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Gospel Character (Part II)

GALATIANS 5:22-23

Introduction

1. Our elders have set before us our mission this year, that we be the hands of Jesus.
2. However, before we can be the hands of Jesus, we must have the heart of Jesus.
3. Though Jesus has ascended back to His Father in heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit.
4. One of the things which the Holy Spirit works to do in our lives is to develop our Lord's heart within us.
5. Within each of us as Christians, the Holy Spirit is causing His fruit to grow.
6. This fruit is to be found in the life of those individuals, who, according to Paul are . . .
 - a. "Led by the Spirit" (Galatians 5:18)
 - b. "Living by the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25)
 - c. "Walking by the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25)
7. As we noted two weeks ago, this fruit is composed of a number of traits or graces: love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
8. These nine traits can be divided into three groups of three.

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9. The first group of three contain those graces which turn our thoughts toward God:
 - a. Love — "love is from God" (1 John 4:7)

- b. Joy — we “rejoice in the Lord” (Philippians 3:1; 4:4)
 - c. Peace — from God comes “the peace which surpasses all comprehension” (Philippians 4:7).
10. The second group contains those graces which direct our attention toward our fellow man:
- a. Patience
 - b. Kindness
 - c. Goodness
11. The third group of graces refer more directly to ourselves:
- a. Faithfulness
 - b. Gentleness (Meekness)
 - c. Self-control
12. Let’s begin tonight by looking at the first trait of the Spirit’s fruit — love.

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I. The Fruit of the Spirit Is Love

A. THIS LOVE WHICH THE SPIRIT PRODUCES IN OUR LIVES IS . . .

1. From God (1 John 4:7).

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” (1 John 4:7)

2. That love which God pours out in our hearts (Romans 5:5).

“. . . the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Romans 5:5).

3. That which makes us most like God (1 John 4:16).

“God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides

in him” (1 John 4:16b).

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B. IT STANDS OUT AS . . .

1. That love (Grk. *agape*) which seeks only the highest good of others.
2. The single term used by the early church to describe God’s self-giving love.
3. It was a word not often used in classical Greek.
4. The church, however, infused this word with a new meaning to describe God’s special love.

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C. AGAPE LOVE IS DISPLAYED IN OUR LIVES AS . . .

1. We walk in love (Ephesians 5:1-2).

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma” (Ephesians 5:1–2).

2. We love one another fervently (1 Peter 1:22).

“Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart” (1 Peter 1:22).

3. That which “binds [us] all together in perfect unity” (Colossians 3:14, NIV84).
4. The "universal motive" for all that we do (1 Corinthians 16:14).

“Let all that you do be done in love.” (1 Corinthians 16:14)

[This love which the Spirit produces in our lives is also accompanied by joy.]

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II. The Fruit Of The Spirit Is Joy

A. THE JOY WHICH THE SPIRIT PRODUCES IN OUR LIVES

1. Is from the Greek word, *chara*, meaning “joy,” but also “*delight*” (LSJ) “*gladness, and great happiness*” (Louw-Nida).
2. It is closely connected with another Greek word, *charis*, meaning grace.
 - a. You and I are able to rejoice and have joy in our lives because of what God’s grace has done for us.
3. Joy is an attitude of life that rejoices in who we are in Christ, regardless of our circumstances.

Slide 7**B. WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?**

1. Like love, it is a gift from God (Romans 15:13).
 - a. Because you and I believe in what God is doing through Jesus Christ, God fills us with “all joy and peace.”
 - b. This “joy and peace” causes us to “overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”
2. It is integral to the kingdom of God (Romans 14:17).

“for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 14:17)
3. It sustains us in times of persecution (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

“You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

Slide 8**C. FOR EACH OF US AS CHRISTIANS, JOY . . .**

1. Should constantly be present in our lives (Philippians 4:4)

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!”
2. Is the result of our love for one another (Philemon 7).

“For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.”

3. Is not determined by our circumstances (James 1:2-4)

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

- ❑ Are we known for our joy? Or do those in our community see us as people who are constantly grumbling and complaining? No one wants to be around a person who is always talking about what is wrong in life.
- ❑

[In addition to love and joy, peace is another aspect of the Spirit’s fruit which turns our hearts toward God.]

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III. The Fruit Of The Spirit Is Peace

A. THE PEACE WHICH THE SPIRIT PRODUCES IN OUR LIVES

1. Our sense of well-being because of our relationship to Christ.
2. The tranquility we experience in our relationship with God and with other people, especially believers (cf. John 14:27; Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:7)

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B. LIKE LOVE AND JOY, IT TOO IS IMPORTANT

1. It also is a gift from God (Romans 15:13).

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

- a. He is the One who fills us with “all joy and peace.”
- b. This, in turn, causes us to “abound (overflow) in hope” all of which is by the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. And, like joy, it is also an integral part of God's kingdom (Romans 14:17).

“for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

3. It is the result of setting our minds on the things of the Spirit (Romans 8:5-6).

“For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.”

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C. IT PLAYS OUT IN A POWERFUL WAY IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

1. We find ourselves at peace with God (Romans 5:1).

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- a. None of us want to be on the receiving end of God's wrath.
 - b. The knowledge that God's wrath awaited us would make day to day living more difficult than we care to admit.
2. It also results in peace with those around us.
 - a. “When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Proverbs 16:7).
 - b. As Paul wrote in Romans 14:19, you and I as Christians, “pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”
 3. Others can also see that there is a peace which we have within.
 - a. Jesus gave peace to His disciples (John 14:27).

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”

- b. This same peace rules within our hearts (Colossians 3:15).

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts . . .”

- b. As a result, we do not need to worry or be anxious (Philippians 4:6-7).

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Conclusion

1. In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul lists for us that which he calls the “works” or “deeds of the flesh.” He tells us that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
2. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul also presents us with “the fruit of the Spirit,” and tells us that “against such things there is no law.”
3. There is quite a contrast between what our desire for the things of God and what the desire of our sinful nature will produce in our lives.
 - a. As we have seen tonight, those who walk by the Spirit experience love, joy, and peace
 - b. But those who indulge their sinful desires will experience hatred, jealousies, and outbursts of wrath.
4. Which would you rather have...?
 - a. A life infused with love, joy, and peace, by the Spirit of Almighty God?
 - b. A life inflicted by hatred, jealousies, and outbursts of wrath, due to fleshly lusts?