



THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

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(PART ONE)

What has been on my heart for almost two years now is a scripture found in John 15:1-2, *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the true vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away."*

Matthew 3:10 says, *"Even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."* As God has been talking to us through the camps and through church services, He expects us to bear good fruit. Now let's go back to John 15:2 & 4, *"And every branch that bears good fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me."* John 15:5-7, *"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. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out*

as a branch and is withered and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."

Pause there for a minute. If we abide in Christ, whatever we desire will be done for us. That's what the Bible says. Now our natural minds can think about many different things to desire. What our natural minds desire will be different from what we desire if we abide in the vine. In John 15:8, we read, *"By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."* Matthew 7:16-18 says, *"You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes 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."*

Now return to Matthew 7:15 & 19-20, *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.” “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”* Now, we have read all these scriptures and they have shown that God has put an emphasis on us bearing good fruit. What is good fruit? Galatians 5:22-25 answers this question, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. IF WE LIVE IN THE SPIRIT, LET US WALK IN THE SPIRIT.”*

I have dealt with each fruit separately, as follows:

Love

We have been taught over and over again about love. So what is love? Love is a very powerful emotion, felt for another person, manifesting itself in deep affection and devotion. God’s love for His creation is immeasurable and that love is expressed in Ephesians 5:25, *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.” “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends”* (John 15:13). *“Husbands love your wives. “Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord”* (Ephesians 5:22). But if a husband loves his wife as Christ loved the Church, a wife will love her husband back and will submit to the head that Christ has put in that family. As we know, most guys have a pretty high opinion of themselves, so they must have a pretty high opinion of their wives. *“For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it”* (Ephesians 5:29). This is what you should do for your wives.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal...Love suffers long, and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; in iniquity; but rejoices in truth;...Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:1, 4, 7-8, 13). When God talks about the fruit of the Spirit, the very first one is love. There is no mistake; love covers everything.

1 Timothy 1:5, *“Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and*

from sincere faith.” Matthew 5:43-47, *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so.”* John 14:15 & 23, *“If you love me keep my commandments...Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.’”* John 15:12, *“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”*

Joy

Joy is intense happiness or great delight; that which gives rise to this emotion or on which the emotion centers. Joy is the outward expression of emotion. We all can be joyful; we all can be happy. James 1:2-3, *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.”*

People often say, *“I need patience.”* Well, by going through trials and tribulations, God provides a way to learn patience. But remember that when you are going through trials, God wants you to be joyful. Now that is not easy, but it is one of the fruits that we are to bear for Him. When you think about it, that is a pretty tough fruit to bear sometimes. John 15:11, *“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.”* 3 John 4, *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”* God wants us to be fruitful. He rejoices in us walking the way He has asked us to walk.

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, *“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For you are our glory and joy.”* Is this not what we want? Last Sunday I mentioned the song that Mercy Me sings, *“I Can Only Imagine.”* What will standing in God’s presence be like on that day? I don’t have a clue, but I do know it will be a joyful day. How we will get there no one knows for sure. Some will pass

by the way of the grave and some may not. Either way, when we stand before God and we did what he asked us to do (bear his fruit), it will be a joyous occasion. Just remember that if we don't bear good fruit, but rather bear bad fruit, we will be cut off and burned. So if our goal is to stand before God and have it a joyous occasion, we have to bear good fruit. We have to abide in the vine. We have to do that which he wants us to do. Psalms 16:9-11, *"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also rests in hope. For you will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will you allow your holy one to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."*

Peace

Another fruit of the Spirit is peace. Peace is untroubled by disputes; freedom from noise, worries, troubles, and fears. It is the condition that exists when nations or other groups are not fighting. When we look at the walk of Jesus, His life was spent in peace and it is in peace that He wants us to walk. I have always loved the picture of great peace depicted by the bird in the cleft of the rock while the storm raged all around her. We can rest comfortably in the arms of God. That's the peace He wants us to have. That is what He wants to give us as part of our bearing good fruit. Our goal is to become a disciple of His; a child of His. Part of discipleship is to bear peace. It is natural to become upset when you are driving to blow your horn when someone cuts you off. What good is beeping the horn, other than giving you the satisfaction of beeping the horn? There are things that we may get upset about and there are things we don't need to get upset about. God wants us to have peace in every situation.

