

Spirit Filled Fruit

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[0 : 0 0] First thing they teach you at preaching school is never to start a sermon with a disclaimer or an apology. I'm just going to break that rule straight away and just say that we here at Holy Trinity and in this service, we are a big word church. We love big words. We love preaching big theological topics.

We love going after the hard, meaty, in-depth stuff that you'll find in the Bible. And I'm not going to do any of that tonight. I'm not going to use any big words.

And what I'm going to say is very, very simple. How many of you just kind of breathed a sigh of relief? Maybe you woke up first and kind of noticed that I was saying something. That's kind of the way it feels tonight. I know it's hot.

But I'm going to try and be pretty brief and pretty simple tonight. If you're new, my name's Jono, by the way. I'm a pastor here at this congregation. And if you are new, I just want to catch you up to speed on where we're at in this four-week series on the Holy Spirit.

So last week we kicked it off and I talked about what it means to be filled with the Spirit, to live a Spirit-filled life. So I said, if you're a Christian, then you have the Holy Spirit.

[1 : 1 3] Everyone who's a Christian has the Holy Spirit. We read about that in Romans 8 and a bunch of other places. But Paul also tells the Christians in the churches that he writes to, to be filled with the Spirit.

So the implication there is that you can have the Spirit and not be filled with the Spirit. So last week I said that the Spirit-filled life, as opposed to the average Christian life, the Spirit-filled life is one that is marked by, do you remember?

Boldness and fruitfulness in living out the Great Commission. Let me just unpack that for you. I said that the Spirit-filled life is marked by boldness and fruitfulness in living out the Great Commission.

The Great Commission was given to Jesus' disciples and to all of his disciples of all ages before he ascended into heaven. And it was this. He said, That's the Great Commission.

So if you're a Christian here tonight, you want to know, what's my purpose? A big chunk of your purpose on earth is to live out that commission. To make disciples of all nations. To share the good news with people.

[2 : 3 4] See them come to faith. Have them baptised. And then teach them the truths of the Bible. And I said, If you are living a Spirit-filled life, you will enjoy boldness in that.

And I don't mean, By that I don't mean that you need to be really extroverted and go door-knocking and do cold turkey evangelism or anything like that. You might want to. But by boldness, I really mean that you are open to sharing the good news.

Even if it's with a friend you've known for 20, 30 years, that you'll be open and ready at all times to share the good news. So that's boldness. And then fruitfulness. And that's where we come tonight.

To the fruitfulness that should be evident in your life as a result of being filled with the Spirit. And we're going to look at these fruits of the Spirit that are mentioned here in Galatians chapter 5.

So this is week 2 of 4. For the next 2 weeks, Chris Bowditch, who is just up here giving the notices, he'll be preaching in the next couple of weeks on the gifts of the Spirit and how we ought to use those gifts.

[3 : 36] He preached twice this morning at 8am and 10am. He did a great job. So you're in for some good teaching in the next couple of weeks. So make sure you're here for that. Why don't we just pray to kick it off.

And then I'm just going to go through these 9 aspects of the fruit of the Spirit, one by one. Give a little definition. Give a couple of examples. And then we'll be done. Okay?

So let's pray. Father, please be with us now as we open your Word. Lord, it is hot in here. It is stuffy. It is muggy. And many of us find it hard to stay awake when it's like this.

So Lord, please give us power by your Spirit to understand what your Spirit is saying to us through your Word. And please help us to be eager to grow in fruitfulness as you fill us with your Spirit.

In Jesus' name. Amen. So to get the most out of this sermon, not only do you need to stay awake, but you need to be sitting here with me. And as I read out each of these fruits, fruits of the Spirit, you need to be saying in your heart, I want that.

[4 : 41] When I start talking about love and peace and patience, you need to be sitting there saying, I want more of that in my life.

That's how you get the most out of this sermon. If you're not really bothered about growing in fruitfulness, you're not going to get much out of this sermon. I'll just give you the heads up. So let's do it.

