

Galatians 5:22 “Fruit of the Spirit - Joy, Peace, Patience,
Kindness”

You know it’s interesting that the comparison to fruit is being used here as it relates to our walk with Christ, because as we said last week we are to be fruit bearers to the world to the degree that the world can taste and see that the Lord is good.

Remember, this is the fruit of the Spirit, not the fruit of you or me. In other words, this spiritual fruit, which is the result of spiritual life in Christ, is the product of God working in and through us.

Now, granted we are the ones to be demonstrating this fruit through lives of love and obedience, but we can only do this because of the One who has given us this life in Christ.

And so, it is not only a great responsibility to walk in the Spirit but also a great privilege to have been chosen by God to represent the King of kings and Lord of lords as His Spirit indwells us and empowers us for works of service in His Kingdom to His glory.

And so, when we look at the fruit of the Spirit it’s not just an exercise in studying an aspect of God’s word, but at real look into what the Spirit of God is actually accomplishing in our lives on a daily basis.

Now, one more thing before we actually begin examining this fruit. It must be understood that when we discuss this fruit of the Spirit we are often talking about degrees of how this fruit is being manifest in our lives.

As I said last week, we get all of the fruit of the Spirit, not just part. We get the entire package and so it’s not as though the Holy Spirit doles out this fruit, little by little, so that when we first get saved we only get 10% of love or mercy or kindness and that by the time we’re mature Christians we end up with 80 or 90%.

Instead, we have all that the Spirit is, and since this is His fruit, and since He indwells us we have His power and His life living in and through us. The problem is not that we only have a part of the fruit, but that we only manifest a part of it because of choices we make.

I use the analogy of an orange tree, since most of us either have fruit trees in our back yards or we know someone who does who is

always trying to get rid of their oranges or grapefruit because it's all over the ground.

But, if you've ever noticed, an orange always starts growing the same way. It begins with a beautiful aroma of the orange blossom's scent permeating the air. And in a relatively short time you'll notice that in the middle of that blossom is a tiny green ball.

That tiny green ball is the fruit of that orange tree. That tiny green ball is the actual orange that you'll eventually pick and eat. But what is interesting about that tiny ball is that it is no different in composition than the mature orange fruit.

It's the same fruit. And in a similar way, the baby Christian possesses the same fruit of the Spirit that the mature Christian does. The only difference is that one Christian has had time to mature as he submits more and more to the work of the Spirit, which is seen as the Spirit's fruit is made manifest in that believer's life.

And so, if we want to get past the tiny green ball of fruit to the maturity of the fruit we need to submit to the means by which that fruit must grow. We need to feed and drink in those things of the Spirit; His word, fellowship of the saints, worship, prayer and so on. And as we pursue the things of the Spirit we will find that we will mature and that fruit of the Spirit will be sweet and tasty for the world and each other.

Joy and peace is the fruit of the Spirit and joy and peace are those things which most people would love to possess. There's nothing more frustrating than being around someone on a constant basis who is always bummed out about life, who is always negative about life because they have no joy or peace.

God wants to bring this to His people. He wants the world to experience His joy and peace working through us. We don't often think of God being joyous, maybe because we see God as some somber serious and holy God sitting on a throne with great responsibilities running His universe.

Well, the fact of the matter is that God is tremendously joyous as this is one of His attributes. Like love it's not just that God expresses joy; He is joy.

1CH 16:26-27 "For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy in his dwelling place."

Now, when we talk about joy and peace in our lives we are not necessarily talking about being happy all of the time. Joy and peace can certainly express themselves in happiness, but they are lightyears beyond a mere emotion.

Joy and peace takes knowledge of God and translates that into a sort of resting place, or a safe place where we know nothing can shake that relationship with Him. Joy and peace understands who God is and rejoices in who God is and what He has provided for all who will trust Him, knowing what the final outcome will be.

Imagine being in a school yard where the bullies of the school come out and intimidate you and make threats of all sorts against you. Your first reaction is fright and anxiousness. But what if you know that the person who is off to the side intently watching all of this behind a tree is your friend Mike Tyson.

You know he's there and you know his power and his friendship for you. And all of sudden a calm comes over you in that anxious moment, and a joy and a peace of knowing that if Mike is for you, who can be against you?

Well, multiply that by a gazillion. If God is for us who can be against us? And we begin to realize that we should be living in that calm and that joy and that peace that only He can provide, because it's real.

This is why the Psalmist could write, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." (PSA 23:4-6)

That's a joyous statement about God. And so, if we can demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit found in joy and peace in those times of trouble, imagine how our joy and peace in Christ can manifest itself in good times as we recognize His blessing in our lives. This is why we come together to worship the Lord.

