

Fruits of the Spirit

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 23rd Jan 2011

Intro

- I really enjoyed the walk Charles arranged for us as a Church, where we had a picnic by a hillock, overlooking an amazing view. What is the most amazing walk you have been on?
- The Bible says that the path we walk on is so important. We know that Jesus is the only way, or path to God. However, once we have found Jesus, and started to obey His Spirit, do we always keep to the path He leads us on, or do we sometimes selfishly want to go our own way, thinking we know better?
- Today we will look at what Paul has to say to Christians about following the leading of God's Spirit, and warnings not to go our own way and give in to selfishness.

Read Gal 5:16-25 (NIV)

This is the passage the Sunday School are currently studying. From this passage we will look at 3 things God's Holy Spirit will do in our lives:

God's Spirit teaches us the difference between right and wrong

2 Groups- mixed up cards- things of the 'flesh' (selfish things) and things of the 'Spirit' (good things). Un-mix across the 2 groups by getting the children to act as runners between the groups.

- Here in the letter to the Church at Galatia Paul writes 2 lists- firstly a list which characterises wrong, ungodly behaviour, and then a list of good, godly behaviour. Why does Paul do this? Sometimes people use the excuse of God leading them to do something, when it is really them choosing selfishly to do something.
- An example of this would be where someone is married to one person, but thinks that God is somehow leading them to marry someone else- the Bible is clear that the Spirit of God does not lead people this way- rather they are being selfish. Another example would be where someone reads their stars in a newspaper to get guidance for their life, saying that God could speak through it. We know from the bible that divination is wrong.
- In John 16:8 Jesus says the Holy Spirit will convict people of sin. He shines God's light on it to reveal it. He uses the word of God, the Bible, to do this. The more that we are filled with God's Spirit the more we can't just ignore sin in our lives- we have to get it dealt with. Thank God that there is forgiveness with Him because Jesus took our punishment on the cross. It doesn't matter what we have done, or how long we have or have not been Christians- if we truly say sorry to God and accept what He has done for us on the cross then we are forgiven. Heb 10:22 says 'let us draw near (to God) with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water'.
- 3 levels: **Conviction** (John 16:8 also the word is used of giving a rebuke)- we become aware of our sin. **Confession** (1John 1:9)- we agree with God that we are wrong- homologeo- to say the same thing as (normally used in a positive sense for confessing Christ, but here used of admitting our sins before God). **Repentance**- we turn away from it with God's help (metanoia= a change of mind, in O.T shuv=turning around -basically changing your course).
- **Application**- Is there something the Holy Spirit is convicting you of right now? Rather than wait until tomorrow why not resolve to sort it out today? Is there

something you know you are doing that you have tried to make out God was okay with, but really you were being selfish? Ask God for His forgiveness today, and choose to change.

God's Spirit gives us the power to live right

Object lesson- wheel spanner- ask children what it is, and how it works. Comment on how it is done in garages with pneumatic power and that as a result can be almost impossible to take wheel nuts off unless stand on it. However this one has a secret weapon. Any of the children guess? Extend the arm of it. Well recommended to all. Having God in us makes us strong like the extended wheel spanner, or like the pneumatic spanner.

