



The Fruit of the Spirit – Peace and Patience

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Introduction:

This morning we are going to continue our series on the subject of the fruit of the Spirit. Last week we looked at the fruit of love and joy. This morning we will look at the fruit of peace and patience.

Duke University did a study on “peace of mind.” Factors found to contribute greatly to emotional and mental stability are:

1. The absence of suspicion and resentment. Nursing a grudge was a major factor in unhappiness.
2. Not living in the past. An unwholesome preoccupation with old mistakes and failures leads to depression.
3. Not wasting time and energy fighting conditions you cannot change. Cooperate with life, instead of trying to run away from it.
4. Force yourself to stay involved with the living world. Resist the temptation to withdraw and become reclusive during periods of emotional stress.
5. Refuse to indulge in self-pity when life hands you a raw deal. Accept the fact that nobody gets through life without some sorrow and misfortune.
6. Cultivate the old-fashioned virtues - love, humor, compassion and loyalty.
7. Do not expect too much of yourself. When there is too wide a gap between self-expectation and your ability to meet the goals you have set, feelings of inadequacy are inevitable.
8. Find something bigger than yourself to believe in. Self-centered egotistical people score lowest in any test for measuring happiness.

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.

I. THE FRUIT OF PEACE

People are looking for peace. There is turmoil in marriages, in homes, in relationships, on jobs, and people seek for peace in many ways. They try to find it by drinking, by drugs, by relationships, by things, by vacations, by summer cottages, retreats, books. Our text tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is peace. As followers of Christ, who have experienced and discovered the fruit of the Spirit of peace, we have something that people need, and want.

The word peace here comes from a Greek work meaning to join in quietness, rest or peace.

Among the greatest places that the fruit of peace will be observed in someone’s life is when they are in the middle of turmoil or unrest. Watch someone who has lost a loved one. Watch someone who has lost a job. Watch someone who is struggling with a relationship – **DO YOU SEE PEACE IN THEIR LIFE?**

Jesus told His disciples this before he left them – **(John 14:27) Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.**

We have some control over allowing the peace of God to be seen in our lives, or allowing our hearts to be troubled and filled with fear. Our thoughts are to be focused on the things that are lovely, honest, pure, true and of a good report. There is great torment with fear, whereas the peace of God is comforting.

Col. 3:15

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

If you allow fear to dominate your heart and mind it will destroy the fruit of peace in your life. Let me ask you this morning – what is your greatest fear? What is the greatest tormenting thought that comes against your mind and heart? Is it death, loss of a job, ridicule for your faith, rejection of a friend, illness? Can the peace of God be present if that thing you feared happened? IS GOD BIGGER THAN your fear? Where the life of the spirit is, the fruit of that life is rest, quietness and peace.

The peace of God goes beyond all understanding. In fact the peace of God is not only something that others can see as a tangible manifestation of the Spirit's life and work through us, but it also helps our minds and hearts remain restful in that place of quietness.

Philip. 4:7

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The fruit of the Spirit of peace is a very tangible manifestation of the life of the Spirit within the believer, and is something that can be seen by others around us.

II. THE FRUIT OF PATIENCE OR LONGSUFFERING

The word patience comes from the Greek word which means to have fortitude, to forbear, be patient or longsuffering.

If any of you are fishermen or fisherwomen, you know there has to be some longsuffering present in your life. You persevere. You are longsuffering and wait to catch that fish. For those who are golfers, you have to have patience and forbearance with those around you, and also patience to get that little ball in that little hole. Some people just don't like to wait

and so for them fishing or golfing is no fun and they are frustrated because they have to wait.

If we are honest enough to admit it, most of us here at one time in our lives have been pretty impatient. We really don't like to wait. We often give up rather than wait for something patiently. Waiting means I am at the mercy of someone else. Waiting means I have to endure. Being patient means the fortitude is there to see something through to the end.

When we suffer we don't want to wait to the end of the suffering, we want to rebuke suffering out of our life. Too many Christians get the idea that we should not have suffering in our lives if we are followers of Christ. Jesus suffered and in Hebrews 5:8. The word tells us that he learned obedience from what He suffered. Suffering has a place in the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit. Without suffering, there would be no evidence of this fruit of perseverance.

James 1:3-4

... Because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Perseverance, endurance, or patience is a mark of maturity. I believe that there can be fruit of the Spirit as soon as one becomes a follower of Christ, but I also know that bearing fruit takes time.

Romans 5:3-4

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

One way that character is developed in our lives and manifested is from suffering. The character of Christlikeness is something that people should be able to see and grasp in our lives.

In his letter James encourages those in Christ to be patient and firm in the faith waiting for Christ's coming. Listen to his words in James 5:7-8.

James 5:7-8

Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

Those who have farmed or lived on a farm have learned that once the seed is in the ground, all you can do is wait for the fruit. Not one bit of worry, of impatience of fretting can speed up the process of growth or fruitfulness. The crop of fruit comes in when there is maturity and the conditions are right for a harvest.

Hebrews 12:1 tells us to “run with endurance” the race set before us. George Matheson wrote, “*We commonly associate patience with lying down. We think of it as the angel that guards the couch of the invalid. Yet there is a patience that I believe to be harder -- the patience that can run. To lie down in*

the time of grief, to be quiet under the stroke of adverse fortune, implies a great strength; but I know of something that implies a strength greater still: it is the power to work under stress; to have a great weight at your heart and still run; to have a deep anguish in your spirit and still perform the daily tasks. It is a Christ-like thing! The hardest thing is that most of us are called to exercise our patience, not in the sickbed but in the street.” To wait is hard; to do it with “good courage” is harder!

Our Daily Bread, April 8.

Conclusion:

Let me summarize this morning as we bring our focus to a conclusion. I want to encourage you this week to let the peace of God rule in your hearts. Let people see the fruit of the peace of God. Let people see the patience and endurance especially in the middle of stress, and suffering. The fruit of peace and patience needs to be seen in spite of the conditions around your life. Let Christ prune the fear from your mind and heart so that your peace is not destroyed.

As our life continues in Christ, and the work and fruit of the spirit are developed within, the end should be better than the beginning. Allow God to have His way with you. He knows what will cause the development of the fruit of His Spirit in your life.