

“THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT”
Psalm 142, Luke 10:25-37, Galatians 5:13-26
July 9 & 10, 2022

“The famous Boston pastor Dr. A.J. Gordon visited the World’s Fair in Chicago in 1893. In the distance he saw a man robed in bright, gaudy Oriental clothes who appeared to be laboriously turning the crank of a pump and thereby making a mighty flow of water. Gordon was impressed with the man’s energy, his smooth motions, and his obvious physical conditioning. He was pumping a tremendous amount of water.

“Drawing closer, Gordon was surprised to discover that the man was actually made of wood. Instead of turning the crank and making the water flow, the flow of water was actually turning the crank and thereby making him go!

“Thus it is with those in the Lord’s work. It isn’t our efforts for Jesus that achieve the results. **The flowing river of the Holy Spirit, channeled through our lives and lips, keeps us going and yields infinite results through our ministries.”¹**

The working of the Holy Spirit is intentional for those who ask Him to guide and empower them. Luke 11:13 tells us, “...*how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*” If we ask the Lord God Almighty to give us the Holy Spirit, He is ready and willing to enable us to do great things through Him. But we must ask Him into our lives in order to find His gifts and His fruit. And that necessitates our having a relationship with Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.

Last week we touched upon the gifts of the Holy Spirit that enable us to do the work that God has given to us. The Holy Spirit gifts us with communication gifts (verbal) and action gifts (physical). Those gifts are for us to use as the Holy Spirit enables us. They are ready for us to instantly employ in our lives because they are gifts given to us. We use them as we receive them.

Today we look at the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The major difference right off the bat between the gifts and the fruits of the Spirit is that **the fruits of the Holy Spirit have to be grown in our life before**

¹ (Robert J. Morgan, *Stories, Illustrations & Quotes*, [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publications, 2000] pg. 441-442)

they are able to work in and through us. We have to cultivate them and work at them in order for us to see their results within us. Whereas gifts are given for us to use at the instant they are given to us, the fruit of the Holy Spirit comes as we nurture them, and practice them, and use them in our everyday life.

Gifts are given; fruit is grown.

So even though the Holy Spirit works within us, the fruit of the Spirit is the result of His presence within us over a long term. The Holy Spirit showcases the work of Jesus Christ, so when we are diligently seeking to follow Jesus' commands, the Holy Spirit is available to us so that we might bring glory and honor to Jesus.

Now, here's an important question to consider. When is the best time for us to rely upon the Holy Spirit? Always, of course, but Psalm 142 helps us with the answer to this question. When all the struggles and trials and hardships come our way in life, where can we turn to find support, encouragement and guidance that will bring us hope? It is the Lord our God. Verse 3 tells us, "*When my spirit grows faint within me, it is You [Lord] who watches over my way...*" Then in verse 5 David says, "*I cry to You, Lord; I say, 'You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.'*" David directs our attention to the things of the Lord, especially when the bottom drops out of our lives.

You see, God knows the difficulties that we have here in this life. He knows how easily it is for us to give up our faith because of the troubles that battle against us. God does not want us to faint and grow weary in our faith, but to remain strong for Him, even in the face of the harshest trials and struggles. So **the Holy Spirit grants us His encouragement as fruit in order that we might remain faithful to the Lord at all times.** But it is in the middle of the struggles where we are to grow the fruit of the Holy Spirit that will enable us to endure the problems and hardships that we face. If we keep our trust in the Lord, if we keep Him as "*our refuge and our portion in the land of the living,*" then the fruit of the Holy Spirit begins to flourish and we are given hope.

So what are the fruits of the Holy Spirit? What are those things that bring encouragement and hope? Listen to Galatians 5:13-26 for the answer. (READ Galatians 5:13-26)

The ways of the flesh are the world's ways, in absence of God's presence, and in opposition to God's ways. God has set forth His standards and guidelines for the men and women of the world to follow and to be blessed. But when we refuse to follow God's ways, we end up doing a lot of things that bring hurt to one another. When we rebel against God's commands, we want what we want when we want it, and we usually want it right now for our own pleasure, with complete disregard to the life of another person. The acts of the flesh are selfish to satisfy only me (and you) as an individual person.

The acts of the flesh, then, do nothing but bring destruction to us. And it is these acts of the flesh that bring so many hardships and troubles to us today, because they are not in accord with the ways of God. When Christians decide to follow the ways of God, we come smack dab, face to face with the opposition of the ways of this world. And those who live according to the things of this world expect us to follow suit and join right along with them. In fact, they become very offended if we do not follow along with the ways of the world, because our lifestyle of living in Christ Jesus shows their lifestyle of living in the flesh to be corrupt and evil. So we find ourselves at war with those who live in the ways of the flesh when we live according to the ways of Christ Jesus.

