

“INTO THE ORCHARD”
(Galatians 5:16-26)

1.6.19

INTRODUCTION

Today we are starting a journey — an exciting trek that I hope and pray will have a major impact on all of us. I look forward to walking this path with you, as we are about to go “Into The Orchard.”

MESSAGE: What are we talking about?

Now before I ever go on a trip that, before I start, I run through the list of everything I’m going to need, to make sure my trip was as successful as possible. We’re kinda going to do that this morning as well. Now some of the things we’re going to mention today may be repeats, but I think it will be worth it to make sure that we all have complete understanding of all that is needed for this particular journey. So, let’s start with:

Jesus’ mission:

~***Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — Paul, I Timothy 1:15.***

~***“[T]he Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” — Jesus Christ, Luke 19:10.***

What was lost:

Relationship with God — how life was always intended to be. Sin broke that, and the result of that sin, that “missing the mark” of God’s perfection, was separation:

~***[Y]ou are not a God who is pleased with wickedness; with you, evil people are not welcome — David, Psalm 5:4.***

~***Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing — Habakkuk 1:13a.***

Without a remedy, mankind was heading for an eternity of complete separation from God — what we call “hell.”

~***We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each one of us has turned to our own way — Isaiah 53:6a***

~***[A]ll have sinned and fall short of the glory of God — Paul, Romans 3:23.***

~***[T]he wages of sin is death — Paul, Romans 6:23a. Wages = what we have earned.***

What did God do about man’s sin? Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, God’s own Son, was His remedy:

~***God made Him (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God — Paul, II Corinthians 5:21.***

~***[Jesus Christ] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world — I John 2:2.***

Jesus Christ is the ONLY remedy possible. Our own efforts can never do what Jesus did:

~***[A]ll our righteous acts are like filthy rags — Isaiah 64:8a.***

~***“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” — Peter, Acts 4:12.***

BUT — as great a gift as Jesus dying for all our sins truly is, and as intended for everybody as it truly is, it does not become anybody’s gift until it is claimed — individually in a moment in

conscious time through the surrender of our life to God through Jesus Christ. When that happens, we are “born again.”

**~“Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again”
— Jesus Christ, John 3:3.**

**~[I]f anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!
— Paul, II Corinthians 5:17.** At that moment, we are justified!

What is justification?

Justification is a legal term that means “not guilty.” When we are born again, God credits our account — our debt of sin — with the saving blood and perfection of Jesus Christ. Jesus paid the price of our sins when He died on the cross. As a result, all our sins — all our “yesterday” sins, all our “today” sins, all our “tomorrow” sins — are washed away, as David said,

**~as far as the east is from the west — David, Psalm 103:12a. “I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for My own sake, and remembers your sins no more” — God speaking, Isaiah 43:25 (also spoken by God through Jeremiah). As a result,
~since we have been justified (declared “not guilty”) through faith (believing in what Jesus did on the cross), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ — Paul, Romans 5:1.**

There is peace with God because no longer are we God’s enemies as a result of sin. We are now His children as a result of His declaring us “not guilty” through the work of His son on the cross. And, where there is no sin, there is no punishment. Instead of the hell our sins deserve, we are now sealed by the Holy Spirit to be prepared for eternity with God and His Son Jesus in heaven; as Paul said:

~[A]ll of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ — Paul, Galatians 3:27.

But justification, as hugely important as that is, is just a moment — just like the birth of a child. What comes next? That is called sanctification.

What is sanctification?

Sanctification is every moment of the Christian life following justification — our “new birth.” It is the process of growth that is expected in every one of our lives. It is the process through the work of the Holy Spirit in which we begin to experience the fruit of the Spirit.

~In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy . . . being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus . . . that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God — Paul, Philippians 1:4, 6, 9b-11.

~[W]e all . . . are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit — Paul, II Corinthians 3:17-18.

Another way to think of all this: What Christ did on the cross was switch places with us; He switched our identity as sinners with His identity as perfect. He took our sins; we received His righteousness. So now, as Christians, He wants to perform another switch: He wants to switch our sinful nature with His spiritual one. Sanctification is the process of that spiritual

transformation, and that will be a lifelong process — ended only when we are made perfectly complete in the Kingdom of God. It is the desire, based on the indwelling of Christ's Holy Spirit in our lives, that compels us to live lives that reflect the One who has done so much for us:

~[Christ] died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again — Paul, II Corinthians 5:15.

~Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did — I John 2:6.

Now in practical terms, this all means that we go from our own thoughts, our own perspectives, our own responses as to how we look at the world to how Jesus looks at the world — His thoughts, His perspectives, His responses. Remember when Jesus is standing before Pilate, and Pilate asks Him if He is a king? Do you remember Christ's response? **"My kingdom is not of this world"** — **Jesus Christ, John 18:36**. And then He went on to say (and I'm paraphrasing here): "If My kingdom were of this world, then My people would act like people who belong to a kingdom of this world." And that's the whole point of sanctification: to make in us something unlike anything the world knows or does or says. Christians are supposed to be reflections of Christ. The fruits of the Spirit are the evidence of that process.

What are "spiritual gifts?"

Spiritual gifts (in the New Testament Greek, *charisma*, "grace gift") are special abilities granted by the Holy Spirit that enable believers to serve others in the context of the community of faith. In the New Testament, there are three (3) lists of spiritual gifts — Romans 12, I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. All authored by Paul, they include both ministries in word (i.e., preaching, teaching, evangelism) and in deed (i.e., giving, encouragement, hospitality). These are not exhaustive lists but rather representative, in other words, examples of what spiritual gifts are. Whatever the gift, what they all have in common is that they are given and enabled by God and exercised within the context of a caring, loving, Christian fellowship with the purpose of building up both individuals and families of believers to spiritual maturity.

