

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22-23

Scripture Reading: Galatians 5:16-26

Intro: I doubt if anyone who tries to teach what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit, is ever satisfied with what he, or she, has done. Every subject in the Bible is amazing. The Bible is the most wonderful book that has ever been printed in any language. I don't know what the statistics are, but the Bible probably has the record for having been printed in more languages than any other book that has ever been written.

For several weeks now we have been looking at what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit. We have learned that the Holy Spirit is a Person. He is one of the Members of the Trinity, and He has the same attributes as God the Father, and as the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the first individual Member of the Godhead to be mentioned in the Bible, and five verses from the end of The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ He is mentioned for the last time. And there are hundreds of times that He is mentioned throughout the Bible.

The Holy Spirit is the Member of the Godhead Who has given us the Bible. Every writer of Scripture spoke, or wrote, as He was directed to write by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was active in the death of Christ. We are told in Hebrews 9:13 and 14 tell us this:

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

And so the Holy Spirit had a major part in giving us the Gospel.

It was the Holy Spirit Who convicted us of our sin, and showed us our need of Christ. If you are saved, you were born again by the Holy Spirit of God. It is the Holy Spirit Who teaches us the Word, and then He brings to our remembrance what He has taught us. And so He is the One Who has supervised our growth in the Lord. We have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We have been sealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit. We have been baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ, the Church. And we have been commanded by the Scriptures to be filled with the Spirit as the normal way for every Christian to live in fellowship with God and with Christ. The Holy Spirit leads, blessing us when we are obedient to

the Word, rebuking us when we stray away from the truth, and He is the One Who restores us to our fellowship with the Lord. The Holy Spirit is the One Who empowers us to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world. The Holy Spirit restrains sin in the world. If He didn't, life in this world would be impossible because of the sinful condition of the human race. We are coming up to our national Thanksgiving Day this week. One Person all of us should be thankful for is the Holy Spirit. He and God, our heavenly Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Lord, ought to be at the very top of our list for thanksgiving. I'm not satisfied just to call this coming Thursday, Thanksgiving Day; for those of us who know the Lord it should be Thanksgiving to God Day – meaning Thanksgiving to God our Father, to Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, and to the Holy Spirit, thanksgiving for Who They are, and for what They have done, and what They are doing, and for what They will still do for us before we all get to heaven.

Clearly the study of the Holy Spirit alone can keep us busy until we leave this earth and are taken to heaven.

The Message

Today I want to begin a study of what is called in the Bible, “the fruit of the Spirit.” And the main Scripture verses on this glorious subject were in our Scripture reading this morning: Galatians 5:22 and 23. Perhaps you remember also these words in the book of Ephesians which speak of the fruit of the Spirit. Listen to what Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:8-10:

8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

So we can say that “the fruit of the Spirit” is one way of showing us what is pleasing to God.

But if you will give a little thought to this expression you will see that these characteristics describe for us a godly character. Or, to state it another way, these two verses in Galatians 5 describe for us what holiness is. But could I take it a step further, and a step much higher, but saying that for these characteristics to be “the fruit of the Spirit,” not natural to us, but produced in your life and mine by the Holy Spirit, that we can see in these words even a portrayal of the character of the Members of the

Godhead Themselves. We must never forget that the Lord did not save us just to forgive our sins (although I am sure you would agree with me that that would be much more than any of us deserves). Nor did He save us just to take us to heaven (although this, too, will be far more wonderful to us then than it possibly can be to us now). None of us would want to give up that aspect of our salvation. And the worse that conditions get here on earth, the more we look forward to heaven, don't we?). *But the main reason that the Lord saved us is to make us like His Son.* And we must never forget this. Let me give you a few verses from Romans chapter 8 which we all need to keep remembering every day. Here they are. You know the first verse I am going to read, and we all should know the others too:

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Rom. 8:28-30).

In 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and 14, Paul stated it this way:

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Apostle John stated it this way, and perhaps this is the clearest of all. And now I am reading from 1 John 3:2-3:

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Now let me bring these three passages of Scripture together by asking three questions. First, what does it mean that we are going to be conformed to the image of God's Son? Second, what does it mean that we will obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ? Third, what does it mean that we shall be like Him, like the Lord Jesus Christ?

