

It's my intention for the next several months to examine what's commonly called "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal.5:22-23). This morning I will limit our consideration to the first few words of v22—"But the fruit of the Spirit."

Now, I want to briefly remind you, that the Scripture often describes Christians as trees that bear fruit and the church as a field or garden. In fact, of all the many imageries used to describe the church, a fruitful field or garden is one of the most common. The church is described as a bride, body, city, temple, and field or garden. Each of these are beautiful and unique ways to describe the church as a whole, and individual believers in particular.

And so, I want to quickly say one last thing by way of introduction (only because this entire sermon is really an introduction)—the fruit of the Spirit is another way of describing the various and individual graces of the Spirit. We typically speak of the gifts and graces of the Spirit. By gifts are meant various abilities given us by the Spirit, and by graces are meant various virtues given to us by the Spirit. As the Spirit takes up residency in the heart of a believer, He brings with Him various gifts and graces.

William Perkins—"The church is the garden of God, teachers are planters, believers are trees of righteousness, and the Spirit of God is the sap and life of them. And good works and virtues are the fruits which they bear."

- I. Fruit is Evidence of a Necessary Change
- II. Fruit is the Work of the Holy Spirit of Christ
- III. Fruit is the Responsibility of Every True Christian

I. Fruit is Evidence of a Necessary Change

1. In v22, Paul speaks about "the fruit of the Spirit" and then goes on to describe nine kinds or types of fruit.
2. This means, while these are all fruit, there are necessary distinctions between them; while they are all fruit of the Spirit, they are distinct fruit of the Spirit.
3. Now I don't believe Paul is suggesting these are the only fruit of the Spirit, but the primary fruit of the Spirit.
4. Perhaps better said, these are a summary of the Spirit's fruit—every other grace could be tied to one of these nine.
5. And so, verses 22-23, are merely a summary of the fruit, that's produced upon the limbs of our lives.
6. Arthur Pink, I think insightfully suggested, the nine graces mentioned can be divided into three sets of threes.
7. Pink—"The first three, love, joy, and peace—being Godward in their exercise; the second three—patience gentleness, and goodness—being exercised manward; and the last three—and the last three—faithfulness, meekness, self-control—being exercised self-ward."
8. Thus, these various graces (fruit), have to do with our relationship with God, our neighbors, and ourselves.
9. Now, let me quickly point out that while Paul uses the plural when he speaks of the works of the flesh, he uses the singular when he speaks of the fruit of the Spirit.
10. I think the reason is this—while not every sinner will be characterized by each work of the flesh, every Christian will be characterized by the fruit of the Spirit.
11. Put another way—every Christian will be loving, joyful, peaceable, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled.

12. This fruit is singular and comes as a package—it's not possible for Christians to pick and choose among them.
13. James Haldane—"Perhaps the holy dispositions produced by the indwelling of the Spirit are termed 'the fruit' rather than the fruits of the Spirit, to teach us the unity of His operations. The holy dispositions which He implants, may be distinguished, but are inseparable."
14. Now my main point under this first heading, is to underscore the fact that the fruit of the Spirit is evidence of a necessary and radical change.
15. This is suggested by the word "but"—"But the fruit of the Spirit" which is in contrast to the works of the flesh (v19).
16. This fruit is evidence of two necessary and radical changes—we are no longer under the law, and we no longer walk in the flesh.
17. (1) We are no longer under the law, v23—"Against such there is no law"—that is, against those who manifest the fruit of the Spirit, there is no longer any curse of the law.
18. The law, as a broken covenant, no longer condemns such a life—it has nothing to say by way of condemnation.
19. Gal.5:18—"But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law"—that is—those led by the Spirit evidence they are no longer under the law.
20. There are only two kinds of people in the world—there are those led by the Spirit and those under the law.
21. To be led by the Spirit is to be indwelt by the Spirit—which shows itself in—"the fruit of the Spirit."
22. In contrast to this—by nature we are under the law—that is—we are under the law as a covenant of works.
23. This covenant was originated with Adam in the Garden of Eden, as the federal head of the human race.
24. In short—God promised Adam and his posterity eternal life if he obeyed and threatened death if he disobeyed.
25. Thus, because he broke that covenant—his seed are born under the demand and condemnation of it.
26. Let me put this way—those led by the Spirit produce the fruit of the Spirit, which is evidence they are no longer under or condemned by the law.
27. Rom.7:4—"Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God."
28. There are three important words in this verse—death, marriage, fruit—and they necessarily come in that order.
29. Here's the imagery—we are all by nature married to the law—that is to the law as a covenant of works.
30. When we become Christians, the old man is crucified (or he dies)—thus we are free from to remarry.
31. The new man is married to Christ—that is—we are in covenant with grace, called the covenant of grace.
32. Now, from this new union comes fruit—not children—but fruit to God—that is, the fruit of the Spirit.
33. Thus, those under the law as a covenant—are not led by the Spirit, and are not able to bear fruit to God.
34. (2) We no longer walk in the flesh, v24—"And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."
35. This is a fact of every Christian—"they have crucified the flesh"—the old man has been put to death.

