

Gospel Fruit in All of Life

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[0:00] This is your word, and we desire to submit ourselves under the authority of this word, and! Lord, we ask by your spirit that you would change us, make us to bear the fruit of the gospel! As we root ourselves in it and in Christ, I pray this in his name. Amen. Good morning, church.

Good morning. My name is Mike, one of the pastors here at Shoreline, and I'm so glad you guys are here working with us this morning. I've been drinking lemon tea and with honey all weekend, so if my voice is a little weak or shaky, I apologize, but thank the Lord. May the Lord strengthen my voice for this sermon here. You know, as Josh just read this passage for us, you might have been thinking, what is the point of preaching a sermon and all these ancillary details? And like, what does this have to do with us today? And you know, I've been reading through this letter a number of times over the past year, and I've been tempted towards similar thoughts every time that I've arrived at chapter 16.

After that resounding crescendo of the resurrection in chapter 15, and then you get to all this stuff about collection and travels and whatnot. But then I started studying this passage last week. And I was reminded, first of all, that every single bit of scripture is the breathed out word of almighty God, and it is profitable for the saints. Amen? Amen. And second, as I studied, I was increasingly amazed at both the beauty and the timeless relevance of this chapter. Surprise, surprise, being God's word. You know, from a church history perspective, 1 Corinthians 16 gives us some fascinating insights into the life of Paul, the saints in Corinth, the early church in general. But more importantly, get this, 1 Corinthians 16 comes after 1 Corinthians 15. And the whole rest of the book. Okay, and so therefore, 1 Corinthians 16 gives us a vision for how the gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul was just heralding, how that gospel informs and transforms our individual and corporate lives. This chapter is actually squarely in line with the force and emphasis of the whole letter in which Paul has been calling the

Corinthians to display Christ and the gospel in all things. And specifically, this chapter demonstrates what it looks like in light of the death and resurrection of Christ and our future resurrection with him to abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord, our labor is not in vain.

[2:48] Amen. This is the final verse of last week's chapter. So please turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 16, 1 through 12. If you haven't already, as always, we have Bibles on the back table. They're bookmarks to today's passage. Feel free to keep one of those as a gift to you if you need one. The title of today's sermon is Gospel Fruit in All of Life. Gospel Fruit in All of Life. And this passage is absolutely overflowing with gospel fruits. Kind of like a homeward orchard apple tree filled with savory mcallons. Okay, that's a nice time. Come on, son. I will mention that again. Okay.

What that means, at least for this year. We'll wait till next year. What that means, though, is that you're actually not going to get this nice and neat Baptist three-point sermon today like I normally give, but more of a Piper-style sermon. Okay? So we're going to talk about 27 gospel fruits. I'm just kidding. We're going to talk about 10, 10 gospel. See, 10 sounds better now. 10 gospel fruits evident from this text. And I already had to cut a couple out that I was planning to say, and they were more still that I wasn't even going to include. I am sure that you on your own can identify more fruits born out of the gospel from this passage. Now, the thing, the main point that we're going to keep coming back to is this. Gospel roots produce gospel fruits in all of life for the display and glory of Christ. It's really basic. Okay, this is basic. We're going to see how this works in this passage. Gospel fruits produce gospel fruits in all of life for the display and glory of Christ. Okay, are you

ready? Here's the first one. Gospel fruit number one. Solidarity among God's family. Solidarity among God's family. You see this in the first few verses. Look in your Bible to verse one. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do.

Okay, and then Paul proceeds to give them instructions for collecting money and provisions to then go to the church in Jerusalem. Now when we read Paul in the New Testament, we learn that this collection is very important to him. And the way we know that is because he talks about it in every major epistle.

