

Bringing Heaven to Earth: Part 4

Expressing Heaven's Virtues

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A brief recap from our last few Sundays:

1. A Glimpse of Heaven: Understanding what Heaven is right now
 2. Accepting God's will: Having a change in our thinking that produces a paradigm shift. This change brings our hearts in line with God's heart.
 3. Executing Heavenly Mandates: Carrying out our greatest commandment to love the Lord God with all of our minds, soul, heart, and strength. And a second command to love our neighbors as ourselves.
- What have you been looking for spiritually that you haven't seen taken place within your life yet? The Spirit of the Lord declares that He opens and closes doors that man cannot fathom. His timing is purposeful and because of your obedience, this seed will bring forth the more that He has placed within your Spirit. Because of the promise of more, His word is everlasting! Take this few moments remaining to prepare your heart for the seed. This preparation is your intentional actions that will produce the harvest to ready the multitude for His return. Harvest time is upon us.

In Part 4 we will move on to our next part of the processing in Bringing Heaven to Earth. We will be highlighting the perspective of "Expressing Heaven's Virtues".

Expressing means to reveal, communicate, or make visible through one's being and behavior.

Virtues means positive character traits of moral excellence.

As we spoke about last week that our obedience is the proof if we love God. If we love God then we will execute heavenly mandates without question. But how about when the going gets tough? When we aren't seeing the results of our labor? Here is where the next step comes in. Turn with me to Galatians 5:16-17

Galatians 5:16–17 ESV

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

The greek word for walk means to live or behave in a customary manner with the focus of continual action. We referenced last week about obedience is a requirement whether it's favorable or not. Regardless of our situation, obedience is the standard for our position. If we live by obedience we will follow the Spirit of God and we will not gratify our flesh. So what does the flesh look like? What parts of the flesh are we guilty of succumbing to? Paul gave us a list:

Galatians 5:19–21 ESV

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Sexual Immorality: Fornication, Adultery, Homosexuality, Prostitution. Any form of illicit sexual relationship. The word pornography is derived from this greek word.

Impurity: lustful thoughts and use of sexual humor

Sensuality: Pornography, Licentious, Lasciviousness (The inappropriateness of lawless and immoral sexual conduct) Open and excessive sexual sins

Idolatry: Anything placed before God

Sorcery: The use of drugs and or the practice of casting spells. Manipulating other

Enmity: Hatred or Hostility

Strife: Rivalry and discord. Always saying bad things against others or not having anything good to say to someone. Seeds and fruit of hatred

Jealousy: feelings of resentment

Anger: ignition of fury, wrath, rage. Outburst of fits for selfish reasons

Rivalries: selfish ambitions, self centered, conceited, egotistical. One who cares about oneself above others. Work that tries to get ahead at other people's expense

Dissensions: division and discord. To cause people to be angry with another. To paint a picture that will cause someone to not like another person.

Divisions: heresy, one who is effectuated with their own opinion. One who rejects truth

Envy: A desire to possess something awarded to or achieved by another. Or even the twisted logic that cries "Unfair!"

Drunkenness: to be a drunkard, the practice of being drunk

Orgies: drinking parties involving unrestrained indulgence in alcoholic beverages and sexual promiscuity

This list is not an exhaustible list. Paul continues that if we practice this list and things just like this will, that we will not inherit the Kingdom of God. That declaration is not only for the future reference but the present moment. As we have spoken throughout this series that Heaven is within. The Kingdom of God is within us. And the practice of fleshly desires will cause heaven within us to go dormant. And will eventually cease to exist. Paul brought Heaven to Earth again and again by putting this warning on repeat.

Galatians 5:19 ESV

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident:

Galatians 5:22 ESV

22 But the fruit of the Spirit...

The works of the flesh is combatted by the fruit of the Spirit. The flesh creates chaos from multiple directions when we fall prey to temptation. But the Spirit leads us to the one way to heaven. We have all heard from society that there is more than one way to Heaven but this contradicts scripture. Jesus said that He is the way. The works of the flesh lead us away but the fruit of the spirit brings unity between us and Heaven.

Galatians 5:22–23 NLT

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!

