

Place: Lurgan Baptist 25:6:2017

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD

Reading: Galatians 5:16-25

6. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

The leader of a Bible class for young women had in her class a girl who was extremely shy. The leader regarded her as spiritually backward but how wrong she was. For at her daily work this girl had been opposed and persecuted for her stand for the Lord. In countless little ways the other girls made it hard for her. The manager also delighted to make life difficult for her. One day things reached a climax. For months the girl had looked forward to a special meeting that was to be held in her town, and had made preparations to be able to attend. She could not often get out at night, for she had to care for a sick mother. But she had arranged for a friend to stay with her mother that evening. *Happily she looked forward to the meeting.* But that afternoon, just before closing, the manager announced that she was to work overtime, on work that could not possibly be completed in time for her to go to the service.

Her heart rebelled. *Why had she been singled out ?* The manager would not dare ask this of the other girls. Why should she alone have to stay ? Overwhelmed, she fled to the cloakroom, and there she wept. Then she thought of her witness for Christ before the other girls. Bracing herself, she bathed her face in cold water to hide the traces

of tears, came out, and calmly went about her appointed task. The other girls soon left, and she was alone. About twenty minutes after, the key turned in the office door. In walked the manager. To her great surprise he asked her forgiveness for the abominable way in which he had treated her. *'How is it,'* he asked, *'that you can take it as you did ? Anyone else would have blown up. Tell me about your Saviour.'* How gladly the girl complied. Her quiet, consistent, Christ-like life had opened the way for her to speak *'the boss,'* about Christ. Here was a Christian girl who was displaying *'the fruit of the Spirit.'* *'If I were fruitless,'* wrote honest John Bunyan *'it mattered not who commended me, if I were fruitful I cared not who did condemn.'* What is the goal toward which the Holy Spirit is moving ? What is the Spirit of God aiming at ? What is His objective in our lives ? Fruitfulness. For the evidence of being filled with the Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit is seen in our lives. And what is the fruit of the Spirit ? Character, Christlikeness.

Now let's do a quick review. When you receive Christ as personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit comes to live in your heart (Rom 8:9) This is *a gift.* (Acts 2:38) In turn, the Holy Spirit gives believer's a variety of *gifts.* (1 Cor 12:4) These are Spirit-given abilities to serve the Lord Jesus through the Spirit's power. So there is the *Gift* of the Holy Spirit: (Acts 2:38) There are the *Gifts* of the Holy Spirit: (1 Cor 12:4) But we are thinking this about the *Graces* of the Holy Spirit: for the evidence of being filled with the Spirit is not whether you possess this gift or that gift, it's not whether you have this experience or that experience. No, the final evidence of a Spirit filled

life is this. Is the fruit of the Spirit evident ? How like Jesus Christ are we ? Now as we consider this passage I want you to notice,

(1) THE INTERNAL FLESH

You see, there is a war going on inside the Christian. (5:16-17) Another translation put it like this, '*for the desires of the flesh are opposed to the Holy Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are opposed to the flesh for these are antagonistic to each other.*' The '*old you,*' and the '*new you,*' don't get along. The flesh and the Spirit are mortal enemies. Civil war. Yes. And this enemy '*the flesh,*' will try to keep you from walking in the Spirit, and will hinder your attempt to live the victorious Christian life. Now what is '*the flesh,*' ? Will consider,

(a) THE FLESH DEFINED:

1. THE FLESH RESIDES WITHIN US:

By the flesh, Paul does not mean '*the body.*' The human body is not sinful, it is neutral. If the Holy Spirit controls the body, then we walk in the Spirit, but if the flesh controls the body, then we walk in the lusts or desires of the flesh. *You see, the flesh, stands for that part of man's nature wherein his natural desires have free rein.* '*I know, that in me,*' writes Paul, '*that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.*' (Rom 7:18) The flesh, represents the sinful tendencies that become a part of your existence at birth. All of us were born '*in the flesh.*' Sometimes the Bible refers to this flesh nature as '*the old*

man.' Our old man is our old nature. It is everything our physical birth makes us. But then something wonderful happens. We receive Christ as our personal Saviour. We are born spiritually (Jn 3:5) and at that moment we receive a new spiritual nature. The Bible refers to this new nature as the new man. *Now, your new spiritual nature represents everything you can be by the power of the Holy Spirit of God.* The unbeliever is a one-natured man, the flesh, the believer is two-natured, the old sinful flesh and the new Spirit-nature, which came to him at his conversion. Paul explains the contrariness of these '*the flesh lusteth against the Spirit*' (5:17) You see, the old nature does not vacate the premises when the new tenant takes up His residence. Here is a dark room at night, it has a darkness nature, in common with the night outside. Now you come into that room, switch on the light and at once a new nature is manifest, a light nature, at variance with the night outside. Now that the new nature is present, has the old darkness nature gone ? Turn out the light and see. No, the old is still there, but the new counteracts it. So when we admit Him who is '*the Light,*' into our lives the new does not eradicate the old, but it counteracts it. (1)

