

Fruit of the Spirit - Love

10-12-16

Love a Noun b4 a Verb

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2a Stuff the Bus - teens in crisis. Sheets on sound booth.
- B. Slide2b Pray: God will speak to you tonight. Through His word. By His Spirit.
Are you willing to hear, change, learn, grow tonight? Willing to apply this to your life?

II. Slide3 Intro: Love

- A. * Take a few minutes w/your neighbors & come up with 3 **song titles** that have the word **Love** in them. *Christian or secular.* Ready Go.
- B. Though we all grumble when we are faced w/**tests**, in 1 sense we really want to have them.¹
 - 1. Tests that measure skill, achievement, & knowledge are always found in magazines. [I.Q. tests. Rate yourself as a Lover (Arcades). Sports Quiz. Game shows you follow along with (Jeopardy)] (my sis sent around, I was a Professor status)
 - 2. People want to know **how do we rate**. And **Christians** are no different.
 - a) I'll explain why this is *so difficult* toward the end.
- C. Slide4a Let's talk Fruit-Bearing (note: it is not *service*)
 - 1. These **virtues/attitudes/character traits** are to characterize the Christian life.
 - 2. If we are **filled** w/the Spirit, we will exhibit **the fruit of the Spirit**. [fruit filling]
 - a) **But know this takes time.**
 - 3. These are not superficial character adjustments that happen over night.
 - a) **Very Important:** They involve a reshaping of the innermost dispositions of the heart, which is a lifelong process of sanctification by the spirit.
 - b) Don't go home & try to pop out a fruit. **It's earnestly seek God's Spirit to fill you, reshape you, do an inner makeover.**
- D. Slide4b Fruit is singular – **deeds** (of the flesh) were plural.
 - 1. **Deeds** = what **man** can do.
 - 2. **Fruit** = what **the H.S.** will do as a natural byproduct of His indwelling.
 - 3. **The singular form stresses that these qualities are a Unity.**
 - a) Like a bunch of grapes...not separate pieces of fruit.

¹ R.C.Sproul – adapted from Essentials; pg.245.

4. **Also**, they are **ALL** to be found in Christians.

a) It's not like walking through Albertsons squeezing & selecting which fruit u want.

E. **Slide4c** 1st 3 are **Inner Attitudes** (Sourced in God)

F. **Love** – *The Spirit brings a harvest of love* (Dr. Weymouth)

1. **Slide5 Love**, the fountainhead of all other virtues:

Joy is **love** exulting. Peace is **love** resting. Long-Suffering is **love** enduring.

Kindness is **love** w/bowed head. Goodness is **love** in action. Faithfulness is

love confiding. Gentleness is **love** in refinement. Self-Control is **love** obeying.

III. **Slide6 LOVE**

A. **Slide7 C. S. Lewis** in *The Four Loves* speaks to these 4...

1. **Eros**, a **romantic love** where the lovers are hungry for each other.

2. **Philos**, **friendship love** where 2 people are linked arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder, with a common vision and a common goal and a delight and a partnership pulling together toward the goal.

3. **Storge**, **affection** of a parent/child, or affection that one might have for an old sweater or slippers, an old dog that you just can't let go of.

4. **Agape**, **divine love** characterized by *sacrifice* in the pursuit of another person's good.

a) God's agape love is **not** a sappy, sentimental feeling. God's agape love is unmerited, gracious, and constantly seeking the benefit of the ones He loves.

b) God's love is displayed most clearly at the cross. Eph.2:4,5 *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)*

c) **Slide8** This word **agapao** has little to do with mere emotion; it indicates love which deliberately, by an act of **will**, **chooses** its object, & through thick or thin, regardless of the attractiveness of the object concerned, goes on **loving continually, eternally**.²

d) 1 Cor.13:4-8 msg *Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self.*

Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't

² Alan Redpath, pg. 156.

keep score of the sins of others, Doesn't revel when others grovel, Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end. Love never dies.

B. It's helpful is to divide love into **2 categories**. [from Jonathan Edwards, **but** it goes way back before him]

1. **Slide9 2 Categories**: love of complacency **and** love of benevolence.

a) **The love of complacency** (lit. *to please*) would be, *"I love pizza."* - *"I find myself pleased by the qualities I find in pizza; namely, its taste."*

(1) Or you might love a place **or** a country. You could say you love them because they are *lovely*. They are *pleasing to you*.

b) **The love of benevolence** is *not* based on the loveliness of the object of the love, **but** rather your good will, benevolence, your good will toward the person or the thing that you are loving.

(1) And your aim in that kind of love is to do good, to bring about something beautiful, **not respond to beauty**.

c) This is the kind of love which in Scripture is celebrated as *the heart of God's love*.

(1) So the most beautiful love in the world is **this divine love** that pays the highest price, the life of the Son of God for **completely undeserving enemies**, **to** give us the longest and greatest happiness in His presence. **And he loves doing it**.

d) So, the heart of God's love is **benevolence** toward unworthy people like us **and yet** the ultimate goal of human life is **complacency** in God.

IV. **Slide10 LOVE a NOUN B4 a VERB** (agape b4 agapao)

A. We've heard **Love is a Verb...but Love Is Not Only a Verb**

B. **Slide11** John Mayer's catchy song captures the way many people end up defining love in total: *Love is a Verb*. The problem is that's **not the whole truth**. Love is *not only* a verb.

