

Bearing fruit * Galatians 5:22-23

March 26, 2020 * Langford Community Church * Graham Gladstone

Hello everyone! So glad that you could be here today. I think that I'm going to try to put together a 'virtual church gathering' on Sunday – through the wonders of technology, I think that we'll be able to connect online if you want to come on and have a brief time of Scripture and prayer together – as long as the wonderful technology holds up. Watch in your emails – there'll be a link you can click, you don't need an account or anything so that's good. It'll be good to see anyone who can make it.

Today I want to revisit something that came up in the "Stay connected" message. John 15 tells us that when we stay connected to Jesus, we will inevitably bear fruit.

I mentioned in that message that that fruit is probably good deeds and obedience and evangelistic effort, but I also mentioned that that fruit probably has to do with character – not just what we do but what we're like. If He is the Vine and we are the branches, then it just makes sense that our lives would resemble His.

And I'll be honest. That's a reminder that I need to hear right now. Because right now, everybody's a little on edge, you're cooped up in your house with your whole family, and it can be easy to produce some pretty un-Jesus-like fruit.

So what I want to do today is look with you at the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 with the intention that it will help you to cultivate those qualities in your everyday life.

So, Galatians 5, verse 22, Paul writes that when you walk with Jesus, living according to His Spirit within you, you will bear this fruit – 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22-23 NIV).

When we stay connected to Jesus, His Spirit produces in us – ~~22 But the fruit of the Spirit is~~ love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22-23 NIV).

The Spirit produces in us LOVE – an unending affection for the people around us.

The Spirit produces in us JOY – a confident contentedness knowing that God is in control.

The Spirit produces in us PEACE – a calm confidence in the middle of the storm.

The Spirit produces in us PATIENCE – the willingness to slow down and not demand 'my way, right away.'

The Spirit produces in us KINDNESS – a selfless generosity that looks out for others.

The Spirit produces in us GOODNESS – an unshakable commitment to doing the right thing.

The Spirit produces in us FAITHFULNESS – a steadfast trustworthiness that means others can count on us.

The Spirit produces in us GENTLENESS – a humble demeanour that’s willing to learn and not easily angered.

The Spirit produces in us SELF-CONTROL – the capacity to take responsibility for our actions and limit ourselves where necessary.

That’s the Fruit of the Spirit. Qualities that should characterize our lives when we stay connected to Jesus.

Now there’s a sense in which we work towards those. There are times when I feel impatient when I need to stop and say ‘be patient.’ There are times when I feel anxious and I need to say ‘be at peace.’ Part of self-control IS being able to say ‘I want more joy and so I will work to cultivate it.’

But there’s also a sense in which we simply receive it. This is after all the fruit – ‘of the Spirit’ – literally, that which the Spirit produces in us. Our ability to create this in and of ourselves is limited. Love, joy, peace, patience... all of that ultimately comes from the Holy Spirit and we just need to lean into it and live out what He’s already making us. As often as I say “I want greater peace and so I’ll work to cultivate it,” I need to pray “Spirit, You’re alive in me, enlarge my ability to live in your peace.”

So what I want to leave you with today is a reminder to lean into the fruit that the Spirit is producing in your heart. If you are walking with Jesus, then He is going to produce His fruit in you. Cultivate it, pray for it, and even more, keep it front of your mind. It helps me to remember to be loving and joyful and patient and kind when I remember that the Spirit produces it all in me.

So let me get a song stuck in your head here as we conclude and hopefully you’ll be singing it all day 😊.