2. THE FLESH RAGES WITHIN US:

Do you see (5:17) ? '*The flesh lusteth against the Spirit,*' or '*the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit.*' Did you know that the cuckoo is a very curious bird ? It's a bird that does not hatch its own eggs. Instead of building itself a nest it appropriates someone else's. It is a squatter, it put its eggs in another birds nest. Perhaps

one day a sparrow will find another egg in the nest, and not having got an 'A,' level in math's, it goes on hatching, in ignorance of the imposition. In time, it hatches out, not only its own little fledglings, but a young cuckoo. Then, while, the mother bird goes to find food for her young brood, and brings it to the nest, she finds them all with open beaks crying out, 'Feed me, feed me.' And everything depends on who is fed. If the cuckoo gets the food, it grows and very soon ousts the little sparrows from the nest. So my in the nest of your life there is a dual nature. There is the flesh lusting and saying 'feed me,' and there is the Spirit lusting and saying 'feed me,' and it all depends who you feed, who will control your life that day. Think about this. One Sunday morning your new nature wants to get up, go to church and hear the Word and remember the Lord. But your old nature fights it.

'You are tired,' an inner voice says. 'You've had a tough week, don't get up so early. Have a rest. You deserve a break.' Have you heard that voice? Have you ever known that struggle?

The new nature likes to give. Someone is in need. The nature wants to give some money to help them. But the old nature says, 'Oh, you can't afford that. Don't do that. They don't deserve it anyhow.' The old nature wants to look at a pornographic scene, do you what I mean men? And the new nature says, 'those scenes will pollute your mind.' My conflict like this exists in a thousand different scenarios every day of life! Do you know anything about it? 1. 2.

(3) THE FLESH REMAINS WITHIN US:

I mean when you receive your new nature, at the time of your conversion, do you lose your old nature? Some tell me that the old nature may be eradicated or eliminated. Paul did not think so. He says, '*For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not I do.*' (Rom 7:19) If you think your old sinful nature has been eradicated, tell me please, and I'll come around and have a chat with your husband or wife. John says, '*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.*' (1 Jn 1:8) 'I have not sinned for some time,' said a lady to Mr. Spurgeon. 'You must be very proud of it,' he replied. 'Yes, indeed, I am,' she said. I tell you, the more holy a person becomes the more he will shrink from claiming the attainment of sinless perfection. Indeed someone has said, that the old nature is born within us, and it will be borne by us all the days of our lives.

(b) THE FLESH DISPLAYED:

For here Paul lists the works (plural) of the flesh. Here, like streams of filth belching up from the sewer of the old nature, is the result of yielding to the flesh. Now isn't interesting that these verses are written to Christians. My this is a warning. If we allow the flesh to take control of our lives, even we as believers can be controlled by these vices. *Becoming a Christian does not mean your old nature is gone, it is still very much with you.* You have the same potential for sin, you always had because you're still human. Paul gives us a warning, '*they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*' (5:21) The person who practices these sins, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Paul is not talking about an act of sin,

but a habit of sin. Do you need to sit up and take notice ? You may not be a Christian. But even believers can yield to the flesh and allow some of these vices to appear in their lives. Paul talks about **Sensual Sins:** (5:19) he talks about **Superstitious Sins:** (5:20) he talks about **Social Sins:** ‘ *hatred, variance, emulations*,’ (5:20-21) Now stand back and have a look at ‘ *the works of the flesh.*’ Do some of these vices ever appear in your life ? Are you ever guilty of some of these things ? If you are, then you can be sure you’re not living by the Spirit. (a) (b)

(c) THE FLESH DEFEATED:

For victory over the flesh is possible if we remember that our flesh has been crucified. For when Christ died I died. Is that not what Paul is saying in (5:24) ? When was the flesh crucified ? Two thousand years ago. Where ? On the cross where the Saviour died. Paul says ‘ *I have been crucified with Christ.*’ (Gal 2:20) When was Christ crucified ? Two thousand years ago. What about our flesh ? It was nailed to the cross too. God says it’s been crucified. Its dead. Does this mean we will never yield to worldly desires anymore ? No. It means that we don’t have to. (Rom 6:6) My at Calvary God has dealt with the question of self as well as the question of sin by putting us to death with Christ. But how we can we come into the good of that ? Well, look at (5:25) ‘ *Walk in the Spirit,*’ means ‘ *keep in step with the Spirit,*’ that involves the Word, prayer, worship, and fellowship with God’s people. My the best way to deal with ‘ *the lust of the flesh,*’ is simply to walk each day under the control of the Holy Spirit. (1)