- Gal 5:24- 'Christians have crucified the flesh with it's passions and desires'. This means that when Jesus died on the cross, we also died with Him (see Rom 6:6-7 our old man was crucified with Him that we might be freed from sin). We were also raised with Christ to a new life, no longer under slavery to sin (Rom 6:8-9). The result of this is that we are to consider ourselves (Rom 6:11; 'reckon'- 'logizomai=accounting term- to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over, do an estimate; draw a logical result from a series of figures) dead to sin but alive to God in Jesus. **Read Gal 2:19-20**- We no longer live, but Christ is now living in us by the power of His Spirit.
- See yourself as a saint, not as a sinner. We are saints who have the potential to sin, but don't need to because we have been set free from sin.
- Slavery abolished- some still cowered, but didn't need to, nor should we.
- Rom 7- Paul says once he was alive apart from the law, but when the law came the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death, even though he wanted to please God, he found he did the opposite (relate to that?). He was once a Jewish boy living without the law, but when he was 13 he became a 'son of the law'- at his barmitzvah- he learned God's law and made a pledge to live by it, but failed. He says the fault wasn't God's law, but him- the problem was his sinful nature. Paul asks who will save him from this body of death and thanks God that Jesus has. It is this sinful nature that Jesus has taken and struck the deathblow to by crucifying it. It is therefore dead and we are not to resurrect it. When we sin we are living as if it isn't dead, but in reality it is dead.
- Not only has the old sinful nature been given the death-blow, but now we have God Himself dwelling in us, empowering us to live a holy life as God does.
'His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.' 2Pet 1:3-4 (ESV)
- God doesn't just wash our sins away, he gives us power to stay clean.
- **Application**- Do you believe that you are a saint or a sinner? Do you believe that the old has gone and the new come? Are you reckoning yourself dead to sin? Ask God to help you see that not only has the old sinful you been crucified, but you are also raised with Christ from the dead, free from sin's controlling power. Read, memorise and speak out scriptures that promise this, and use them as a sword next time you are tempted.

God's Spirit gives us gifts and fruit

- Show power tools. Great for getting the job done, but not so good in the hands of someone who is really angry with someone else. Also not so good in the hands of a child, or someone who is incapable of controlling it.
- The power tools in the Christian life are the gifts of the Holy Spirit- speaking in tongues, prophecy, gifts of healings, word of knowledge etc. These are

indispensable tools for getting jobs done- leading people to Christ and building up the Church. These gifts of the Holy Spirit are for every Christian, no matter how young in age, or in the faith. Paul says that we are to be filled (keep being filled) with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5). He also says that we are to 'follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts (1Cor 14:1). Are we eagerly desiring spiritual gifts? Paul had to remind Timothy to stir up his spiritual gifts. Are we stirring up the gifts within us? Paul had to remind certain Christians not to despise prophecy or put out the Spirit's fire, or forbid speaking in tongues. Why only use 'natural tools' i.e. natural ability when we can use power tools to see God's kingdom come powerfully?

- Notice in 1Cor 14:1 Paul emphasises following the way of love as we desire spiritual gifts. Love is one of the key fruits of the Spirit mentioned in our Gal 5 passage. Not only does the Holy Spirit give us power tools, but He also develops our character so that we do not use them wrongly. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is godly character. Paul emphasises the importance of the fruit of the Spirit in addition to the gifts of the Spirit. You see gifts without fruit becomes ugly. The Corinthians were showing off with their spiritual gifts and it was going to their heads. Paul could thank God for their gifts, but they needed to work on their character. Do we?
- Character takes time to develop, just as fruit does. Fraser's vegetable patch- took much tending, but was continually growing, even though it did not yield for quite some time. What fruit are you looking for in your life? Be patient and sow to the Spirit and in season you will see the fruit, and others will notice 'wow, how that person has changed'. We live in an instant gratification culture that cannot wait for anything, but the best things are worth waiting for. James 5:7-8 says to be patient waiting for the return of the Lord, just as the farmer waits patiently for the land to yield his crop. We too need to be patient (itself a fruit of the Spirit) as we co-operate with God's Spirit as He works on our characters.
- Character is so important, as poor character can spoil and sometimes disqualify us from certain areas of service. Moral lapse has cost many a person their jobs in the secular world, but also in the Church. Paul spoke about ministers who had 'shipwrecked' their faith.
- **Application-** Do you understand the difference between the gifts and the fruit of the Spirit? What areas are you weak or strong in? Ask God for increasing effectiveness in both these areas. Choose to sort any character issues which may be spoiling areas of gifting. Find a person to be accountable to.

Summary

- **God's Spirit teaches us the difference between right and wrong**
- **God's Spirit gives us the power to live right**
- **God's Spirit gives us gifts and fruit**

Song: *This is my desire*

Application: Be filled with the Spirit in order to walk with the Spirit and bear fruit. Prayer for baptism in the Holy Spirit.