Let's just go one by one through each of these fruits. I say fruits, but what I really mean is nine aspects of the one fruit of the Spirit. You notice it's in the singular there.

There's one fruit of the Spirit that should be evident in all of our lives. And then there's nine aspects to it. Or, you know, it might be like an orange. Okay. And there's nine segments to this orange, which is the fruit of the Spirit.

So let's kick it off. Love is the first one. He starts off with love because it's the most important of all of the fruits, all of those segments of the fruit of the Spirit.

[5 : 42] It should be the fruit that we are looking for above every other fruit. It should be the thing that should be evident more than anything else in your life as a Christian. It is the ultimate thing to aspire to as a Christian.

It's the thing that you ought to be asking God for most regularly is for love. Paul very deliberately puts it there at the start to show that it's the most important thing that we need to be filled with, that we need to be producing as Christians.

1 Corinthians 13, Colossians 3, 1 John chapter 3, all talk about love being the most important attribute that we can have.

1 John also says that love is at the very heart of God himself. It's the strongest of his attributes, the most significant. He says, God is love.

Love should be abounding from us if we are filled with the Spirit.

[6 : 48] And we need to be showing it to God, loving God. We need to be loving our brothers and sisters in the church. You look around, these are the people that you're meant to be loving each day. And we should be showing love to the people in the community around us.

Jesus, when he was asked, what's the most important commandment, what did he say? He summed up all the commandments in two. He said, love God and love your neighbor as yourself.

Love is of utmost importance. And the best example for us of love was Jesus himself. So that's love. Flowing out of love come all the other aspects, the other fruits.

I'm just going to call them fruits. Remember, that's one fruit. I'm going to call them fruits. All right. So all these other fruits flow out of a heart of love. If you don't have love, if you're not growing in love, you will not grow in fruitfulness in these other areas.

So out of love, the first thing that comes is joy. And this joy is not so much happiness, though it's linked to happiness, but it's happiness that exists within you irrespective of your environment.

[7 : 56] So for most of us, to the degree that we're happy is contingent on what's going on around us. You know, whether we're having a good time at work, whether we're having a good time with our family, whether our girlfriend, boyfriend is treating us right, whether we're sick or healthy.

So our happiness is very much influenced by that which is around us. But joy, joy is a deep happiness in Jesus, in what he has done for us, which does not change no matter what circumstances we find ourselves, because God himself doesn't change.

Joy is a deep happiness, a deep gladness in what Jesus has done for us. The Bible commands us to serve God with joy, serve God with gladness.

So I think joy is the second most important fruit that can manifest itself in our lives if we are manifesting these fruits of the Spirit.

An example of a guy who I think is just full of the fruit of joy in his life is a guy named Doug. And he's a guy who lives in America, a guy that I've worked with for a couple of years.

[9 : 08] And he is a poor farm boy with little to no prospects in terms of education, work, relationships. I mean, the world would view this guy as a bit of a loser.

But he produces, he radiates this level of joy that I've never seen in anyone with better prospects, anyone with more money, anyone with more friends.

He has this sense that he has been saved by Jesus and that's all that matters. He has a deep gratitude in his heart to God for sending Jesus to the cross. And it just radiates out of him.

You see him in worship and he's literally on the floor, on his knees, in tears. Tears of joy. Circumstances around him change.

He goes through tough times, but he radiates this deep sense of joy in God. That's what joy is about. Thirdly, peace. This is the state of spiritual well-being, of serenity that can only come through the gospel of Jesus.

[10 : 18] A sense of spiritual well-being from knowing that you are right with God. The Bible says that God the Father sent Jesus to the cross so that he might, through his death, bring peace between us and our Heavenly Father.

Without Jesus' death, without being saved from our sins, there is nothing but anger and wrath and enmity and eventually eternal damnation, justified because of our sin.

But Jesus went to the cross. He died a death on the cross for our sins so that he might bring us peace. Peace between us and God. So this peace that Paul is talking about here is a deep sense of spiritual well-being, of serenity, of this feeling that amongst the storms that rock us in life, we have peace with God through the gospel of Jesus.