(2) THE BIBLICAL FIGURE

For when Paul uses this figure or picture of fruit-bearing he follows an established Scriptural pattern. For when we think of fruit-bearing we think of,

(a) It’s PROMINENCE in the OLD TESTAMENT:

For in the Old Testament Israel is viewed as God’s vine. And how disappointed was the Lord when He came to His carefully cultivated vineyard and found nothing but wild grapes. (Is 5:1-7) Again in Psalm 80 the house of Israel is compared to a vineyard thus the Psalmist prays

‘ *Return we beseech thee, O God of hosts, look down from heaven and behold and visit this vine. And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.*’

(Ps 80:14-14) In the Song of Solomon the bridegroom speak of his bride as ‘ *a garden.*’ (S. of Solomon 4:12) Like a garden, are you productive, fruitful and attractive ? When we think of fruit-bearing we think of (a) and we think of,

(b) It’s IMPORTANCE in the NEW TESTAMENT:

For according to Christ the test of any life is its fruit. Just as trees and plants are identified by what they produce, Christ says people are known by the fruit their lives produce. He says, ‘ *Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. ye shall know them by their fruits*,’

(Matt 7:15-16) The Lord Jesus in the same context goes on to say, ‘ *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in that name ? and in thy name have cast out devils ? and in they name done many wonderful works ? And then I will profess unto you I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity.*’

(Matt 7:22-23) Christ didn’t ask us to examine Christians for signs and wonders or great prophetic gifts. He said, ‘ *Ye shall know them by their fruits.*’ (Matt 7:16) You see, the gifts of the Holy Spirit may be counterfeited, indeed they were at Corinth but spiritual fruit cannot. How do we know that the Holy Spirit is working in our lives ? What is the evidence ? What is the proof ? Its not the gifts, rather its the graces ! Christ is looking for fruit.

(Lk 3:16) And the man who shows nothing of Heaven in this life, will share nothing of Heaven in the next.

My the fruit of the Holy Spirit is not a *maybe* it’s a *must*. Without fruit in the life there is no root in the heart. Have you grasp that ? Oh you say ‘ *I’m saved from hell saved for heaven.*’ Wonderful, but is that it ? Have you failed to recognize that the Father created you, the Son redeemed you, the Holy Spirit indwells you. Why ? ‘ *that ye should go and bring forth fruit.*’ (Jn 15:16) (1) (2)

(3) THE SPIRITUAL FRUIT

Now remember Paul is contrasting ‘ *the works of the flesh,*’ with ‘ *the fruit of the Spirit.*’ A machine in a factory works and it turns out a product, but it could never manufacture fruit. Fruit must grow out of life and in the case of the Christian it’s the life of the Spirit. Now one

would have thought Paul would have written ‘ *the fruits of the Spirit,*’ but no he talks about ‘ *the fruit (singular) of the Spirit.*’ For he is thinking of qualities of character as a single cluster. These virtues are not like so many flowers in a bouquet. Rather they are like the variety of petals on one lovely flower. They are like a cluster of grapes distinguishable and yet inseparable. Now what does ‘ *the fruit of the Spirit,*’ mean ? It simply represents traits of Christian character produced by the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. Someone has said ‘ *the mere recital of these Christian graces should be enough to make the mouth water and the heart beat faster for they are a portrait of Jesus Christ.*’ Now this nine-fold fruit has been classified in many ways. I want you to notice here,

(a) *The GODWARD Aspect of the Christian Life:*

In the First Three Virtues. The Ideal life in its Relation to God. Paul begins with,

Love: The Greek word is (agape) Of course love means different things to different people. I heard about a bumper sticker on a truck which said, ‘ *Wanted, prospective wife who loves dogs. Send picture of dog.*’ But what is biblical love ? Well, God is love. *Love is that selfless quality that seeks the good of its object even at personal cost.* (Jn 3:16) A soldier was asked how it became a Christian and he told this story. He was in the new barracks one day when a new soldier arrived. From the very start he noticed this new soldier was different. He would not join in certain barrack activities, and each night before he got into bed he would always read his Bible and

in front of the whole barrack room he would kneel in prayer. One night the soldier who was not saved was on guard duty. It was a terrible night of cold and rain and when he arrived back in the barrack room he was feeling miserable. Then he looked across the room and saw the Christian kneeling in prayer. That made matters worse. So taking off his heavy boot covered with mud, he pitched at the Christian hitting him in the head. *The Christian did not move, he just kept praying.* So the other soldier took his other boot and did the same thing. Still, no reaction from the Christian. However, the next morning when that unsaved soldier got up, he found his boots by his bedside, clean, polished, and shining. That broke his heart and he came to faith in Jesus Christ. My ... is this fruit flourishing in the garden of your heart? Are you someone who seeks the highest good of others regardless of their treatment of you?

