

“The Fruit of the Spirit”
Galatians 5:22-23
(Preached at Trinity, July 14, 2013)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After laboring hard to defend the freedom we have in Christ, in **Verse 13** Paul stresses our responsibility in the Gospel. As I stressed before, freedom doesn’t mean anarchy. The Christian has surrendered his will to Christ. The Christian has thrown down every bastion of independence and has vowed absolute allegiance to Christ.
Paul stresses:
Galatians 5:13 NAU - "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh"
2. The Christian lives his life in submission to the Holy Spirit who dwells in him. Christians are in a fierce battle. Sin is still alive within us. We have fleshly desires that war against our new nature that is governed by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.
Paul describes it:
Galatians 5:17- NAU - "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."
3. In **Verses 19-21** Paul describes the sinful desires of the flesh. These are powerful forces; intense leanings that characterize the nature of lost humanity. Paul says that even after we are saved these desires continue to manifest themselves.
Galatians 5:17 NAU - "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."
4. The Christian is no longer enslaved by the flesh. Although the desires of the flesh are still active we are no longer characterized by these fleshly desires.
This is because the Holy Spirit dwells within us. Paul says:
Galatians 5:16 NAU - "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."
5. The Holy Spirit is a wonderful gift to the Christian. He is given to all of God’s adopted sons.
 - A. In **Chapter 4** Paul described one aspect of His work as assuring us of our adoption into the family of God.
Galatians 4:6 NAU - "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"
Romans 8:14-16 NAU - "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,"
 - B. Now Paul is telling us that the Holy Spirit is the chief agent of our sanctification. He works in us reshaping and transforming our lives and working in us the fruit of obedience.

6. The Holy Spirit's presence in the life of the believer results in the beauty of holiness and the excellence of the character of Christ. Of course, the Christian can hinder the gracious working of the Holy Spirit by careless and worldly living. This is why Paul states emphatically,
Galatians 5:16 NAU - "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."
Galatians 5:25 NAU - "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."
7. In his Epistle to the Ephesians Paul writes,
Ephesians 5:18 NAU - "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,"
8. In **Verses 22-24** Paul describes this Spirit-filled life.
- A. The lost man fulfills the desires of the flesh because it is his nature to do so. He has a rebellious heart. And the Law offers no power for obedience so the sinner is left to the dominion of his own flesh.
Ephesians 2:3 NAU - " Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."
- B. The person filled with the Spirit also does what is natural—that which is natural to the new man.
Matthew 12:33 NAU - "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit."
- C. Life in the Spirit is a radical change from life in the flesh. It is no less significant than having God recreate us.
2 Corinthians 5:17 NAU - "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."
9. In **Verses 16-17** Paul describes the great struggle we still have against our flesh, but we now have the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.
The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of Godliness.
Paul describes this fruit. Just as with the "works of the flesh" the "fruit of the Spirit" here is not an exhaustive list.
11. We are not talking about spiritual gifts. These traits are characteristic of every Christian. The Holy Spirit indwells every Christian. But these fruits do not manifest themselves to the same degree in every Christian. We can hinder His influence in our lives.
10. This morning my sermon will not follow my usual outline form. I simply want us to examine the fruit of the Spirit-filled life. They seem to be in three triads—three closely related groups of three.
- I. Love, Joy, Peace – our attitude towards God
- A. Love – This speaks chiefly of our love for Christ. It is at the heart of our relationship with Christ. It is through this love that we are able to love His people.
John 13:35 NAU - "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
1. Love is ultimately a reflection of Christ's love for us.
1 John 4:16 NAU - "We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."
1 John 4:19 NAU - "We love, because He first loved us."