Psalms 4:8, *"I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."*
 Leviticus 26:6, *"I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid."*

There is no better place to be than in the arms of God. John 14:27, *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."* That is the peace that God is talking about when He says the fruit of the spirit is peace. *"Let not your heart be troubled"* (John 14:1). I speak from experience when I say that is a pretty tough spot to be in sometimes. It is not easy to let not your heart be troubled when your world seems to be falling down around you.

My tendency is to fret and worry, and I want to do everything in my power to fix everything. That is when I realize that I don't have the power to do anything because it's God who gives me peace. When things go wrong in your life, God will say, "Don't be afraid, I've got you covered. I am looking after you." How is He looking after us? It is by giving us the fruit of the Spirit. Who's to bear the fruit? It is the branches. Who are the branches? We are. We are to bear the fruit. We are to help look after each other. That's part of the fruit of the Spirit. Philippians 4:7, *"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

There have been situations that we all have been in, that we do not understand, but God is looking after us. The peace that God gives us surpasses anything that we can imagine. All this world wants us to do is fight, fight, fight, but God is saying, "No, that is not how you do it." In the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was about to be arrested and taken away, Peter drew the guard's sword and cut off the guard's ear. Jesus told him that's not the way it is to be done, and then He healed the guard before they took Jesus away. The peace that God gives us is beyond our understanding.

John 16:33, *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."* Don't let the world get to you. It is not easy to be uninfluenced by the world. People say things at school, in the workplace and in our day-to-day interactions that hurt, but God's inner peace can help us through these circumstances.

Jesus said, *"I have overcome the world."* The peace that I have, I give to you. Why? Because you abide in the vine. You abide in Me. I will give you the desires of your heart. Who does not desire peace? Who does not desire love? Who does not desire joy? There is nothing better than a good laugh. That's part of the desires that God is talking about when He says that He will give us our desires when we abide in the vine. Our desires change from wanting a million dollars to seeing our need for peace, love, and joy. How much more are we encouraged to abide and walk in the Spirit?


Kindness

Kindness is the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.

In this day and age, kindness is a pretty good quality to have because it's not always present. We used to tell ourselves that we, as Canadians, always say please and thank you. I have noticed that please and thank you are not as prevalent anymore. Kindness is starting to disappear. So, when God put that in the fruit of the Spirit, He knew what he was doing. If you want to be different and if you want to stand out, then be courteous. How many of you have held a door open for a person and then had to wait as many more people came through? God wants you to be kind to others. I thank God I found His way.

To illustrate what I am talking about, read Luke 10:30, *"Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him for dead.'"* We know the story. First, a priest came by who wanted nothing to do with him and walked past on the other side of the road. Then a Levite came and passed by. If you want to walk in the Spirit you have to live in the Spirit. Then a Samaritan came, saw him, and stopped. That is a rare thing these days. I was late for a meeting at work once because I stopped and got a tow truck for somebody. Here a man saw someone beaten up and lying on the side of the road. He stopped to help him. Not only did he pick him up and put him on his donkey, but he took him into town. He took him to an inn and looked after him for a day or two to make sure he was fed and getting better. Then he gave the innkeeper some money to look after him until he returned. When you think of kindness, Jesus gave that example for a reason. Jesus wants us to be kind to His people and look after them.

Another example of kindness is found in the story of Ruth. She left her country and her family and everything she knew to be with her husband's mother. Her husband passed away, and she did not have to do this, but someone needed to look after her mother-in-law. She left everything she knew to be with her. As a result of Ruth's kindness, she came to be in the lineage of David and ultimately of Christ. So be kind to others because you don't know what impact it might have on someone else. As we know, God works in mysterious ways that we do not understand. Our understanding is nothing compared to God's.

Titus 3:1-6, *"Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Psalms 117:1-2, "Praise the Lord all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples! For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever; PRAISE THE LORD!"* 

To be continued in the October 2022 issue.

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The Sharon Star is a monthly publication and mailed as a free-will offering plan. The articles within are intended for inspiration and information to those who are interested in the unfolding revelation of the Word of God.

Published by:
Global Missions Inc. in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada.

The Sharon Star is found online at:
www.globalmissionsinc.org/sharon-star

Publications Mail Agreement 40012206

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