Joy: that inward peace and sufficiency that is not affected by outward circumstances. (Chara) Now there's a difference between happiness and joy. Happiness is dependent on happenings, but true joy is not. It glows in the dark. Do you remember Paul and Silas in the prison? They were beaten, bruised, and battered. All around them were the outcasts of society. Yet *'at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God.'* (Acts 16:25) No wonder Paul could write, *'Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice.'* (Phil 4:4) When I was down in Cornwall some years ago (November (2002) I was taken to *'Three Eyes Church,'* where Billy Bray preached. Billy was a tin miner by trade and he loved his native Cornwall, but his love for souls was greater. He was renown for his

joy. *'I can't help, praising the Lord,'* said Billy Bray. *'As I go along the street, I lift up one foot and it seems to say 'Glory,' and I lift up the other foot and it seems to say 'Amen,' and so they keep on like that all the time I am Walking.'*” Do you what Billy Brays last word was before he entered the presence of the Lord? *'Glory.'* Joy, are you reflecting it?

Peace: The Old Testament word is *'shalom.'* If you are ever in Israel and don't know what to say, try *'shalom,'* meaning *'a desire or prayer that all is well with you.'* The word itself actually carries the idea *'to make complete.'* The New Testament word for *'peace,'* basically means *'to bind together.'* Peace in the New Testament means *'tranquillity or serenity.'* It means *'that tranquil serenity of heart which comes of the all-pervading consciousness that our times are in the hands of God.'* Now is the Godward aspect of the Christian life. Love, joy, peace.

(b) The MANWARD Aspect of the Christian Life:

In the Further Three Virtues. The ideal life in its relation to Others.

Longsuffering: We all need patience. Wouldn't you like to be like the little boy at the end of the escalator in the department store? He was watching the moving rail as it came by. A sales lady asked, *'Son are you lost?'* *'No, ma'am I'm just waiting for my chewing gum to come back.'* (Heb 6:12 James 5:10) The basic idea with this particular word is *'patience with people.'* Long-suffering,

something that puts anger a long way off. (Col 3:13) Is that what you do when someone tramps on your toe literally or figuratively for the tenth time ? Is that what you do when someone keeps you waiting for an appointment ? Is that what you do when someone rubs you up the wrong way ?

Gentleness: It was a word used of old wine. Mellow not harsh. It refers to a sweetness of spirit, a mellowness of manner, a texture of character. Do you recall how gentle the Lord Jesus was with the woman taken in adultery ? Oh, He loathed her sin, but He loved her soul. (Jn 8:11)

Goodness: Of the Lord Jesus it was said He ‘ *went about doing good.*’ (Acts 10:38) Barnabas was ‘ *a good man,*’ and out of the goodness of his heart he gave his material wealth to the cause of Christ. Now let me ask you, what about your relationship to others ? Is it marked by long-suffering, gentleness and goodness ? (a) (b)

(c) The SELFWARD Aspect of the Christian Life:

In the Final Three Virtues: The ideal life in its relation to Ourselves.

Faithfulness: Faith or faithfulness. It means fidelity, dependability, keeping promises, being reliable. My can you imagine the Lord Jesus ever letting anyone down ? Yet that’s precisely what so many believers do. They take on a work for God but their heart is not in it. They join a fellowship but they are never there half time.

Faithfulness. My can you employer depend on you ? Can you church rely on you ? Can the Lord trust you ?

Meekness: That’s the spirit that accepts the blows of others, with the confidence that God is in control. Do you recall the Lord Jesus said, ‘ *I am meek and lowly of heart.*’ (Matt 11:29)

Temperance: or self-control. Paul’s word here pictures the discipline of an athlete who has learned to master his body for the games. (1 Cor 9:27) Oh, how we need to control our bodies (1 Pet 2:11) our appetites (Phil 3:19) our indulgences (Ps 132:4) and our tongues (Jam 3:2) In every area of life self-control is needed. My when you look at this nine-fold cluster of ‘ *graces,*’ who do you think of ? The Lord Jesus. When you think of love you think of Christ, when you think of joy you think of Christ, when you think of peace you think of Christ and so on. You see, the fruit of the Spirit is character. It’s the kind of person you are. It’s how Christlike you are. A Sunday School teacher had been telling her class about the wonderful qualities of the Lord Jesus when He lived on earth. Then she asked, ‘ *Where does Jesus live now ?*’

She fully expected one of the children to say ‘ *in heaven.*’ But she was surprised when a little girl from a poor section of the town responded by saying, ‘ *Oh, He lives down our street.*’ Upon further questioning the teacher concluded that someone lived in that child’s block whose life radiated the Lord Jesus. What about you ? Is your life radiating Christ According to the Lord Jesus the test of any life is its fruit. Do you pass the test ? Are you like Him ?