What is "spiritual fruit?"

Spiritual fruit, on the other hand, is the result of the Holy Spirit indwelling human lives that shows itself in both basic attitude and in relationships with others. It is a measure of our relationship with God:

~"Produce fruit in keeping with repentance" — John the Baptist, Matthew 3:8.

~"This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples" — Jesus Christ, John 15:8.

What is the difference between spiritual gifts and spiritual fruits?

God enables different spiritual gifts to evidence themselves in the lives of different believers. As no two believers are alike, no two believers will exercise the same spiritual gifts.

~We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us — Paul, Romans 12:6a.

~There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. . . . All these are the work of

one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines — Paul, I Corinthians 12:4-7, 11.

The bottom-line issue is that God through His Holy Spirit graciously distributes spiritual gifts based on how God has designed us to be used:

~[W]e are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do — Paul, Ephesians 2:10.

~[I]t is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose — Paul, Philippians 2:13.

Now, as opposed to spiritual gifts, a mix of which may be unique to each individual, spiritual fruit is about everybody. Everybody is commanded to produce spiritual fruit because God's expectation of us is that, spiritually, we are all growing up; we are all maturing in Christ. In fact, the author of the book of Hebrews kind of fussed at his readers, observing:

~[T]hough by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food — Hebrews 5:12.

Bottom line: We are ALL called to show spiritual fruit. We are ALL called to show love; we are ALL called to show joy; we are ALL called to show peace — you get the idea. Spiritual fruit is the result of born-again people being rooted in the spiritual ground of Jesus Christ. That is universal, applicable to all Christians everywhere.

What is the purpose of spiritual fruit?

The purpose of spiritual fruit is to "SHOW JESUS," to show Christ to the world — to reflect a love, joy and peace that is unhindered by life's risings and fallings. It is designed to show the complete life-change that has occurred when a person is born again. [LEE STROBEL EXAMPLE]. It is designed to underscore the difference between religion — a human mix of rules and regulations based on human ideals — and the love affair that is genuine relationship with God the Father through the redemptive work of God the Son. And it is a barometer that can measure how our lives are going. If life seems negative, if there seems to be no joy or peace, it is possible that, spiritually, something has gone wrong. If church seems negative, a place of turmoil and tension, it is probable that, spiritually, something has gone wrong. Spiritual fruit shows the measure of our sanctification. It always will.

If the Holy Spirit dwells within me, then why do I still struggle with sin?

To borrow from Hal Lindsey's best-selling book from the 1970s, "Satan Is Alive And Well On Planet Earth." Until final judgment, Satan, as the ruler of this world, is allowed to be constantly bombarding us with temptation as he takes advantage of the sin nature that has been and will always be with us until we are home with Jesus in heaven.

~For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other — Paul, Galatians 5:17.

~[O]ur struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms — Paul, Ephesians 6:12.

CONCLUSION

Two things to keep in mind as we go forward into this incredible orchard:

First, the fruit of the Spirit is an outcome of the surrender of our lives to God through Jesus Christ. Simply put, Christ is not asking us to be partners with Him, nor is He asking us to do the best we can. Most essentially, Jesus ruthlessly demands that we become His slaves. A slave exists for only one purpose: to do the will of the master — period. No votes, no opinions, no analysis, no feedback. Just **“not My will, but Yours be done” — Jesus Christ, Luke 22:42b**. That is the 24/7 drill. And I say that Jesus is ruthless in His demands because it is His Holy Spirit that dwells within us — a Holy Spirit that is in every way reflective of the Father and the Son. It is not about our effort; it is about our surrender. His measure of surrender, His standard of perfection, never changes, never backs off. It, like Him, remains the same. Our lives in Christ are very much supposed to be a reflection of Christ.

And second, when you study the Bible, one of the most prominent things you will find is — failure! Check it out: Adam and Eve started it all by thinking they knew better than God. Moses once acted like he was God. Samson thought he was invincible. David fell for Bathsheba. Solomon fell for a whole truckload of Bathshebas. Elijah ran for his life because of one woman’s anger. Peter betrayed his Lord because a servant girl put him on the spot. Paul called himself **a wretched man — Paul, Romans 7:24a** because of his ongoing struggle with his sinful nature. Folks, if that was them, including some giants of the faith, that is also us. I need to make one thing clear: I don’t go to church because I have it all together. I go to church because I don’t. I go here because I need this place to impact me, to be a part of molding me into the man God wants me to be, much as Proverbs tells us: **As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another — Proverbs 27:17**. Do you get it? We each have the opportunity to show each other what love looks like, what joy looks like, and peace, and patience, and all the rest of the fruit in this orchard. This isn’t about being perfect; none of us are. If churches were only made up of perfect people, then every church on the planet would be the same size: a membership of none. Churches, including this one here, are made up of people at all kinds of various stages of becoming what God wants them to be, what he has begun making them to be. This side of heaven, none of us will ever be completely what God has in mind. In other words, a daily fact of our lives, no matter how much we want to think otherwise, will always include a moment of failure, a moment where we fall short, despite what may be the best of our intentions. That’s all of us.

The point? This is as good a time as any to make a commitment to each other — to always be willing to forgive each other, minister to each other, share burdens with each other, share failures with each other, to come alongside each other with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. That’s the whole point of this orchard — to allow us to minister to others with the fruits which God is growing within us. So, let’s begin this journey. I promise you: It’s gonna be great! Let’s pray!