

**February 26, 2017
Christ Creates Holy Living
Galatians 5:18-26; 6:1-10**

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;

20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions

21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.

2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

3 If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves.

4 Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else,

5 for each one should carry their own load.

6 Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Good Morning My Sisters and Brothers in Christ. I greet you this morning with joy. Joy that comes from **servicing** a Living Saviour. Joy that comes from **knowing** that regardless of what the world might say God has not forgotten or forsaken us. Joy that comes from **preparing** for the Lenten Season, a time of reflection on what the cross really means to me. This joy that I have the world did not give it to me and the world can't take it away.

For the past three Sundays, we have been looking at Paul's letter to the church at Galatia. The people needed this letter for they were allowing outsiders to corrupt their minds regarding what was required to be a Christian – a follower of Christ. In preparation for this series I asked you to read all of Galatians or at a minimum chapters 3-6.

Have you done any reading in Galatians?

Remember that failing to read is like coming to class w/o homework completed – you will probably get something but not as much as you might get if you read, study and pray.

Next I challenged you to live in hope because God was your adopted Father and you are living to be in relationship with Him.

How have you been living since 1st Sunday?

- LIVING LIKE YOU BEEN ADOPTED BY GOD THE FATHER?
- LIVING LIKE YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER WHO ADOPTED YOU?
 - LIVING LIKE YOU HAVE HOPE?

Again, remember if you are not living as God has called you to live you should not be expecting God to bless as God has promised to bless. (Repeat)

On 2nd Sunday I provided 7 questions you needed to ask yourself about those you say you love and those you are seeking to love.

How have you been loving since last week?

- Are you adjusting to those you wish to love?
 - or are you expecting them to adjust to you?

- Are you accepting those you wish to love?
- Are you sacrificing for those you wish to love?
- Are you speaking the truth to those you wish to love?
- Are you freeing those you seek to love?
- Are you willing to suffer for those you seek to love?
- Are you willing to spend time with those you seek to love?

On third Sunday we worked with the theme **Faith in Action** and raised the question **How Are We Doing?** I made three major teaching points, and point one had three parts, so I am going to repeat them this morning as separate points for a total of five.

Faith in Action – How Are You Doing?

- Did you **study** the Word?
- Did you **pray** over the Word?
- Have you been in **community** with like-minded people?
- Do you have a **plan** for how you are going to follow thru?
- Have you considered who it is you need to **love better?**

We are now at the last lesson in this series. Paul is explaining to both the Jews and the Gentiles that because of what Jesus did on the cross we are not living under the law, but with the Spirit. Jesus tells his disciples three times, (as recorded in the gospel of John), that the Spirit would come to help them and therefore us.

John 14:26 (NIV)

²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 15:26 (NIV)

²⁶ “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.

John 16:7 (NIV)

⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Paul writes to them that when they are led by the Spirit there are some characteristics that they will be able to see in their lives. Paul calls this the fruit of the spirit.

With that as background information would you pray with me and for me as I raise this question:

ARE YOU BEARING ANY GOOD FRUIT?**SHALL WE PRAY?**

Father God thank you for waking us and give us the mind to come to your house this day. We thank you for sunshine and rain for both have value in your kingdom. We thank you for providing all that we need and some of what we want. Now we ask that you would open our hearts, heads and hands to receive what you will send to us this morning. Abba, please give me the strength and the wisdom needed to continue to feed your people. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you. In the name of your Son Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen and Amen.

ARE YOU BEARING ANY GOOD FRUIT?

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Yesterday while talking to Jasmyne she told me that she had heard a sermon on the Fruit of the Spirit in which the preacher said it is just one fruit. I must admit that I had not considered that so I checked 4 translations and in each of them the word is fruit, not fruits. Further research lead me to think about the terms associated with **Fruit of the Spirit** as being characteristics or traits a child of God has when that child walks with God.