That nothing can take away that peace. I wonder if you've ever just sat and even just taken a minute out of your crazy schedules to sit and think about, meditate on, the salvation that Jesus has brought to you through the cross.

If you've rightly understood the peace that Jesus brings through his gospel, you'll experience that peace in your heart.

[11 : 48] And that's irrespective of what's going on around you, whether you've got cancer, whether your family's just been killed in an accident. It doesn't matter what happens. These waves will rock us. But that peace that you have eternity in front of you cannot be shaken.

I met a girl once who experiences this so much better and more fully than I ever have. Her name's Laura and she has been abused repeatedly throughout her life, sexually, physically, just in every kind of way, rejected by her family.

And she has a peace and a willingness to forgive that I've never seen in my own life and rarely see in other people's lives.

She came to know Jesus quite recently. She experienced his forgiveness. She experienced his cleansing away of her filth and her sin.

And she now experiences a peace with God and even with those people who abused her. Because of the peace that she's experienced through the cross. It's an incredible, powerful fruit of the Spirit that God will give us if we ask him.

[13 : 02] Love, joy, peace. And we've got patience. The better translation is, it doesn't really work, but it's long-tempered. So if you know someone who's short-tempered, gets angry easily, likes to hit people, yells a lot, the opposite of that is patience.

Being long-tempered. That's what Paul's talking about here. And he's specifically talking about being patient, long-tempered with annoying people in the church. So Paul knows that the church is made up of a whole bunch of different people.

I'm looking out here and just seeing heaps of different people that are brought together under the cross of Jesus. It's a bit like a family. You don't choose who to bring along here tonight. You're all thrown in together and you are bound to come across a few people who just annoy you in this place, even in this church.

What Paul is saying is, if you're filled with the Spirit, if God is changing you to be more like Jesus, then you will grow in patience, in being long-tempered with people.

You'll be increasing in forgiveness. It also means, it's not only reflective of your relationship with other annoying people, but also with annoying circumstances.

[14 : 18] So you find yourself suffering, you find yourself in times of trial and you are patient. Long-suffering. Long-tempered.

A few weeks ago I found myself on a Sunday afternoon in hospital. All of a sudden I just started experiencing some increasing and pretty sharp pain. We went down to Box Hill to the emergency room and I found myself in a bed and I had tubes in me and there's morphine rushing around me and within about an hour I'd had enough.

I was really, really frustrated. I couldn't understand why this was happening to me. I hate getting jabbed with anything, especially those big needles that they shove in your arm so that they can pump.

I didn't mind the morphine, that was alright. But my patience was this big, this long. And for many of us who haven't gone through a lot of that particularly physical suffering, we have developed such little patience, such little fortitude.

So I visited an older guy the other day. He's been in hospital for two years on his back with pipes in him, tubes in him. And I said to him, can you please teach me how to suffer well?

[15 : 39] Because I went in there, he had his Bible out, he's singing psalms, he's like having the best time of his life. And I said to him, how do you do that? And he said, I ask God to give me patience.

That was his answer. I was ready with a notebook. I'm serious. I was ready with a notebook to take down his ten point plan on how to be patient. And he just said, I just ask God for patience. If you want to be long-suffering with people who annoy you, if you want to be long-suffering in situations that displease you, ask God to grow this as a fruit of the Spirit in your life.

Number five is kindness. And this is a general openness to others. A general friendliness where you break down the natural barriers that exist between you and other people, between you and strangers.

This is kindness personified. Just to be open, honest, welcoming. And I reckon this is one of the biggest areas that we can have an influence as Christians.

I couldn't be great if Christians generally were just known to be kind, open, honest, embracing people. If people who came into this church, and we've got some new people here tonight, we have new people every week.

[16 : 57] And to come into a church is a daunting experience. And to come into this church, you've got to walk about 100 metres before you even get to the building. And that's a daunting, overwhelming experience for so many people.

