

PP Root to Fruit! *Going Deep, Growing Up*

Part 3-Galatians 5:22, *Love*

1/20-21/2018

What do you want people to say about you when you are no longer on this earth?

What do you want your grave stone to say when you die?

When Mary Dolencie died in 1985, she expressed clearly what was in her heart toward her neighbors that lived in her housing association called Whaling Port

She was a cat lady, and in my experience, cat lovers, contrary to dog-lovers, tend to have a vicious streak lurking deep within them

Mary came to believe that her neighbors had it in for her, complaining about the number of cats she had and how she attracted pigeons to the area by feeding them.

PP To get revenge, she had a curse engraved on her tombstone—kind of catty don't you think
Anyone who reads this would come away believing this was a bitter, resentful woman

So how do you want people to view you?

What would you hope those who knew you best would say at your funeral?

I think the greatest statement about our lives is that *We loved well*

Think on that for a moment...when you boil it all down to its most important essence, is there really anything more lofty, more central to the bible than we loved well?

PP 1-What is this fruit?

“But the fruit of the Spirit is...”

Last week we saw what the desires of the flesh look when they are all grown up...15 snapshots of horror

“Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.” Galatians 5:19-21

If you ever wanted to build a character profile of the devil, we just read it, because each of these describes his utterly depraved disposition

Notice the first word in verse 22... ***'But'***

In a massive contrast Paul is going to show us a profile of Jesus' character, 9 perfect virtues

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” 5:22-23

It was just last fall that we finished our look at the Sermon on the Mount, and that series began by looking at the beatitudes

Do you recall that I said that they are snapshots of the character of Christ?

If you want to know what Jesus was like as a person, what His heart was like...there it was

But now, we have another look at a list, this time a group of 9 virtues

And a connection that is seldom made is that these virtues in their perfection are beautiful, clear pictures of what God is like

Friends, don't you want to know God so well that He becomes closer than your brother or sister
That you know how He will answer before you ask?

That you hear His voice through His Scriptures in your mind throughout the day?

That when you are with people, they know, you have been with the Lord?

The first and foremost truth we learn from Paul's list of virtues is exactly what God is like in the perfection of His character

Do you want to know the aim of the Spirit of God in you Christian?

He is transforming us to be and live like Jesus, and He is doing this from the inside out as we walk by and with Him

And as we walk with the Spirit, being led by Him, this is increasingly what our hearts will look like

PP 2-Why is it fruit and not fruits?

“But the fruit of the Spirit is...”

In the list of vices, we saw they were ***‘the works of the flesh’***, giving the idea that our flesh capably strives and strains for the fulfillment of self and domination of others

PP *“Make the most of yourself...for that is all there is of you.”* --Ralph Waldo Emerson

We're able to produce these deeds in and of our own power

But that idea of straining and striving isn't part of understanding what the Spirit is doing

And by the use of the word ***‘fruit’***, Paul makes it clear that we are not capable of producing it in our own effort or power

The 9 virtues Paul lists are the result of a heart rooted in the Spirit, or better put, the Spirit rooted in the heart of a believer as he or she walks by the Spirit

But it's important to understand that the Greek tense of the word ***‘fruit’*** is singular

Not *fruits*, not plural like it was with the ***‘works of the flesh’***

When we think of fruit as a singular group, we tend to use the word fruit with no 's'

You should eat five servings of fruit and vegetables every day, or Fruit is good for your health, or There isn't much fresh fruit available in winter

If we want to emphasize different kinds of fruit, then we use *fruits*

My three favorite fruits are bananas, melons and strawberries, or This juice is made from a variety of fresh fruits

Paul is not emphasizing for us different kinds of fruit, but rather the group of fruit

It's like a farmer bringing the harvest in...meaning the corn, alfalfa, hay, soybeans, etc.

While the Spirit gives each Christian spiritual gifts in different measures, He is working to cultivate all the spiritual fruit in each believer to their fullest measure

I may say that I don't have the gift of hospitality, and that is okay because the Spirit didn't give it to me

But no one can say of any of these 9 virtues that it's okay not to have one in their lives

There is one fruit, one harvest, the character of Jesus, described here with a sample list of 9 traits

And I want you to know, with confidence that all three Persons of the Godhead, Father, Son and Spirit are working to bring about this harvest of fruit

PP ***“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.”*** Romans 8:9

What an amazing truth...we are free from the enslaving power of the flesh, and we live in the Holy Spirit, and He along with the Father, and the Son are in us working to change us

PP 3-But why is love first?

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love...”

Every word in the bible is important, even the order of the words

Love heads the list, it is the greatest of the 9, and the foundation of all of them

Love is the primary characteristic of all the traits listed here by Paul

We have been set free from the power of sin and set free for a life of...love

PP *‘love’* is from the Greek word agape which is a word the NT writers breathed life into

PP It describes the deliberate effort to seek only what is best for others, even for those who seek the worst for us

It is a love that has no selfishness, completely directed to another

It is not emotional love, but a love you choose, whether you feel like it or not

We don’t fall into this kind of love, and we don’t fall out of it either...it is a love we determine to have toward another

Unbelievers can experience friendship love, sexual love and parental love, but only believers can experience agape love, for it is poured by the Spirit into our hearts

PP *“God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”* **Romans 5:5**

And Paul describes what this fruit looks like, but what does this love look like in action?

PP *“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”* **1 Corinthians 13:4-8a**

Do we have this love in us is easily answered by asking ourselves or others of us:

Am I patient and kind; am I envious and humble and polite; am I okay at not getting my way and right down the line

PP 4-How do we grow in our love?

Paul gives the key in chapter 5, *“walk by the Spirit...led by the Spirit...fruit of the Spirit...”*

There’s a misunderstanding about the 10 Commandments, as well as the entire Law of God

Many Christians believe that the Law was awful, and now that we live after the New Testament, good riddance to it

They have come to believe it is irrelevant to the Christian, locked in the dust of the OT

The truth is, the 10 Commandments, and the entire Law of Moses, can be boiled down to one command...love

PP *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”* **Matthew 22:37-40**

How unthinkable would it be that since we live in the age of grace, we can murder, or worship another God, or covet, or lie or commit any sin with freedom?

The truth is Christian, the Law of God is what James called, *‘the law of liberty’* **1:25**

Christ’s freedom that we gained from His death and resurrection was the freedom from the

penalty and power of sin, and a freedom *for* loving God and others more than ourselves

Jesus Christ gained our freedom, the Spirit of God enables us to live in it

To tell the truth rather than lie, to worship God rather than an idol, to keep His name holy not take it in vain, to be generous rather than covet

He floods our hearts with new desires as we walk with Him, root to fruit

Life change comes from heart change as we walk by the Spirit

We surrender to Him, trust in His power to gain us victory, putting the deeds of the flesh to death

Beginning every day remembering there is a war taking place in our hearts between the Spirit and our flesh

Recognizing the goal of our flesh is to carry us away to sin

But the Spirit interrupts that journey, unveils the desires in their hideous detail, and disempowers them with new desires

PP *“The Holy Spirit is not given to those who have it all together spiritually. He is given to enable us to get it together spiritually.”*¹ Erwin Lutzer

5:16 didn't say that if we stop carrying out the desires of the flesh we will walk by the Spirit, but *‘walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.’*

But remember, our freedom is from the penalty and power of sin, and for a life of love

“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Galatians 5:13

¹Erwin Lutzer, How to Say No to a Stubborn Habit