2. Love gives substance to our faith
Without love our religion is empty and without substance
Every religious act becomes worthless without love.
1 Corinthians 13:3 NAU - "And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing."
 3. Love finds its fullest expression in sacrifice and selflessness. Christ demonstrated love in that while we were enemies He died for us.
Galatians 2:20 NAU - "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."
 4. True love stands in stark contrast to the world's love that is void of commitment and characterized by the selfish fulfillment of sinful lust.
With Christian love the Holy Spirit stirs our heart in love for Christ.
- B. Joy – Paul is speaking of our delight in God because of our salvation in Christ
1. In the Catechism we read, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." This speaks loudly of our great joy in Him. The Christian life is characterized by celebration.
 2. Again, the world confuses the idea of joy. They see joy and happiness as the same thing.
 3. True joy is found in doing the will of God and seeing Him exalted.
Listen to the joy of Christ:
Hebrews 12:2 NAU - "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."
 4. True joy is found in the wonder of knowing God in spite of our earthly condition. The Holy Spirit stirs our heart in joy.
- C. Peace –
1. This world knows little of peace. There are countless arguments and disputes between people. Nations are in continual war with each other. Violence characterizes our society.
Look again at the works of the flesh:
Galatians 5:20 NAU - "enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions"
 2. The Holy Spirit produces peace. Peace with God through the reconciliation of the Gospel. Peace with men as our hearts are transformed in love and patience.
 3. Through this working of the Holy Spirit our hearts are built up in the assurance of love, joy, and peace
Romans 15:13 NAU - "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

II. Patience, kindness, goodness – actions towards others

A. Patience (KJV – Longsuffering)

1. The world is characterized by impatience – everything must come at once. We have fast food and microwave ovens. People get angry at red lights and traffic. And we want instant gratification – get the new car now. Use the credit card for things you can't afford.
2. God teaches us patience by His Spirit. Few things come instantly. Sanctification is a life-long process.
3. And the KJV translation of longsuffering implies patience towards others when they don't quite meet our expectations. We are willing to suffer long with them.
Calvin: Patience is the mind that brings us "to take everything in good part and not to be easily offended."
4. This is another reflection of God's character towards us. He is wonderfully patient with us. The Holy Spirit creates in us this heart of patience.

B. Kindness – (KJV – gentleness)

1. Kindness is a heart of compassion towards others
2. Kindness demonstrates sympathy when others are hurting. It is a heart that seeks to lift others up. It is a heart of thoughtfulness.
3. God demonstrated this in our salvation
Titus 3:4-5 NAU - "But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, ⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,"

C. Goodness

1. This expresses a heart of benevolence towards others.
2. This is one of God's wonderful expressions towards men. The world is full of the goodness of God.
3. Through the Holy Spirit we are enabled to exercise kindness towards others even when they are most undeserving.

III. Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control

A. Faithfulness (KJV: faith) - πίστις

1. Expresses itself in loyalty and commitment – ultimately towards God
Loyalty to marriage, to church, to pastors, to other believers.
2. Few express this today. Sadly, we find it often absent upon Christians
Few are loyal to their church in our generation.
3. Paul expressed grief of the lack of loyalty to him in his time of need
2 Timothy 4:16-18 – "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge."
4. The Holy Spirit leads us to look beyond ourselves. There are many people in our lives who deserve our loyalty.
5. It also demonstrates itself in reliability, timeliness, dependability
It is the trait we want in our leaders
2 Timothy 2:2 NAU - "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

6. But our greatest faithfulness is to God and His Word. This expresses itself in our commitment to Him in obedience. This is God's great expectation of all of us—that we be found faithful.
1 Corinthians 4:2 KJV - "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."
- B. Gentleness (KJV – meekness)
1. This is related to meekness & humility. James described this submissiveness as being teachable:
James 1:21 NAU - "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."
 2. Paul is talking about a willingness to give up your rights for others.
 3. It is the opposite of a censorious spirit. It is to refrain from anger even when we may feel justified. One commentator described it as “strength under control”
- C. Self-Control
1. This is the ability to discipline yourself—to gain mastery over your desires and passions
 2. The “deeds of the flesh” are characterized by a lack of self-control. The flesh powerfully desires to be indulged. This is one reason obesity is so common in our society. This is why credit card debt continues to rise. The average credit card debt in the U.S. as of June is \$15,216.
 3. The flesh wars against the Spirit – but the Holy Spirit enables us to demonstrate self-control. It enables us to deny ourselves the indulgence of our sinful desires.

Conclusion:

1. These are the things that characterize the Spirit-filled life. These things are the outward fruits the Holy Spirit gives to those who will be led by Him. The Holy Spirit gives these traits to those who will draw near unto Christ. This takes place through His Word and prayer.
2. These wonderful characteristics are not works of our will-power. They are the fruit of the God's reign in our lives.
 Paul says, "against such things there is no law."
 The Law commands these things but it cannot produce them.
3. These things can only be produced by the Spirit—but it demands that we walk by the Spirit.