36. This is what flesh means—it refers to fallen and depraved humanity—humanity in opposition to God.
37. Thus, though the flesh has been crucified (it no longer reigns)—it yet remains in the best of Christians (v17).
38. Perhaps I can put it this way—though Christians are no longer in the flesh—the flesh remains in them.
39. Thus, it's the presence of fruit that argues the reality of our religion—that we are truly in a state of grace.
40. Matt.7:15-20—"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them (Matt.12:33)."
41. (a) Good trees necessarily bear good fruit—by this I mean, every good tree with necessarily bear good fruit.
42. A tree that doesn't bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire—this refers to eternal judgment (this is simply the same thing as saying, faith without works is dead).
43. The presence of the Spirit's fruit is evidence that we are no longer under the law and walk in the Spirit.
44. (b) Good trees manifestly bear good fruit—by this I mean, fruit reveals or shows the nature of the tree.
45. Good fruit doesn't make the tree good, but it reveals the tree is good—it reveals the nature of the tree.
46. Thus, the presence of the Spirit's fruit reveals the fact, that our hearts have been changed by God's grace.
47. Now, it's true that our Savior is directly speaking about false teachers—a teacher should be judged by his fruit.
48. If he lives a wicked and lawless life, then it's evident that God has never commissioned or sent him.
49. But the principle is applicable for every Christian—not only can we discern true teachers, but also true Christians.
50. But here I anticipate an objection—aren't there also non-Christian people who have some of these fruits?
51. Well, it's true there are many non-Christian people who have some version of love, peace, joy, patience, &.
52. But as we being to actually consider this fruit next week, we will learn this is distinctly Christian fruit.
53. There is a kind of love, joy, and peace that the world possesses, but this is not the fruit of the Spirit.
54. This is distinctly a Christian or religion love, joy, and peace—it's fruit that only true Christians possess.
55. And thus, it's not wrong to say, it's the presence or absence of fruit, that reveals the condition of the soul (thus, I want to give you a couple principles to keep in mind when fruit inspecting).
56. (i) Look at the overall true and don't fixate on one branch or fruit—every fruit tree has some bad fruit.
57. For example, while an apple tree may be generally healthy (there will of certainty be a few bad apples).
58. Thus, when our Savior says—"A good tree cannot bear bad fruit" He's referring to the overall bent of the life.
59. All Christians sin, and thus in this sense will have some bad fruit—but this does not characterize his life.

60. And here's what certain sensitive Christians do—they fixate on every apple that has some imperfection in it.
61. They overlook all the other apples, and fixate on the bad ones, and conclude they cannot be true Christians.
62. But keep in mind, our Savior isn't talking about perfection, but instead, the overall direction of life.
63. (ii) Remember that fruit begin as a bud, which solely grows into small (immature) fruit and then mature fruit.
64. Furthermore, remember that fruit begin as a bud, which slowly grows into small fruit and then mature fruit.
65. In fact, this is by definition what fruit is—fruit are things that grow from a bud or a flower—such as tomatoes, cucumbers, peepers, apples, pears, peaches, melons, and mangos.
66. And so, the bud (or flower) is the beginning of the fruit—it's fruit in the bud, even though it's not mature.
67. (iii) Be assured, the presence of one fruit, argues the existence of all fruit—remember, this is the fruit of the Spirit.
68. Thus, while it's possible that at times some of this fruit will less discernible, the presence of any fruit, argues the existence of all fruit.

II. Fruit is the Work of the Holy Spirit of Christ

1. V22—"But the fruit of the Spirit"—that is—the fruit produced by the Spirit, the fruit from the Spirit.
2. Thus—the apostle contrasts "the works of the flesh (fallen human nature)" (v19), and "the fruit of the Spirit" (v22).
3. The works of the flesh come from the flesh, they are produced by the flesh—the fruit of the Spirit comes from the Spirit, it's produced by the Spirit.
4. Hos.14:8—"Ephraim shall say, What have I to do anymore with idols? I have heard and observed him. I am like a green cypress tree; Your fruit is found in Me."
5. Thus, before I go any further, I want to notice the distinction Paul makes between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.
6. All the sins mentioned in vv19-21, originate from the flesh—that is, man's sinful and wicked heart.
7. He's unable to blame anyone other than himself—these are all natural to the soil of his depraved heart.
8. And yet, all the graces mentioned in vv22-23, are placed within the heart by the work of the Holy Spirit.
9. Thus, while native man is to be blamed for the sins of vv19-21, the Spirit is to be praised for the fruit of vv22-23.
10. Let me illustrate—think of a garden—every year we plan tomato plants in our backyard—these have to be planted (they don't grow natively).
11. And yet, every year we have to pull weeds from the same soil, and these are native and never planted.
12. Thus, I want to suggest the Holy Spirit produces this fruit in three ways—He plants, waters, and prunes.
13. (1) He plants—that is—the first thing the Spirit does is—He plants us in Christ—He joins us to Christ.
14. V24—"And those who are Christ's"—that is—those who belong to Christ, who are in union with Christ.
15. It's our union with Christ that causes all the changes—every aspect of our salvation flows from Christ.