The ways of the world and the ways of Jesus Christ are completely different, diametrically opposed to each other, and there is no middle ground. It has become increasingly difficult to live in the ways of Christ today because of the tug and lure of the things of the world. While God says "NO!" to the things of the flesh, the world says, "Why Not?" So we are constantly battling between the two as to which side we will live on. And Satan greatly desires that we give up on the things of God and fully incorporate the things of this world into our lives, outside of the things of God.

Paul makes a very strong statement that says "I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this [according to the ways of the flesh] will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21). He says it plainly that the things of this world are BAD and are to be avoided by anyone who is a follower of Jesus. In fact, if we hope to be able to receive eternal life beyond this life, we must steer clear of these things at all cost, or else it will cost us everything, and we will be rejected from heaven by

God Himself because of our sin.

So that's where the fruit of the Spirit comes into play. **The fruits of the Holy Spirit are exactly opposite to the ways of the flesh, but they are the things that please God and enable us to live in such a way as to inherit the kingdom of God.** “*Love, joy, peace, forbearance (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*” are fruits that must be cultivated, nurtured, practiced and lived, in order for them to be helpful for us. They will counteract all the ways of the flesh when they are full grown within each of us, and they will provide us with the hope we need to endure all kinds of struggles and trials.

Take for example the man who was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho in Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan. This “happy-go-lucky” man came under attack by robbers as he traveled. The robbers showed hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition and envy toward this traveler, thereby beating him up, stealing his clothes and valuables, and leaving him half dead at the side of the road. He was a victim of the ways of the flesh.

And, as the story goes on, you would have thought, and hoped, that a priest or a Levite would have stopped to help the man out of his situation, but because they, too, were living in the ways of the flesh, they decided only to pass by the beaten man, so as to not become defiled by his condition. They knew nothing of this man's history, so they refused to stop to help, thinking that he was a hopeless case, a derelict or drunk. They did not know why he had been beaten up, but they were unwilling to offer assistance because they did not have any of the fruits of the Spirit active within them. These leaders of the church knew nothing of the Holy Spirit's ways for them to be at work to help this man in need. They were only living according to their selfish, worldly nature.

But there was another man, a foreigner, a hated Samaritan, who was different than the first two. He had the fruits of the Spirit alive within him. So when he came upon this man alongside the road, obviously beaten up and bleeding and in need of assistance, the fruit of the Holy Spirit within him opened up his eyes to the need, and encouraged him to get to work for the benefit of the life of this man.

First, the Samaritan, out of love and care for this man, stops his travels to take the time to care for him. He takes a moment to stop and think what it would be like if he were in this man's situation, and considered what he would want someone passing by to do for him at that moment. Then he shows kindness and goodness to the beaten man by taking "*pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine*" (Luke 10:33-34). The Samaritan may have been the first Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) recorded in Scripture. He cared enough about the needs of this broken and abused man to tend to his immediate need.

But he didn't just patch up the beaten man and then say, "Ok, there you go; you're all set. See you later." The Samaritan gently "*put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him*" (10:34). This first EMT patiently took the time out of his own busy schedule to put his faith into action and cared for the man. He took him to the nearest thing to a hospital, a local hotel, and stayed with him the rest of the night, feeding him, caring for him and even footing the bill for him.

Then, "*the next day he took out two denarii [that's two full day's wages] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have*" (10: 35). **This Samaritan didn't even know the man who was beaten up, yet out of the goodness of his heart, through the fruit of the Holy Spirit at work in him, he cares for the one who was attacked and left for dead so that he could have new life.**

This was the fulfillment of Jesus' answer to the question "*what must I do to inherit eternal life?* (10:25)" - "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind;*" and "*Love your neighbor as yourself*" (10:27). If the Samaritan had only been living by the ways of the flesh, he wouldn't have given a hoot about the "scum" in the ditch. **But because he had the fruits of the Holy Spirit living in him, he was able to practice them and care for one he didn't even know, for the glory of God.** And Jesus tells us, "*Go and do likewise*" (10:37).

What a marvelous example of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in action, being used to touch the life of another who was in need. The fruits of the Spirit aren't selfish, but rather self-giving to demonstrate the

difference that Jesus Christ makes in our life. They are for us to show to the whole world what life could look like if we all went beyond the ways of the flesh and lived by the ways of God.

You see folks, we live in a world, and at a time, when we need to live our faith more than ever. As Christians, we have the chance to do great things for the Lord, but we face such huge spiritual barriers and blockades. We cannot face the things of this world on our own power or for our own glory. If we hope to make a difference for the sake of Jesus Christ, we have to begin to cultivate and grow these fruits of the Holy Spirit so that we can accomplish the Salvation of the world through Jesus.