We come together to express our joy before a God who loves us and desires that we love Him above all. And our joy is founded in the fact that we are at peace with our God and Creator who has secured this peace for His people.

We have been reconciled back to the Father through the shed blood of Christ. He is our peace because He is the Prince of Peace. And if this is the case then we have a peace which passes all understanding, not simply because of a knowledge of what He has done for us in taking our sin and paying the debt in full, but also because we now have His Spirit who is peace.

If we want joy and peace in our lives then we simply need to acknowledge that we are already at peace with our God through faith in Christ, and then out of gratitude begin to express that joy as we thank Him with lives of love and obedience.

But the fruit of the Spirit is also patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness. And again, these are all attributes of God as He desires to express His holy character through the lives of His people.

Patience, as it's used here in our text, and other places of the Scriptures, is really more of a quality expressed toward other people. It's true that we might desire to express patience in circumstances like driving on US 41 or being patient in the line at the grocery store, but the kind of patience being described here is really more of a long-suffering toward people who can try our patience.

The greatest example of patience or long-suffering is that of God Himself toward people who reject His love. All people deserve God's wrath and yet in His patience He holds out that we might seek Him and find His grace and love. This is what we read in Paul's letter to the Romans.

ROM 9:22 "What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath -prepared for destruction?"

Instead of quickly destroying mankind God demonstrates long-suffering with people and allows them time to come to Him. Now, granted even God's long suffering will come to an end as we saw with the great flood of the world as He destroyed mankind, but the world had many years of patience from God before He destroyed them.

In fact, Paul even uses his own life as an example of how God is patient with men. Here Paul was trying to destroy Christ's church and the Lord could have quickly taken him out of the way and sentenced him to eternal damnation, but instead the Lord was

patient with Paul as he allowed him to live to see the grace and love that would literally arrest him on the road to Damascus.

1TI 1:16 “But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.”

God has infinite patience. Unfortunately we don't. And yet we possess the Spirit of God who does. Patience is an attribute we need to demonstrate to other people. The fact that we are commanded to be patient tells us that people will try our patience, including other believers.

But the way we respond is the way God desires for us to respond which is found in patience. In fact, in that love chapter found in 1Cor.13 it begins by saying, “Love is patient.” (1CO 13:4)

When writing to the church in Ephesus Paul reminds the Ephesian believers that even in their own ranks patience should be practiced toward each other.

EPH 4:2 “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”

Sometimes it's hard to be patient with people. And sometimes people will purposely try our patience, but in the power of the Spirit we can prevail as people who are patient as we show them kindness, which is also a fruit of the Spirit. Paul makes this connection when writing to the Thessalonians.

1TH 5:14 -15 “And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.”

Kindness and patience go hand in hand. Kindness is a sort of benevolence or a friendliness toward people and it will work along-side every other aspect of the fruit of the Spirit.

In fact, all of this fruit of the Spirit works with the others to one degree or another. And so, it's not a matter of saying, I'll work on this one area of my life without having that effect every other area.

Patience, kindness, gentleness are all attributes born out of an agape love which God has given us in Christ. And it's a love

which, as Paul says, needs to be wrapped around us in such a way as to cover over the old man, the old nature and snuff him out like a blanket as we love God above all.

COL 3:12-13 “Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

This is the practical outworking of the fruit of the Spirit. And it's a fruit which is meant to be shared with other people both inside and outside of the church.

Goodness, faithfulness and gentleness also are seen side by side as this fruit works itself out in our lives. Goodness is an attribute of God which is also seen working alongside other fruit of the Spirit.

ISA 63:7 I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us - yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.

When Moses asked to see the glory of God it's interesting in the way the Lord responded as He described how this glory would be made manifest before Moses.

EXO 33:18-19 “Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

God is a good God, and His goodness is something He constantly showers us with. But He wants us to take His goodness which He has instilled in us with our new nature in Christ and give it away to the world.

One of the ways the Random House College Dictionary defines goodness is to say that it is the best part of anything. And when we're talking about the goodness of God or the goodness of God's people found in the fruit of the Spirit we are talking about the best aspects of what it means to love.

Again, we can't escape the foundation for all of this fruit of the Spirit which is love. Goodness, kindness are part of that love, along with gentleness. That picture of Christ and the children

wanting to come and sit in His lap and love on Him is indicative of a gentleness He has toward people.