16. John 15:5—"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."
17. Christ is the vine and we are the branches—branches derive their ability to bear fruit from the vine.
18. Phil.1:9-11—"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by [through] Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."
19. (a) What are the fruits of righteousness—that is—fruits that fulfill the righteousness of God's holy law.
20. I suggest this is the exact same thing Paul means in Gal.5:23—"against such [fruit of the Spirit] there is no law."
21. (b) Where are these fruits found—"being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ."
22. These fruits or graces, are "through Jesus Christ"—produced by His Spirit as He unites us to Christ.
23. (2) He waters—that is—He not only joins us to Christ, but He communicates grace from Christ to the soul.
24. Isa.44:3-4—"For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring; they will spring up among the grass like willows by the watercourses."
25. The benefits and blessings of the Holy Spirit are described with the imagery of water poured on dry ground.
26. By nature our souls are dry ground—barren and without fruit—and it's the Spirit who creates our fruit.
27. Zech.12:10—"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."
28. John Gill—"I will pour on them...the Spirit of grace—by which is meant the Holy Spirit of God, who is called the 'Spirit of grace'; not merely because he is good and gracious, and loving to his people, and is of grace given unto them; but because he is the author of all grace in them; of gracious convictions, and spiritual illuminations; of quickening, regenerating, converting, and sanctifying grace."
29. (3) He prunes—that is—the Spirit is the great beautifier of souls—He conforms us into Christ's image.
30. He not only plants and waters, but He also removed the dead leaves, trigs, and bad fruit that remains.
31. 2Cor.3:18—"We all, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."
32. Thus—let me point out—working fruit within us and conforming us into Christ's image—are the same thing.
33. Or, put another way—Christ had the fruit of the Spirit in perfection—as He had the Spirit without measure.
34. A.W. Pink—"The Spirit's fructifying of the believer is the conforming of him unto Christ, first in his heart, and then in his life."

III. Fruit is the Responsibility of Every True Christian

1. The fact that fruit is the work of the Spirit, in no way denies our responsibility to cultivate and promote it.
2. Accordingly, this broader passage (vv16-26)—is bookended with the exhortation to "walk in the Spirit" (v16, v25).

3. Now—the first thing I want you to notice is—these verses are commands that Christians are to obey.
4. We are commanded to "walk in the Spirit" or "live in the Spirit"—we are to allow the Spirit to work within us.
5. A.W. Pink—"There is to be a concurrence between the Christian and the Spirit: our responsibility is to cherish and cultivate our graces, and to resist and reject everything which opposes and hinders them."
6. Furthermore—elsewhere throughout Scripture, we are commanded to promote each of these graces.
7. For example—we are commanded to love, to rejoice, be peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled.
8. And so, I want you to keep this principle in mind—that while this is the fruit of the Spirit, we all have a responsibility to promote it.
9. (1) Pray for the Spirit's influence, Lk.11:13—"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him."
10. This means in part—we are to ask God that the Spirit would fill our hearts and cause us to bear fruit.
11. Sol.4:16—"Awake, O north wind, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out. Let my beloved come to His garden and eat its pleasant fruits."
12. (2) Avoid grieving the Holy Spirit, Eph.4:30—"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."
13. If the Spirit of God is the divine beautifier or fructifier—then we must do nothing to hinder His work.
14. Gal.5:17—"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."
15. I take the last part of v17 to mean—because of the presence of the flesh, we are unable to do the things we want to the degree we want (it's really a miniature Romans 7).
16. While it's the task of the Spirit to produce fruit in our hearts and lives, our flesh seeks to sabotage or hinder that work.
17. (3) Expose your soul to the word of God—God's word is the primary means the Spirit uses to produce fruit.
18. Throughout the Old and New Testaments, Scripture often describes the word with the imagery of water.
19. Water not only cleanses but it nourishes—and it's by the water of the word, the Spirit produces His fruit.
20. Thus, we must expose the garden of our souls, to the word of God, both in private and public worship.
21. Ps.92:12-14—"The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him (Ps.1:2-3)."
22. Here the righteous are likened to palm trees that bear fruit—but notice where they are planted—"in the house of the LORD" and "in the courts of our God."
23. This means, they've been planted in the soil of His grace, and they've been restored to fellowship with Him.
24. But in the most specific sense, by "house of the LORD" is meant the church, or the New Covenant temple.
25. If the Holy Spirit uses the word of God read but especially heard, then we need to expose our souls to that word.

26. One of the reasons I am anticipating summer is to plant some tomato plants—and one thing tomato plants need to bear fruit is water—they will need to be watered every day.
27. And so too, our souls need watering every day with the word of God, if they are to bear fruit for God.