Love: Agape, unconditional love, self-sacrificing and unchanging

Joy: an inner rejoicing that abides despite of the outer circumstances

Peace: inner quietness and trust in God's sovereignty and justice, even in the face of adversity

Patience: long-suffering, self-restraint before proceeding to action. The quality of a person that is able to sustain themselves but refrains from doing so.

Kindness: Acting charitably, benevolently toward others, as God did toward us. Kindness takes the initiative in responding to other people's needs.

Goodness: Reaching out to do good to others, even if they don't deserve it. Goodness does not react to evil but absorbs the offense and responds with positive action

Faithfulness: Reliable and trustworthy

Gentleness: Humble, considerate of others, submissive to God and His word. Even when anger is the appropriate response, gentleness keeps anger heading in the right direction

Self-Control: Mastery over sinful human desires and their lack of restraint, to exercise control over one's desires

1 Corinthians 13:4–7 ESV

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

A majority of this list falls under the umbrella of love. If we have not love then the rest is in vain.

As each virtue on this list hits our heart we must meditate on the surrealness that Paul stated the word fruit for a reason. We all know that fruit comes from something that is planted. We know that it is a seed and that there is a process. Executing Heavenly Mandates is the preparation and planting of these seeds. We go from doing God's work to being God's work. Expressing Heaven's Virtues doesn't supersede Executing Heavenly Mandates it safeguards us from legalism.

Since fruit comes from a seed that means that cultivation must take place before bearing fruit. Fruit requires seasons of growth, pruning, and weathering. A seed does not bear fruit immediately. It is a process. It will take time. But the amount of time it takes depends on a few other factors. Are we planted in the right place? How much sun exposure? How much are we eating? Are we removing the things that will rob the nutrients from our plant? This process is intentional. It requires that we pay attention to our environment and how we tend to what was planted. We enjoy fruit but do we

think about what it takes to produce it? Growth of fruit requires obedience and surrender. And we have spoken about this truth in first parts of this series.

Teachability is another factor that is foundational to the process because the fruit of the spirit isn't instantaneous or passive. It emerges through a deliberate process of receptivity to divine correction and instruction.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 NLT

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. 17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

When we neglect this process within our lives we will not witness the fruit that we have been called to express. Our fruit is bringing heaven to earth. The discipline of being corrected within our wrong shows our humility. It is the all scripture that teaches us truth. It is the all scripture that shows us the error of our ways. Paul stated just a few sentences later in 2 Timothy 4:2

2 Timothy 4:2 ESV

2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

When we hear the word of God preach there are three areas that is used to equip people. Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort. Which of these words are we comfortable with? Let's look a little closer:

- Reprove: to convict, to show to be wrong, to convince of error, to bring correction of wrong
- Rebuke: to warn, to place urgency upon, to point out
- Exhort: to aid, help, comfort, encourage

The word we hear preached must bring conviction and point out sin. It must warn us of the repercussions of sin. And it must also encourage and comfort us.

If we were to divide a single dollar bill into 3 parts, how much would each part be? Thirty three percent. Each part would represent a third. And Paul charge Timothy to preach by the reference of these three part. These three areas is how we become equip to Bring Heaven to Earth. When we are not receiving all three then the balance is out of wack. So I ask the question again, Which of these three areas are we

comfortable with? As humans we would gravitate to constant encouragement. We want to hear about how we are doing it right and how successful we are being. We don't want the corrective portion. But when we refuse two thirds we fall into the bracket that Paul spoke of next.

2 Timothy 4:3–4 NLT

3 For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will reject the truth and chase after myths.

Bearing fruit is not a one time process. It's ongoing, it continues and multiplies. But to assure that it remains, continues, and multiplies, it must be pruned.

John 15:1–8 NLT

1 "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. 3 You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. 5 "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. 7 But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

This is where the three areas of God's word comes into play. This is where the correction, warning, and encouraging happens. By surrendering ourselves to the word of God, His spirit, and discipline we allow the fruit of the spirit to shape our character to become the Expression of Heaven's Virtues. We cannot neglect the work of the Holy Spirit in this next step. When we understand that this is a process and it must take place over time, we are moving into the more that God has called each of us to in this end time harvest by Bringing Heaven to Earth.

1 Peter 1:6–7 NLT

6 So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. 7 These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much

praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

These trails produce the fruit of the Spirit. They show the genuineness of our faith just like fire burns away what is not gold.

Let me pray with you today!