There is sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery all around us in our world today. As Christians we are called to model the standards of God to those around us by living in Christ-like love. This is not a selfish love, but a self-sacrificing love, living according to the standards of the Bible, not of the world. We must cultivate and practice self-control, not indulging ourselves in whatever our hearts desire, but rather looking at the needs of those around us and meeting those needs first.

Idolatry and witchcraft and Satanism seem so attractive because they promise power over others, as well as gaining everything we want. When we participate in these things, we are replacing devotion to God with false religions and powerless beliefs. We are to grow faithfulness in the Lord, keeping His commands, patiently enduring any abuse or persecution we get from the world, remaining loyal to Jesus Christ. When we are faithful to the Lord Jesus, the world will become our enemy because our enemy, Satan, desires to turn us from the Lord's ways or else be destroyed. Yet God has promised to protect us and provide for us as we remain faithful to Him.

Hatred, discord and jealousy are on the rise as we see the world try to pit us against one another based upon our differences. But when we have Jesus Christ in our hearts, there is such joy that fills us as we begin to recognize each other as brothers and sisters, even though we may have different skin color, or different eye color, or different nationalities, or different languages. When you can recognize each other as a child of God, there is no longer any need for hatred or disagreement or conflict because you come to understand that the other person is not so very different than you are.

When we see each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, we put aside our minor differences in order to live in peace with each other. **And when we live in peace, there is no need for any kind of rage or selfish ambition, for we begin to look out for the needs of one another.** But having peace takes practicing patience with each other. Since we are all different people, we have different ways of doing things that can get on the nerves of others. And sometimes, even with the best intentions toward another, we may end up hurting another, either in what we say or what we do. This often creates dissensions and factions. Yet in kindness, seeking forgiveness in love, reconciliation happens so that peace may once more abound.

Sadly much of the struggles we face today comes from the envy of one person toward another person based upon the material possessions we might have in our stewardship. Our selfish desires work overtime in us to have what the next person has, and if we can't get it through reasonable means, we often use radical means to achieve that selfish desire. Burglary, theft, arson, and wanton destruction of possessions are examples of the radical means that some employ to try to get what they want. Yet, the goodness of the Holy Spirit recognizes the differences and begins to reach out to enable folks to attain their goals by legitimate means. Education programs, internships and other social stimulating outreaches enable folks to step up to the level they want to be at in our society. The goodness of faithful believers enables such courses to inspire and encourage folks toward greater satisfaction of their lives without resorting to illegal or immoral actions.

With many things striving to lead us or drive us away from the Lord God Almighty, our faithfulness to Jesus Christ is essential. However, it goes beyond being involved in church once a week. **Faithfulness involves daily feeding of our souls from the Word of God in the Bible.** It requires that we hold fast to God's Word as the driving force in our lives. We must compare everything of the world with what Scripture tells us, and if God's Word says "No," then we are also to say "NO" to it, in order to remain faithful to Jesus, rather than to cave in and following the ways of the world. It means standing up to those who would try to bully us into doing what we know is wrong. It means that we diligently

seek to please the Lord Jesus Christ in all that we do rather than seeking to please ourselves. Satan is a schemer and will try his best to deceive us into thinking that the ways of the world are good and right, just because others think so. We have to remain strong in our Christian beliefs based upon Scripture, to stand squarely against the ploys of the devil.

But that means that we are to love even those who disagree with us. We could rail against their turning away from God's laws, but that would only enrage them more, because they believe they are in the right. So the fruit of the Holy Spirit grants us gentleness and self-control in order to address the issues at hand and to peaceably guide them back to the Lord Jesus as we live righteously before them.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is unparalleled so that whenever we practice them and make use of them in our lives, there is no law against them. But we are to allow the Holy Spirit to guide our hearts so that we do *“not become conceited, provoking and envying each other”* (Galatians 5:26). It's not about making us look better than another, but rather walking alongside one another to help each other grow closer to Jesus. And that takes all of the fruit of the Spirit to help us do that.

So I invite you to grow strong in your faith in Jesus Christ and produce the fruit that can make a difference in your life, and in the life of another who needs your help. Let the fruit of the Holy Spirit guide you each and every day of your life. Let's pray...

Father, we need Your help in our lives in order to face the things of this world. While they may seem right, and may be called right, Your way is to be our way so that we remain loyal to Jesus Christ. Provide us with the courage we need to grow the fruit of Your Holy Spirit so that we may find the right way to live according to Your Word. Then, as we live for Jesus, guide us to grow love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control so that they may be incorporated into our lives each day, allowing us to make a difference in those around us. Encourage us to see that Your ways are always the best ways, even if it demands that we abstain from activities or words or actions that we greatly desire to have in our life. Thank You for Jesus, who has shown us the right way to live in order to honor and glorify You. This we pray in Jesus' Name. AMEN.