1. Now, we know what Mayer's getting at. He means that *lip-only love isn't love*. **Love is displayed in action**. That is **true**. The apostle John agrees when he says, **Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed & in truth.** 1Jn3:18

C. **But it's still a massive and potentially dangerous oversimplification.**

1. **Slide12** If we reduce love to **mere action**, we will miss love at its **source**.

2. Making love only a **verb** will likely make us *Pharisees*. Because just like you can *talk loving without really loving*, you can *act loving without really loving*. That's what Paul meant when he said, *If I give away all I have and deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing* (1 Cor.13:3).
- D. Slide13a To understand love correctly, we must see that love originates as a **noun** that *necessarily* produces verbs.
1. *God is love* (1 Jn.4:8). By saying this, John is pointing us to the **origin** of love. In the previous verse, he writes, *love is from God* (1 Jn.4:7).
 2. True love is a **part of** and **comes from** the most beautiful, most valuable, most satisfying Treasure that exists: **God!**
 - a) Love is not merely the **action** of meeting others' needs; it includes the **motive** of the action.
- E. Slide13b So that's where pursuing love begins: *look at the noun b4 you look at the verb*.
1. **Look at the Noun**, gaze at God in His love. Dive into the 1st & greatest commandment (*loving God*)...**before** getting consumed in the 2nd (*loving your neighbor*).

V. Slide14 **FRUIT FACTS**

A. **2 Classes of Fruit**

B. We know there are 2 classes of fruit, *good & bad*. **Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.**

1. **Sin** produces **smelly fruit** in your life. **The H.S.** produces **His fruit** in your life.

2. Slide15 **Durian vs. Bowl of Fruit** at Mountain View...

- a) **Durian**: Smelliest fruit. I'll try anything once (this was the worse).

- (1) It's banned from restaurants in Iloilo PI & on Rapid Transit in Singapore

- b) **Bowl of fruit @ Mountain View** Guest House, in *Chiang Mai*: (w/yogart & Muesli) Fruit was perfectly ripe, smelt fragrant, juicy, it satisfied me the partaker.

C. Slide16 **Fruit Bearing** - We're not called upon to **produce** the fruit **but** simply to **bear** it³

1. You are not manufacturing it yourself. **How does an apple tree bear apples?**

D. Slide17 **Fruit Filling** - How do we know if we are *full of The Spirits fruit?*

³ Roy Hession in The Calvary Road. Christianity Today, Vol. 33, no. 13.

1. Picture a **water-saturated sponge**. If you push down with your finger even slightly, water runs out onto the table. We immediately know what fills the interior pockets of the sponge. The same is true of ourselves. We can tell what fills us **on the inside** by what comes out **under pressure**.
2. Picture a **tea bag**. When you place a tea bag in hot water, it doesn't change, **but** the hot water reveals what was **already in** the tea bag.

E. **Slide18a 3 Problems with trying to rate our Fruit progress:**

F. **Problem #1** We tend to examine our **performance & progress** in **sanctification** by **External** standards.

1. Do we **cuss**? Do we **drink**? Do we go to **R-movies**?
2. These standards are **often** used to measure **spirituality**.
3. **But** you might just end up just a **Moralist**. Same trap the **Pharisees** fell into.
 - a) It's more than what you **don't** do...It's is what you **do** do.
4. So what then is the **real** test? **Answer:** Evidences of the **Fruit of the Spirit** in ones life.
5. So, why **don't** we like **this** test? Because it is too unclear, hazy, vague?
 - a) It is far more demanding of **personal character** than **superficial externals** are.
 - b) It is a lot easier to refrain from **cussing** than it is to acquire a **habit of agape love**.

G. **Slide18b Problem #2** seems to be our preoccupation with **gifts** of the Spirit, **rather than** His **fruit** borne in our lives.

1. Did you know we can possess **gifts** while being **immature** in spiritual progress.
2. 1 Cor.13:1 **Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.**

H. **Slide18c Problem #3** if we'll be honest...is that often we see **unbelievers** doing a much better job **exhibiting**, & to a greater degree **living out**, **gentleness** or **patience** than many Christians.

1. Now, how can they have the **fruit of the Spirit** if they don't have the **Spirit**?
 - a) Well, there is a difference in **Quality**.
 - b) Unbelievers can only exhibit these **spiritual virtues** to the extent of **human ability**.
 - (1) **Fake fruit** can look pretty real these days, **but** ultimately it gets exposed

- I. **Slide19 Banana Analogy: What is this? How do you know?** All you see is the peel. How do you know there's a banana inside?
1. When you buy a **Banana** at the store you buy **the peel**, fully expecting the meat of the banana to be inside. [watermelon/thump sound]
 2. If someone cut you open, or peeled off your outer layer, what would they find?
 3. Only because **God Is Faithful** do you trust there's a banana in there.
 - a) **Everything God creates has Integrity.** And, He expects the same **in you**.
 - b) When I see your peel, are you the same inside???
- J. Is **divine love** a characteristic of my life?
- K. Do I sense **agape love** in my heart?
- L. Have I been able to **incarnate love** in my life?
- M. Do others see **love** exhibited in my life?
- N. Have I been **growing in love** over a period of years?
- O. "To love at all is to be **vulnerable**. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable." C.S.Lewis, The Four Loves