The answer to all three of those questions is the same. It means that God has saved us to make us like the Lord Jesus Christ. But what do the Scriptures mean by that? Are we all going to look like the Lord Jesus Christ outwardly? Well, yes, in one way we are. We are, as Paul declared in Philippians 3:20 and 21 going to have bodies “fashioned like His glorious body.” *But when the Apostle Paul spoke of “the fruit of the Spirit,” he was speaking of what we are going to be like inwardly. He was talking about a complete character change.*

The first chapter of the first book of the Bible, Genesis, tells us that when it came to the creation of man, the Members of the Godhead said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” You will find that in Genesis 1:26. He didn’t say that about any of the birds, animals, or fish – only about Adam and Eve. So what we are seeing in salvation, in the Gospel, is the working out of God’s original purpose for mankind, that man should become more and more like God. It is recorded in Psalm 82:6 that God said of human beings, “Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.” He meant that all people are children of the most High by creation. God made man in His image, and intended that man would become more and more like Himself, like his Creator. And our Lord Jesus quoted from Psalm 82 in John 10 when the Jewish leaders with whom He was speaking took up stones to stone Him because He had claimed that God was His Father. Let me read to you from John 10:32 and following to see how the Lord used Psalm 82:6 where the Lord was answering those who were ready to stone Him for blasphemy:

32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of

their hand (John 10:32-39).

So the Lord was speaking to those Jews about the original purpose of the Members of the Godhead in creation, a purpose which was ruined by man's sin, and yet a purpose which was to be fulfilled through the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ Himself, a man in human flesh, was the Example of what the redeemed would be here on earth, and through all eternity, not Gods with a capital "G," but gods because through salvation God's original purpose would be realized in those of us who have been chosen of God to be saved.

Remember: We will never be Deity, but outwardly and inwardly we shall be like Him. So, when you think of "the fruit of the Spirit," think of the Lord Jesus. And even think of Him in His relationship with the Holy Spirit while He was here on earth. The Holy Spirit came upon Him when He was baptized by John (Matt. 3:13-17), and Luke (4:1) tells us that He was filled with the Holy Spirit as He faced temptation by Satan, and as He began His public ministry. I don't know why the Lord needed the help of the Spirit in His humanity, but He did! And yet as far as I know it is never explained for us in the Word. So let us just believe it and revel in it. Perhaps it will help us even more to understand how much we need the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Now I want to call your attention to the word "fruit" in Galatians 5:22. If you will consult your dictionary you will find that there are several meanings to this word, *fruit*.

Probably its most common usage has to do with apples, oranges, pears, plums, etc. – fruit that is grown on trees which we eat. We used to speak of children as being the fruit of a marriage. But the words that fit best with our text are the words result, or product, or outcome. When the Spirit led Paul to write about His fruit, he was saying that these are not the outcome of what we do, but these are the results of the Holy Spirit's work in us. They are mentioned so that we will give, hopefully, our full cooperation to the Spirit of God in connection with whatever He may be doing in our lives. But the Spirit does the work, and it is to the Spirit that all of the glory must be given. Traces of these may be found in us because we were made in the likeness of God, but they never reach their fullest and richest expression except with those who know the Savior and so are indwelt by the Spirit of God. Sin is what stands in the way, and the only remedy for sin is in the saving grace of God. Remember sin is our

obstacle that stands in the way of being what God wants us to be, and so doing what God want us to do. As our passage this morning has told us, it is only by walking in the Spirit that we are going to overcome the lusts of the flesh, and as we walk in the Spirit, the Spirit works within us to produce the godly characteristics which are so pleasing to God, and which bring into our lives the blessing of God. As our passage indicates, there is a war going on within us – the Spirit against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit. And this keeps us from being what we want to be, and what we need to be. But it is through the Spirit, and only through the Spirit, that our lives can be changed. It is the fruit of His work within us.

But let me make one more point before I close. Have you noticed that the word “fruit” is singular? It is “the fruit of the Spirit is,” not *the fruits of the Spirit are*. *This is one fruit!* This means that the Spirit of God is working on all of these all of the time. They are nine parts of one holy character which in turn leads to a holy life.

Concl: Now I am going to ask you to do several things. First, if you don't know Galatians 5:22 and 23, please learn them. And then I want you to be looking for these words as you do your regular Bible reading. I feel that these two verses are a gold mine of spiritual truth. I am not saying how long I will be in these verses, but I hope and pray that you will benefit from them like I already have, and like I expect to benefit more and more as we look into them in greater detail. And the Holy Spirit will not only enable us to understand what they mean, but He will show us how they can be incorporated into our lives. We all need the fruit of the Spirit in a greater measure in our lives. And we will learn more perfectly that that which pleases God is what will bring the greatest blessing into our lives. So let's look forward to a good time together under the ministry of the Holy Spirit.