Listen to the passage again from the Amplified Bible:

*²²But the fruit of the Spirit [the result of His presence within us] is **love** [unselfish concern for others], **joy**, [inner] **peace**, **patience** [not the ability to wait, but how we act while waiting], **kindness, goodness, faithfulness**, ²³**gentleness, self-control**.
Against such things there is no law.*

(I wish to acknowledge the work of Scott Williams of Family Life for his contribution to this sermon)

1. Love. This word for love doesn't refer to warm feelings but to a deliberate attitude of good will and devotion to others. Love gives freely without looking at whether the other person deserves it, and it gives without expecting anything back.

Question: Am I motivated to do for others as Christ has done for me, or am I giving to get?

Scripture: John 13:34 "I give you a new commandment – to **love** one another. Just as I have **loved** you, you also are to **love** one another.

2. Joy. Unlike happiness, joy is gladness that is completely independent of the good or bad things that happen during the day. In fact, joy denotes a supernatural gladness given by God's Spirit that seems to show up best during hard times. This is a product of fixing your focus on God's purposes for the events in your life rather than on the circumstances.

Question: Am I experiencing a joy of life on a regular basis, or is my happiness dependent on things going smoothly in my day?

Scripture: Psalm 30: 5b *⁵For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

3. Peace. It's not the absence of turmoil, but the presence of tranquility even while in a place of chaos. It is a sense of wholeness and completeness that is content knowing that God controls the events of the day. Kirk Bryon Jones says we might be in the storm, but we don't have to let the storm be in us.

Question: Are you in the storm or is the storm in you?

Scripture: Phillipians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious or worried about anything, but in everything [every circumstance and situation] by prayer and petition with

thanksgiving, continue to make your [specific] requests known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God [that peace which reassures the heart, that peace] which transcends all understanding, [that peace which] stands guard over your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus [is yours].

4. Patience. It is the ability to endure ill treatment from life or at the hands of others without lashing out or paying back. It is also about your attitude while you are waiting.

Question: Am I easily irritated and derailed by circumstances? Do I seek to get even? Or do I allow God's grace to be seen in me?

5. Kindness. When kindness is at work in a person's life, he or she looks for ways to adapt to meet the needs of others. It is moral goodness that overflows. It's also the absence of malice.

Question: Is it my goal to serve others with kindness, or am I too focused on my own needs, desires, or problems to let the goodness of God overflow to others?

6. Goodness. While kindness is the soft side of good, goodness reflects the character of God. Goodness in you desires to see goodness in others and is not beyond confronting or even rebuking (as Jesus did with the money changers in the temple) for that to happen.

Question: Does my life reflect the holiness of God, and do I desire to see others experience God at a deep level in their own lives?

7. Faithfulness. A faithful person is one with real integrity. He or she is someone others can look to as an example, and someone who is truly devoted to others and to Christ. Our natural self always wants to be in charge, but Spirit-controlled faithfulness is evident in the life of a person who seeks good for others and glory for God.

Question: Are there areas of hypocrisy and indifference toward others in my life, or is my life characterized by faith in Christ and faithfulness to those around me?

8. Gentleness. Meekness is not weakness. Gentleness is not without power, it just chooses to defer to others. It forgives others, corrects with kindness, and lives in tranquility.

Question: Do I come across to others as brash and headstrong, or am I allowing the grace of God to flow through me to others?

9. Self-control. Our fleshly desires, Scripture tells us, are continually at odds with God's Spirit and always want to be in charge. Self-control is literally releasing our grip on the fleshly desires, choosing instead to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. It is power focused in the right place.

Question: Are my fleshly desires controlling my life, or am I allowing the Spirit to direct me to the things that please God and serve others?

10. Walk by the Spirit. While not a fruit of the Spirit, the final item on the checkup produces all nine qualities listed above. When we follow the Spirit's lead instead of being led by our self-focused desires, He produces the fruit.

But even when we don't walk by the Spirit, He is the very one who convicts us that things are not in proper order in our lives.

God promises that if we are willing to admit that we have been walking our own way and ask for His forgiveness and cleansing, He will empower us through His Spirit to live above ourselves and live the abundant life for which He has created us.

Question: Am I actively depending on the Holy Spirit to guide me in God's ways so I don't get wrapped up in myself? If not, am I willing to confess to God that His ways are better than mine, and that I need the Spirit's guidance to live above the fray?¹

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Benediction

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4)