What if those people came into this building, and there was just a hundred odd people full of kindness, openness, friendliness.

There were no barriers between them and us. That would be the fruit of the spirit of kindness being manifested among us, and it would make all the difference.

It's not enough to be really well taught. It's not enough to know your Bible backwards. It's not enough to have cool music. If we're not kind, if we're not open and generous and honest with people, we're not going to get anywhere.

Number six. This Bible says generosity, another translation would be goodness. So goodness and kindness, they seem kind of quite closely related, and they are.

[17 : 56] But goodness or generosity, it's sort of kindness in action. So you can be kind and open and honest, but then when goodness comes in, when generosity comes in, that's when you act.

That's when you start doing the good works that God has provided in advance for you to do. Ephesians 2.10. So this is where we become the hands and feet of Jesus as his followers.

When we get out there into the world and start doing good to others, irrespective of how they've treated us. James says in his letter in the Bible, he says, true religion is marked by this, to look after widows and orphans in their distress.

That's how he sums it up. And he'll say other things about knowing the truth, and we know all of that. But we need to be active in our goodness, in our generosity towards others.

We see this in the ministry we've got running here called Impact. That's our social justice ministry, but we don't want it to be just an add-on aspect to the church. We want it to be an organic way of life for us.

[19 : 06] It's just a vehicle for you guys to be able to get involved in helping those people who need it. We've got guys here tonight from the Anchorage down there in Abbotsford, where we go and visit and we hang out with these guys.

And it's just part of being generous. It's just part of living out our Christian convictions in loving other people. It's part of being the hands and feet of Jesus. If you're full of the Spirit, you'll find yourself doing more and more acts of goodness and generosity towards others.

It's not a list just to tick off as we go through. It's just a way of life that we want to live. Number seven, faithfulness. So this word, it's actually faith, but in the context, it means faithfulness.

It's more than just having faith. It's about being faithful to God. It's about being loyal to God and loyal to others. Jesus said, let your yes be yes and your no be no.

That's faithfulness to God and to others. It's about doing what you say you're going to do. It's about persevering in faith to the end.

[20 : 21] Jesus told the story about the sower. You remember that story? He spreads a seed. Some of the plants shot up real quick, but by the time the sun came out, they withered away.

And unfortunately, it's a mark of our generation, this new generation, that we tend to be pretty short-lived in our commitment. We tend to shoot up real quick and then fall away really quickly as well.

So faithfulness is about longevity. It's about perseverance. It's about perseverance. It's about loyalty to God and to others. It's about being dependable as Christians.

All right. Number eight. Gentleness. Gentleness. Gentleness. The actual word here in the original language means, it's the same word that they use for putting a bridle on a horse or for taming a wild animal.

So gentleness is about taming yourself, but it's not. Another word for it is meekness. But quite often when we hear the word meekness, we think weakness. And when you hear about an animal being tamed, you think it's kind of being weakened.

[21 : 30] But that's not the sense of the word that we get here. Gentleness is about power under control. It's power in check. So Peter in 1 Peter, I think it's 3, 15 to 16, says that if we're going to have a genuine witness in the world, we need to be gentle with others.

And you need to sort of contrast this with me saying you need to be bold. You need to be bold in sharing your faith. But at the same time, you need to be gentle. You need to be tamed. You need to be gentle in your interaction with others.

And the reason Peter in his book, 1 Peter 3, 15 to 16, the reason he says that you need to be gentle in your interaction with others is so that when other people start to slander you for being a Christian and say, oh, Christians are all hypocrites and Christians don't really love other people, then the people who hear that can say, no, hang on a sec.

I know Dave. I know Eric. I know Alison. I know Jono. I know Katrin. I know Naomi. They're all Christians and they are gentle.

They've got this great, amazing message of the gospel, but they're tame in the way that they present it to me. They're gentle and loving in the way that they deal with me.

