

The Holy Spirit
Fruit of the Spirit
Galatians 5:16-25

November 18, 2018 a.m.

HDBC

While walking through the countryside, Jesus had many occasions to observe farmers in action. He saw the Springtime preparation of the soil and planting of the seed. He observed that some seeds took root and produced good fruit. Others did not. He often used the process of farming to reveal spiritual truth.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus revealed an expectation that we would produce fruit in our lives. The fruit which comes out of our lives is an indication of what is happening on the inside. Just as the apple is a reflection of the tree, the fruit of my life is a reflection of who I am.

Fruit is mentioned in 24 of 27 books of New Testament. Important truth.

Read Galatians 5:16-25

1. The Battle (16-18)

The call is to **walk by the Spirit**, under the influence and leadership of the Spirit. Another way of saying *be filled with the Spirit*. The issue is **control**. Allow Him to be in charge. The solution is **surrender** of our will to His.

Sounds simple, but it is not. In our lives are two opposing realities: our sinful, unholy humanity and the divine Holy Spirit. Paul makes it clear that these two are in a battle that will last until our bodies are laid in the ground and we have gone to Heaven.

It's like an old house with a new occupant. As you have heard me say already in this series, the Holy Spirit moves into our lives. When he comes in, He comes in not to be a guest, but to be in charge. His role is to lead us to become more like Jesus. **The flesh says NO!** And the battle rages!

The appetites and cravings toward sin are still present. This sets up a royal battle. These two opposing sides squaring off against each other on a daily basis. **Like two football teams** squared off against each other. Before each play they line up across from each other. When the ball is snapped one side wants to advance and the other does everything they can to keep them from advancing. Whatever one side does, the other opposes it.

The reformer, John Calvin put it well; *The spiritual life will not be maintained without a struggle. Disobedience and rebellion against the Spirit of God pervade the whole nature of man. If we would obey the Spirit, we must labor, and fight, and apply our utmost energy; and we must begin with self-denial.*

This all-out war between the Spirit and our flesh is unrelenting. You will not always win the battle against the flesh. That's when we confess, regroup and once again surrender to the Holy Spirit. **Let's acknowledge the battle!**

Paul then moves to point out the two outcomes. When we walk in the flesh we can expect certain outcomes. When we walk in the Spirit we can expect a totally different outcome. Let's look at them.

2. The Outcomes (19-23)

In the next few verses we see opposite outcomes. We see the ugliness of allowing the flesh to control our lives and we see the beauty of allowing the Spirit to be in charge. Paul begins with what happens when we yield to the longings of the flesh and push the Holy Spirit to the background.

1) Deeds of the Flesh (19-21)

Paul lists no less than 15 concrete examples of what happens when the flesh, the old self is in charge. **You get the impression** that Paul could have listed more. No need in examining each one individually. I don't think that was Paul's intention. Examples, not a full listing.

Instead he has painted with a broad brush a picture of the ugly results of living by the flesh. We can see four major areas of sin in his list

a. Sexual sins

Adultery, homosexual practices, pornography, prostitution.

b. Religious sins

Occult practices, worshipping false gods, new age beliefs

c. Social sins

Things that are destructive to families, communities and churches.

Slander, gossip, bearing grudges, taking revenge, refusing to forgive.

d. Personal sins

Sins against the body like drunkenness, drug addiction, gluttony and other forms of self-destructive behavior.

Those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Does this mean that those who fall into any of things sins will lose their salvation? No. Christ has forgiven us of all our sins, past present and future. Paul's point is that those things cannot be acceptable as a lifestyle for those who are born again.

If a person is born again, the Spirit of God is in that person and He will lead that person to confession and repentance. These are things that characterize those who are not saved. If you are saved and fall into any of those things even for a season, the Holy Spirit will push back. If there is no push back, the Spirit is not in you and you are not saved.

2) Fruit of the Spirit (22-23)

Note some important things about the fruit of the Spirit.

a. It is Singular

These qualities are a unity, like a bunch of grapes, rather than a bag of separate kinds of fruit. All are produced together.

b. It is Recognizable

Fruit reflects the character of the plant. Apples hanging on branches

make it clear that the tree is an apple tree. The fruit of our lives is a reflection of what is guiding our lives. If we are led by the Spirit, the fruit will be the things flowing out of the character and nature of the Spirit. That's why they are positive and good.

c. It is for Others

One final thing to remember is that fruit is not for the plant but for others. The tree does not benefit from the fruit produced by that tree. The fruit of the Spirit blesses God and benefits others around us. Every one of the nine things mentioned will positively impact others.

I love what Paul wrote at the end of verse 23. ***Against such things there is no law.*** What does that mean? When we are walking by the Spirit we are not subject to the law. We don't need to worry about a list of rules and regulations to follow. We simply follow His promptings.

3. The Plan (24-25)

So, what is the plan? How can we ensure that the fruit of the Spirit will be seen in our lives? You can't do it by focusing solely on those nine character traits and working to produce them. We bear the fruit, we don't produce it. It is the fruit **of the Spirit**. He produces it, in us. But we do play a part. So, what is our part?

1) Remember Your Salvation (24)

The first step is to remember that when you were saved you crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. This is a past reality. Our old nature was crucified with Christ, nailed to the cross with Him.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

When we were saved we died to the old way of life controlled by the flesh and embraced the new life that came in Christ. We repented and

turned away from that. This was a conscious decision we made in trusting Christ. At that moment we were considered to have been crucified with Christ. God applied our guilt to Christ on the cross.

2) **Live Your Salvation (25)**

Paul then comes right back to what he wrote at the beginning of this section. If we live by the Spirit (meaning we have received eternal life by the Spirit) we need to walk by the Spirit. In other words our lifestyle is to be a reflection of who we are in Christ. **Die to self. Yield to the Spirit!**

God uses the Fruit of the Spirit to impact others, who are watching and evaluating, wondering if Christianity is real and for them.

Chuck Colson was standing in a long line in the airport in Jakarta, Indonesia. He and some Prison Fellowship colleagues had been traveling all night. The terminal was hot and steamy, and they were tired. As Chuck related in his book,

Passport in my sticky hand, I was exhausted and exasperated at the long, inefficient line snaking ahead of us. I was worried we would miss our next flight and the ministry friends who were waiting for us. I was also determined not to let my frustration get the better of me. I talked with my friends; we laughed and made the best of the situation.

Two years later, he received a letter from a businessman who lived in Singapore. The man had been a follower of Confucius, but he sent his children to Sunday school at a Presbyterian church. One Sunday, as he picked up his kids, he heard the end of the sermon. A visiting missionary held up a copy of Chuck's first book, *Born Again*. On the cover was a picture of Chuck.

A few months later, this businessman was stuck in a long line in the steaming Jakarta airport. Glancing over into the next line, he spotted the same face he'd seen on the cover of *Born Again*. He was so impressed by Chuck Colson's calm demeanor and cheerfulness that when he got back to Singapore, he got the book, read it, and committed his life to Christ.