under control.” Think of the great warhorses of ancient days that are controlled by a tiny bit in its mouth. It is “power harnessed for God's service.”

SELF-CONTROL – self-discipline, temperance, self-mastery so that we can accomplish God's will. Giving your will over to God's will.

Life is about balance. One characteristic should not be practiced in such a way that the other characteristics are runover or excluded. Notice that the fruit of the

Spirit are all about reflecting how God treats us. The fruit are not contingent on external circumstances...but when practiced...help us get through trials and tribulations. We are works in progress. We won't be perfect in our character this side of heaven...but are you striving to practice the fruit of the Spirit every day! The Holy Spirit has made it possible for us to leave behind our character flaws that so often define us and rise above to be the reflection of Jesus Christ. This is our true self, our true story, and so often stated today...our truth. The Christians "truth" is always "God's truth." Any attempt to turn from "God's truth" is to live a lie and fall into disobedience.

May the "fruit of the Spirit" grow in our lives and ripen so that the world may truly see Jesus in each one of us!

Let's pray...