**Fruit Of The Spirit**

**Galatians 5:24-34**

Trinity XIV – 9.13.2020

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What is the fruit of the Spirit? According to our text, the fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. If you have the Holy Spirit, this is the fruit which will show forth.

In Matthew 7, Jesus says this: *“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.”* (Mt. 7:15-20)

This fruit of the Spirit is what will show forth in the lives of Christians as the Holy Spirit is at work in them.

Of course, opposed to the work of the Spirit is our own flesh. Interestingly, our flesh also appeals to the world, looking to it in order to decide what is acceptable behavior in our life and what is not. When the world agrees with our flesh, then the God-pleasing, Biblical mandate must be wrong – outdated – old fashioned – or some other bad name we can call it.

What are the works of the flesh to which the Spirit is opposed? Our text says that thew works of the flesh are evident! That means that they are obvious – it is blatantly obvious, it is evident, that they are opposed to God’s Will in the lives of those who call themselves His children. What are these works?

*Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

And this list is not exhaustive. That means there are other things that could be put on the list as well, things which you could name. This list is just the tip of the iceberg. Did you hear them? I pray that you did, for they come with a warning, a warning which Paul proclaims you are not hearing for the first time. I too warn you, as I have warned you before – these are things which, if continued in, would lead to the loss of your inheritance – the loss of a place in the eternal kingdom of God.

Why? Because, if you are God’s children, you are to be holy! To be holy, is to be without sin! We are no longer to let the desires of the flesh reign in our flesh. Why are we to be this way? Because we are to be living witnesses to those around us.

Of course, you are now thinking, “But pastor, I am not perfect! I so easily fall into idolatry – there are so many things I love before God, but not because I truly want to it happens. Hey, I’ve been waiting for the Packer season to start, and today is the first game. I have to see what this is going to be like in life under COVID-19! I do want to envy, but how come the Joneses have a so much nicer boat than me? And last night, I had no intention of getting drunk when I started, but it just got out of control. What am I supposed to do? Am I just supposed to stop living?”

Did you hear it? We all make the excuses? And there are others that are very similar, but ultimately, they are excuses.

What are you supposed to do?

You have heard me declare to you that you are baptized into Christ. That is not my saying, that is God’s declaration about you through the pen of Paul. You memorized the pertinent passage when you studied baptism in the Small Catechism.

You are no longer slaves to your flesh – no longer slaves to sin. Christ has given us His Spirit, and it is in the Spirit that we are to live and walk. Neither Christ nor the Holy Spirit can sin, and if they are dwelling in us, then sin should not. Everything about you, everything you do is a reflection upon God – like I said, a living witness, a living testimony, which our world desperately needs.

Yes, you and I struggle daily against the flesh. We are to walk in the Spirit, exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit. Did you hear that, they are ***FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT***!!! These are the things that the Holy Spirit works in you and through you.

These fruits will, in no way/shape/form help get you into heaven! They are however, the things expected of the baptized children of God. When you walk by the Spirit, your life will be fruitful evidence of God's Spirit in you.

As I have said before, is it the apples that make the apple tree? Or does the apple tree bear apples? When an apple tree ceases to bear apples, it is cut down and cast into the fire because it is no longer bearing fruit.

If the Spirit dwells within you, if you are in the faith, you cannot help but exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. When people look at you, they will see; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. You can do all these that you want! You never have to restrain yourself from any of these!

However, you are still in the flesh even as you have been born again in the Spirit. Paul warns about what too often happens, even among the faithful, *For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.* (vs. 17)

Yes, even filled with the Spirit, you succumb to the desires of you flesh, fighting against the Spirit that God has placed within you. Some of the old cartoons came close to getting it right when they depicted the devil sitting on one shoulder and the angel on the other. Instead, it is the Holy Spirit and your own flesh struggling for control of your actions.

You are here for your failures, your succumbing to the desires of your flesh. Your sinfulness weighs heavy on your mind. You know only too well how you have tried to kick out the Holy Spirit and live according to you own will. I describe it in my own life, as the struggle of the Spirit against the will of Todd. Your flesh has also struggled against that Spirit, sometime there is either rotten fruit – or no fruit at all on some branches.

Paul has told us what the fruit of the Spirit is to be. Some think that is the Bible telling us what we are supposed to do. We could take the list of the things of the flesh as telling what we are not supposed to be doing.

You really do not need the lists, for you already know what you should and should not be doing. I could give you a detailed description of what it means to live a good, God-pleasing life. And even knowing that, you would fail to do so and come up short – just as you already do.

You cannot live up to that description yourself. You are a sick apple tree; the fruit that should be there, isn't always in evidence in your life. And even when there appears to be good fruit, too often those apples are full of worms.

Christ came to heal sick apple trees. He took upon Himself human flesh and lived without sin. He paid for your sin in His flesh, with His own death upon the cross. He desires to give you His forgiveness. It is as the Spirit comes to you, that the Spirit lives in you, and the fruit of the Spirit is worked out in you.

So instead of giving you a simple description, I will deliver what God has commanded me to use to cure your flesh, and grand you renewal in His Spirit. Christ has commanded me to declare that your sins are forgiven you! Those times you have booted out the Spirit and walked according to your flesh are forgiven.

On this altar is a further prescription to cure your fleshly desires, the medicine of immortality. Take and eat, this is my body. Take drink, this is my blood. These gifts of the Lord's goodness deliver to you – His body and blood, broken and shed for you – for the forgiveness of sins. He gives to you His body and blood given to nourish and strengthen your faith – His Spirit granted.

Today again the Spirit of God descends upon you, is renewed within you, for Christ has done just that for you. Today, you have crucified your flesh with its passions and desires by your contrite repentance. You have heard the Word of God and been united to Christ's crucifixion. You have been healed from your sinfulness and given a new Spirit, Christ’s Spirit, the Spirit of forgiveness and life. Now the fruit of the Spirit shows forth in you! In the name of Jesus. Amen.