

The Fruit of the Spirit

A Message From Pastor Faber

Everyone knows that you can tell a tree by its fruit. You can tell a fig tree because it is loaded with figs. You can tell a tomato vine because it's loaded with tomatoes (at least it should be if everything is all right with the vine). But today as we begin our transition from the synagogue to the church (the Torah to the Book of Acts) I want us to think about the fruit that we should exhibit as believers.

I had planned to spend the morning talking about what it means to be "the church". We are the "called out". But what are we really called out to do? You will find this out next Sunday morning and we'll touch on it this coming Wednesday. This morning I've asked Kelton to talk a little bit about the FRUIT that we're to produce as Christians.

I had not planned to get bounced from my flight here in Frankfurt Germany, but let us each remember that "All things work together for good for those who love God for those who are called according to His purposes". Romans 8:28 I will be back with you soon and Wednesday night we'll talk a look at what it means to be the church. My prayer for myself and all of you this year is that we would each "get real with God".

As we each yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit, we should see growth in the form of spiritual fruit in our lives. Faith in Christ should bear fruit. It should produce real tangible fruit in our lives. It should make us have the smell of prayer on us, and it should make others that come into contact with us know that we've been in the presence of Almighty God. Enjoy Kelton's observations on the Fruit of the Spirit this morning. Pray we can get out of Germany sooner than later. We have solid ticket confirmations for Monday, so I feel certain we'll be out and home by Wednesday night services. Until then, please know we love you all and miss you."

Now.....HERE'S KELTON (said in the voice of Ed McMahan)

KELTON - YOUR PART FROM HERE ON:

Larry has been talking for the last two Wednesdays on Walking on the Spirit. Let's take a close look this morning and uncover exactly how a believer's conduct should differ from the world around us. What sort of evidence should we have that the Holy Spirit of God is moving in our lives?

Let's stand as we read Galatians 5:22 together.

- 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness,
23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions
and desires.
25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.
26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.¹

LOVE - is something you do (it is the foundation for your motivations)

In the great Love Chapter of 1 Corinthian Chapter 13, the Apostle Paul says, "¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." Why is the greatest of these love? It really is sort of an interesting question.

So, my question to the congregation this morning is, "Why is love such a big deal"?

I think love is a big deal because it is the ultimate source of our motivation. We are responding to how much God loves us as we love others. The Bible says, "We love Him because He first loved us." We are loving Him when we're loving others. Faith and Hope are very important, but the fact of the matter is that Love can carry you when faith and hope are gone. The Christian has a totally different viewpoint of love than the unbeliever. So, just how does Christian love really look different from the way the world loves?

"Love" as defined by the world is really a very selfish thing. The world's system of love is based on what a person can "get out of it" for themselves. To the contrary Christian love is a selfless kind of love. The Apostle Paul says,

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Questions to the congregation:

¹ [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*](#). (1995). (Ga 5:22–26). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

- 1) How do you exercise patience when it is not easy to do? Let several answer.
- 2) What is envy? How is that the opposite of loving others? Let several answer. (Envy is when you want what others have and you don't even want them to have what they have) Like all sin, it is based in pride.

So, love really is something you do. You make a conscious decision to love others because God's love for you has no limits.

Joy - contentment in all circumstances because you're rooted in Christ

Content in all circumstances. What does that all mean? Paul is talking about contentment in this passage from Philippians. Listen as he says,

¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

It's easy to think that Paul had a cushy life, but he had a very difficult hard life. Just listen to him describing his circumstances in 2 Corinthians 11

²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. ³² In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. ³³ But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

Does this sound like the life of a guy with all the privileges? No. Not at all. And remember that he wrote the Book of Philippians while he was in prison. Joy should not and cannot depend on our circumstances or we'll never experience true joy.

Peace - Believing God's best is at work in whatever circumstances you find yourself in.

Let's look at Jesus in the midst of the storm on the Sea of Galilee. When we do, we can really understand how our hearts should be when we're under pressure.

Mark 4:35-41 English Standard Version (ESV)

Jesus Calms a Storm

³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." ³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. ³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" ⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Sometimes when you're in a storm the best thing you can do is "get a pillow and go to sleep" and leave it in the hands of the Father. It is hard to do this, but it's easy at the same time. We make a mess of things when we try to take control and make things turn out the way we think they should be.

Patience - Waiting on the Lord and His timing

Remember how we looked at the children of Israel a couple of weeks ago. They couldn't trust God's timing so when Moses didn't come down from the mountain when they thought he should, they ended up building a golden calf to worship. Have the faith to know that God's plan is best. Remember when Abraham tried to hurry up God's plan to bless him with children, he ended up with Ishmael who is the father of the Arab people who are thorn in the backside of Israel even until today. Trust God for His timing in your life.

Kindness-Goodness-Faithfulness-Gentleness

These four all have to do with how you treat other people. There all sort of the same.

These are all the opposite of harshness. They are the attitudes we have when we treat others as we want to be treated. Let's look at a little story back from Jesus' day to illustrate what I'm talking about.

Back in Bible times you were not allowed to touch someone who was clean if you had open wounds. Remember the woman who had been sick for a long time with an issue of

blood reached out and touched the hem of Jesus' garment. She should not have done this. Jesus could have been offended by what the woman did, but instead Jesus had great compassion on her.

Luke 8:43-48 English Standard Version (ESV)

⁴³ And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. ⁴⁴ She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. ⁴⁵ And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!" ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me." ⁴⁷ And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. ⁴⁸ And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

Jesus was criticized for such conduct by the Pharisees, but He cared more about helping the hurting than he did about the Levitical law. We should have compassionate hearts like Jesus.

Self-Control - Doing what's right even when you don't want to do it

In 1 Cor 9:24–27 Paul compared Christians to athletes who must undergo strict training in order to compete as a runner or boxer. A Christian without self-control, is like a racer who runs aimlessly from one side of the course to the other or a boxer who merely pummels the air, never landing a blow. In contrast, Paul said, "I discipline and subdue my own body so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize." The fact that self-control appears last in Paul's list may indicate its importance as a summation of the preceding virtues. ²

So church, let us each this week ask God to produce fruit in our lives. Read through this list slowly and prayerfully and let God do a work in your heart.

Larry, please lead us in a song and then I will close in a prayer.

² George, T. (1994). *Galatians* (Vol. 30, p. 404). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.