[22 : 58] That's the whole idea behind gentleness. And I know a guy who just personifies this. His name's Peter and he's probably the most capable person I've ever met. High-flying CEO, businessman type.

He's just an elite guy in just about every aspect of life. He's one of the guys that you want to hate because everything they do is really good, but they're so gentle and they're so humble that you find yourself loving them.

That's what marks him out. And he succeeds in business because of this, because of his gentleness, power under control. But he also succeeds far more importantly in sharing the gospel because he's got all this power, but he uses it in gentleness.

That's how we ought to be. Okay, we'll come to the last one, self-control. You'll notice in the reading from tonight, a little bit earlier on, Paul is speaking to the Galatians and he says that the works of the flesh, that is the vices, the sins in our life are obvious.

And he lists a bunch of them there. Fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like those.

[24 : 21] So just everything that he can think of, he mentions there. And the way to deal with those vices that all of us have is to be self-controlled.

And the way to be self-controlled is to pursue all of these other fruits of the Spirit. If you pursue love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, you'll have a much better time of it in being self-controlled.

I've said before that living a self-controlled life is not just about white-knuckling it and just, you know, trying your best because none of us will get anywhere that way. That's religion, that's works, that's not the way it works.

The key to self-control is the fact that it is a fruit of the Spirit. It's not the fruit of trying really hard, it's a fruit of the Spirit.

And with every one of these fruits, all nine of them, none of them will be manifest in our life in any great measure unless God does the work in us.

[25 : 30] Is that right? The whole message of Christianity is you can't grow in godliness through external feeding in.

It's got to come outwardly from the heart. You can't grow in godliness, you can't become more like Jesus, you can't manifest the fruits of the Spirit in your life merely by trying really hard, by having a list of rules and regulations, by obeying a bunch of religious tenets.

No, it's got to come from the heart. And we learnt last week that for everyone who confesses Jesus, the Holy Spirit dwells within us. That's why He can do this heart work.

He's there. The Holy Spirit is there. And so, as the heart manifests these fruits of the Spirit, it's the Holy Spirit at work in us in bringing them to fruition.

I think I want to leave it on that note, because I think that's probably the most important message that you can take away from tonight. The whole problem in Galatia was that they had descended into thinking that they could do works of the law in order to grow in godliness.

[26 : 51] They had a bit of Jesus, and then they wanted to add all these lists of rules and regulations in order to grow in godliness. That was their mistake. So, whatever you do, don't leave tonight thinking, okay, I've got nine fruits of the Spirit.

These are my ten-point plan to get it done. These are the areas that I need to work on. These are the laws that I need to keep. That would be missing the whole point of the book. The point of the book is that it's futile to try and force yourself to grow to be more like Jesus.

The Spirit has to do that work within you. So, I said last week, one of the biggest things that we can do is pray. Remember Luke 11, Jesus said, if you go to your father and ask for a fish, he's not going to give you a snake.

If you go to your father and ask for an egg, he's not going to give you a scorpion. And if you go to your heavenly father and ask for the Holy Spirit, he will not withhold it from you. So, if my prayers have been answered tonight and you've been listening through this thinking, I want more of that.

I want more love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control. If you want more of that in your life, then I'm going to pray for us now on behalf of all of us and ask God to fill us with his Spirit so that those fruits would be evident in our life.

[28 : 25] in greater measure each day. Alright? I'm going to pray and then I'm going to ask you to pray each day that God would fill you with his Spirit as well. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for being so practical in your Word, for giving us this list of nine fruits of the Spirit that are really just one fruit of the Spirit that you want to see growing in each of us.

thank you for showing us tonight what it means for us to manifest each one of these in our life. I pray that throughout this week that we would meditate on this message and more than that, that we would pray and ask you to fill us with your Spirit so that we would be growing in each of these areas in our life.

I pray corporately for us as a church that we would be growing in each of these areas as well so that we could be more effective in our mission to fulfill the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations.

So fill us with your Spirit, I pray, right now and for the rest of our Christian lives. I pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.