



The Fruit of the Spirit – Love and Joy

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Introduction:

Over the next 4 weeks we are going to look at the fruit or evidences of the spirit filled life.

Last Sunday was Pentecost Sunday. God's Word teaches us that we are to be filled with the Spirit. It teaches us several things about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, comforts, convicts, counsels, and conveys truth. Scripture indicates that we are to walk in the Spirit, and allow the gifts of the Spirit to operate in our lives.

God's Word also teaches us what the evidence or manifestation of the Spirit looks like and how it is expressed in our lives. Over the next few Sunday mornings, we will be talking about the fruit of the Spirit and the way it is seen.

As we begin I want to make it clear that even though we are followers of Jesus Christ, and even though Jesus is alive through the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we still have to struggle with the flesh and at times the works of the flesh manifest themselves.

In the 5th chapter of his letter to the Galatians, Paul contrasts the fruit of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. In each of our lives we have experienced both the evidence of the flesh and the spirit. The manifestation of the flesh works destruction and death. The manifestation of the spirit is that which brings life and builds up. When Paul writes about the works of the flesh, or the way the flesh manifests itself, he is not talking about this body, but about the sinful nature that has to come under the authority and dominion of God's Spirit.

From creation, to the present time, we see the nature of flesh is selfish, proud, haughty, angry, and destructive. Paul points this out in Galatians 5:19-21. The works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit are as diverse as light and darkness, love and hatred.

In our text, Paul points out the difference between the flesh and the spirit but also makes us aware that the things of flesh are works – toil, acts, labor. These are dead things. No matter what human beings have worked at accomplishing, there is nothing we have made or worked at that has created life or has life in it. Geneticists are working on that, but they have not been able to create life. Clone it, yes, manipulate the DNA, and structure of cells, yes, but create something that lives, never. Only God can create life.

You can not have fruit without life. A couple of weeks ago I purchased some raspberry bushes. If those bushes did not have life in them, there would be no raspberries on them, but the fruit is evidence that there is life there. It is the Spirit who is a vitalizing power and the presence of the spirit is known by the fruit it produces. The person who yields to the flesh becomes a victim of certain appetites and lusts, but the person who yields to the virtues of the Spirit manifests the life of the Spirit within.

There are nine attributes that Paul lists here which are capable of being visible in everyday life. Some of you are saying, "I should have all of these in my life?" If the Spirit of Christ lives within you, then all the fruit will be growing in your life.

The two characteristics of the life of the Spirit that we are going to look closely at this morning are love and joy.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

The word fruit here literally means something that is plucked or seized. It is something that is tangible, something that one can seize and take hold of.

Our focus here at CLF is to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. By devoting ourselves to God, allowing Him to fill us with His Holy Spirit, there should be tangible things others can grasp or seize or take hold of from our lives.

I. THE FRUIT OF LOVE

The word, **agape**, from Greek, means *affection* or *benevolence*; charity

Love is the primary demand of the Christian faith. On the night which Jesus was betrayed he gave His followers a new commandment, and that was that we love one another. Jesus also told His disciples that it would be the way in which they loved each other that all men would be able to identify them as His followers. The fruit of the Spirit is a distinguishing characteristic of the nature and life of Christ within.

1 John 4:7-8

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

John says that whoever loves is born of God and knows God, and whoever does not love is not born of God, because God is love. The Christian life is one that is characterized by love, and without the Spirit of God there is no use pretending that we have love.

I Corinthians 13 gives us a wonderful picture of love. This scripture indicates, that we can have the gift of the Holy Spirit such as prophecy and even give our body to be burned, but without love those manifestations are worthless, and without love, even the things

we say that are prompted by the spirit are meaningless.

I have come to the understanding that you and I do not have the ability in our strength, to love like I Cor 13 tells us to love. Fruitfulness is the end result of life, nutrients and moisture. The fruit comes from the Spirit of God, and is not something you and I can create or manufacture. It is the outgrowth of the life and nature of Christ within. God's Spirit takes up residence in a life and that life can either nurture His Spirit and allow it to live and be seen, or it can be suppressed and demonstrate the works of the flesh.

Romans 13:10

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Love is not something we grit our teeth and do! I'm going to love that person if it kills me! Does a tomato plant grit its teeth and say, I'm going to produce tomatoes? Absolutely not. It is the nature of that plant to bear fruit that is the offspring of that plant, and it reproduces after its kind. So it is with the fruit of the spirit. GOD IS LOVE. If we invite the Spirit of God to fill us and live within us, then the fruit of His nature will be grasped and be manifested through the things we say and do.

Galatians 5:14

The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

When we love properly, the whole law is kept. We will not lie, steal, covet, commit adultery, break the Sabbath rest, honor our parents, love God, not have any idols etc.

When I talk about love - affection, benevolence or charity, not only do I mean those things toward God, but I must have affection and charity for myself and others as well. You can't properly love someone else unless you care about and love yourself. I have met countless numbers of people during my years of ministry that have a very poor self esteem. They don't love themselves. It is very obvious and as a

result it is difficult for them to allow the fruit of that love to be directed toward other people.

The fruit of this love is manifested in all relationships. These include love of self, of God, of parents, children, spouses, neighbors, supervisors, work associates, friends, relatives, etc.

II. THE FRUIT OF JOY

The word **chara**, in Greek, means *cheerfulness*, calm *delight* :- gladness, to be exceeding glad

Joy is not based on circumstances. The fruit of joy is that no matter what is happening around me, no matter what has happened to me, I am joyful. How can that be when one has lost a job? How can that be when one has lost a loved one to death?

Philip. 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

We are directed here to rejoice always. That doesn't always happen does it? There are definite times when we don't feel like rejoicing. However if we look closer we will discover that bearing the fruit of the spirit is not based on my feelings, it's a result of the life of Christ being seen from our lives.

David wrote this in Psalm **35:9**. **Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD and delight in his salvation.**

Joy comes from the heart that has been redeemed and that knows a restored relationship with one's creator. Joy comes from knowing God has forgiven, and

Conclusion:

This week our assignment is to let the fruit of love and joy be seen in our lives. We can manifest works of flesh, or we can allow the Holy Spirit to make us productive with fruit that people will grasp. The decision is ours. Wherever you find yourself this week, let the tangible fruit of the Spirit, be produced in your life.

taken the past offenses and they will not be held against us.

One of the things that Mary Ann asked of me when I went to see her this week was that I would pray she would rejoice in the Lord. It is one of the fruits of the spirit.

Isaiah 61:10

I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Is it any wonder that the enemy of our soul will attempt to find ways to destroy this joy in our life? He will attempt through doubt to destroy our joy. He will attempt through temptations to destroy our joy. He knows if he can destroy the fruit of joy in our lives, the strength of the Lord in us is diminished as well. Don't let him do it. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Submit yourself to God. Our source of joy comes from our submission to God.

Other people are looking for evidences that what we claim to be is true. They want to see that we are truly devoted spirit filled followers of Jesus Christ. The fruit of the Spirit is a major way for them to observe the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We have to destroy the works of the flesh, so the fruit of the spirit can be produced and seen.