

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



Lasting Change

Galatians 5:16-18, 22-25

Sunday, August 25, 2019

God's desire is for us to experience deep and permanent change. He knows that it is most often gradual, but, thankfully, it certainly comes. It is the byproduct of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Galatians 5:16-18

¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For 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. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ESV

IT IS REAL

We cannot possibly avoid change in life. Everything around us is constantly transforming. Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, said, "No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it is not the same river and he is not the same man." This is true because you are changing and the river is changing. Everything you experienced yesterday made you slightly different today. The question is whether that difference good or bad.

God's process for changing us is similar to the way seeds grow into plants and eventually bear fruit. The Holy Spirit is at work producing His character, as revealed in our text.

Galatians 5:22-25

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. ESV

IT IS GRADUAL

The word "fruit" is deliberately used to convey the idea of that which is so gradual that it cannot be observed as it is happening. This is the nature of the plant (botanical) world. We cannot see plants grow, but we know it is happening right before our eyes. We can prove it is happening because we can measure it over time.

Fruit trees have to adjust to all four seasons of a given year. Even in winter, trees grow, but it is not evident to the eye. Just the opposite appears to be true. This is the time, however, when root systems develop and store energy for the spring and summer months when growth is detected by us.

The same is true of you. Even in times of "winter" in your life, you may be growing and do not recognize it. The progress may be internal and so gradual that it is unnoticed.

IT IS INEVITABLE

The Bible makes use of similar imagery in describing the certainty and security of the committed Christian life.

1 Peter 1:23

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. NIV

Also in the Psalms is a description of the ongoing outcome for anyone who chooses to consistently connect to the Lord and His promises.

Psalm 1:1-3

¹Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ²but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. ESV

If the Spirit of God is in you, you will inevitably grow. There is absolutely no power on earth that can stop it from happening.

An acorn under a marble slab gravestone took root, and over many years penetrated and broke it in half. If plant life can do that much damage to a thousand-pound stone, what can the fruit of the Spirit do gradually in your life?