His gentleness is seen in embracing the children and kissing them as He just wanted to be near them and let them feel the love He had for them. And it is this gentleness we all experience in Christ as His love reaches out to us and brings us near. Paul spoke of the gentleness of Christ.

2CO 10:1 “By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you...”

PHI 4:4-5 “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.”

Gentleness is not overbearing. It’s not trying to force your way upon someone. And even when we share the gospel with people we want to do it in such a way where they sense love and gentleness instead of pounding someone over the head with the truth.

1PE 3:15 “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...”

Paul gives a sort of overall attitude of gentleness when he wrote to Titus who was instructed to teach his congregation of how to demonstrate this fruit of the Spirit in a practical way.

TIT 3:1-2 “Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.”

The last two fruit of the Spirit mentioned in our text are faithfulness and self-control. Self-control is actually not an attribute of God in the sense that He fights against it and needs to revert back to an aspect of His character to overcome it.

God is in perfect control and so is His Spirit. And as such, as we are indwelt with the Spirit of God we have the ability to overcome that old nature which either wants to lose control or take control in such a way where we don’t consider God’s will.

And so, when we’re out of control, by either seeking our own way or by anger or by any other outworking of the flesh, which is contrary to God’s word and will, we’re not living in the Spirit.

In fact, this one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit really keeps all the others in check. If our lives are in control. If our lives are controlled by the Spirit then love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness will be at the forefront of our lives.

And the reason for this is because we are choosing to follow our Master instead of letting sin and self be the master of our lives. The last aspect of the fruit of the Spirit that I want to touch on in our text is faithfulness.

Faithfulness here is not describing faith that we might utilize as in trusting Christ for salvation. Faithfulness in our text is that aspect of God's character which is seen in His trustworthiness to do what He says He will do and be who He says He is.

Faithfulness carries out its word without wavering. The first time we see God's faithfulness in action toward men is when He told Adam and Eve of His will concerning the fruit they should not eat.

He essentially told them that if they ate of that tree He would be faithful to carry out His word which said in the day they eat of that tree they would die.

And of course, He was true to His word. But on a more positive note He also told them He would send the seed of the woman into this world to redeem them back and give them life.

He was faithful to His word which He reminded different people throughout history until Christ finally came into this world to fulfill that promise of which Paul addresses in this very letter.

GAL 4:4 -5 "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons."

ROM 5:6 "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly."

1PE 1:20-21 "He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God."

He is a faithful God and we are to be faithful people who carry out His will, not just with our lips, but with our lives. Praise God Christ carried out His faithfulness with action as He died in our place.

Faithfulness is to be demonstrated both to God and to men. When we give our word we must keep our word. When we say we have made Christ both Lord and Savior, then our lives must keep true to that choice as we then are faithful to love and obey our Lord.

Faithfulness is an aspect of life that both Christians and the world can admire. There is nothing more disconcerting than to trust a politician who says he'll deliver the world on a platter and then have him back away from his promises. Of course there's nothing more silly than to trust such a politician.

But if we're going to put our credibility on the line then we need to have the fortitude to bring it to pass with the kind of faithfulness that shows itself to be true. In the case of showing our faithfulness to God we need to be willing to say yes to Him and no to self.

And when we say that we will follow Him to the end then we need to pursue that promise with a passion as we persevere to the end in the power of the Spirit.

HEB 10:35-37 "So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay."

We can be faithful to God and others because we are indwelt by the One who is faithful. In fact, in this verse in Hebrews the writer shows us how Christ will remain faithful.

He was faithful to come into this world the first time as He came as a humble servant and Messiah, whose job was to secure our salvation at the cross. But He also promised to come back for us. Let me refresh your memory as Jesus speaks to His disciples.

JOH 14:3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

Luke records for us this promise which the angel reminds these same disciples of after Jesus ascended back to the Father.

ACT 1:11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

This is a promise we can rejoice in and a promise that our Lord Jesus will be faithful to fulfill. It may be in our life time that He will come back for us and I, for one, hope so.

It will be a glorious day when we see Jesus face to face as we receive our glorified bodies as we will then be in the presence of our Lord and Savior for ever more.

1TH 4:16-18 “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.”

We need to be encouraged that the Lord isn't finished with His plan for us. There is much more in store. And believe me, as He was faithful to come the first time you can take it to the bank that He will come again. But until that time we are to be found faithful to Him and each other.

If He were to appear today would He find us faithful doing the work, using our gifts for each other, walking in the fruit of the Spirit? His Spirit will enable us and empower us. May we look to the One who loves us and will one day come back for us.

1TH 5:23-24 “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.”