Here in 1 Corinthians, again for two whole chapters in 2 Corinthians, he talks about it in his letter to the Romans at the end, and then also in his letter to the Galatians. Now this collection was significant to Paul for two main theological reasons. The first one is that this would demonstrate unity and solidarity among the church across cultural boundaries, especially across the Jew-Gentile boundary. Okay, listen to what Paul says in Romans chapter 15. He says, I am going to Jerusalem, bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia, which is Corinth, Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. For they were pleased to do it, and indeed, listen to this, he says, indeed, they owe it to them, to the Jewish Christians. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. Paul is saying that the Gentile Christians owe it to the [6:11] Jewish Christians to share materially with them because the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings. Or if we use his language from Romans chapter 11, the Gentiles have been grafted in to the olive tree that is the true Israel. And then there's Ephesians 2. We were in this earlier this year. There's Ephesians 2. Paul reminds the Gentile believers that they were once cut off from Israel, cut off from Christ and the promises and the covenant. But now Christ has brought them near by his blood. He says that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two. So I'm using Gentiles.

One man in place of the two. So making peace. And might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. Paul was ever eager to proclaim the solidarity among God's family, that Jesus Christ created through the gospel and especially across that Jew-Gentile divide.

And so he's using, he's taking advantage of this financial need in Jerusalem as a way to affirm and to cultivate that solidarity among the saints. This is great leadership here.

Church, when the gospel takes root in our hearts, it leads, and we've seen this time and again in 1 Corinthians, especially at the beginning. It leads to the dismantling of cultural boundaries that breed disunity and contentment. The gospel unites us across boundaries of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, etc. Because it makes us one family in Christ.

Christ. As in this passage, this solidarity is made visible when churches love and care for their brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. We'll talk about that a little bit more later.

[8:04] This family unity, it's also made visible within the local church, right here, as we love and care for people who are not like us. Right? I don't know if you've noticed that before. Look around you. People are different than you. People who might even think that we're weird or who you might think are weird.

People who sometimes hurt or offend us. But church, we remember, one, that God is holy. He is not like us. Utterly different, set apart, totally other. We were just singing that the great I am. It's none like him.

And he bridged that gap between him, infinitely holy, and us, infinitely, not infinitely. We are we are corrupt. We are unable to do anything. He bridged that gap. Also, we had offended him. We had broken his law. Talk about offense. We had offended God. We owed an eternity suffering for that. But he, again, bridged that gap. He forgave our sins by going to the cross, enduring our punishment, to unite us with himself and love. That gospel creates solidarity among the family of God.

We have far less of a gap to bridge between one another. We've been offended far, far, far less than we've offended God. Solidarity among the family of God. Here's the second gospel fruit. Concern for the welfare of others. I mentioned Paul had two main theological reasons for the

collection. This is the second. Now, we aren't entirely sure of all the circumstances that led to this need in Jerusalem, but famine was likely one of them. Either way, it's clear that there's a material and financial need in Jerusalem. There's Christians there that are living in poverty. And Paul calls on the church to show not only solidarity, but concern and compassion for these poor. Now, countless verses of scripture could be consulted to demonstrate God's heart for the poor. From the law of Moses, to the psalms and the wisdom literature, to the prophets, and from the words of Christ himself. And that's where I want to go real quick. A well-known are Jesus' words in Matthew 25. In Matthew 25, Jesus pictures the day of judgment to come when believers and unbelievers will be separated, the former to eternal life with Christ, the latter to eternal destruction. And it's to the saints that King Jesus will say, come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Can't wait for that day, huh? And he says, for I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me. And the righteous are going to be confused.

They're going to say, when did we see you and do these things for you? And the king will answer them, truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me. The gospel creates compassion for others. Concern for the welfare of others, especially among the poor and the needy, and especially among the saints, whom Jesus himself identifies with. But also, church, among the world, that we seek to extend the compassion, the concern, the care of Christ to the world, just like he did for us. And so when we do that, we put Christ and the gospel on display in the church and in the world. We reflect the mercy of the one who, though he was rich, yet for our, for your sake, he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

[11:53] In the ways abound in which we can practically embody this today. We show concern for the welfare of others when we send aid to victims of natural disasters. All the time there's opportunities for that. When we provide for orphans and widows in Nigeria, which this church got to do through Randy a couple years ago.

We show concern for the welfare of others when we engage in the loving labor of foster and adoptive care. We have families in this church laboring in love, and we can support them as well. We show concern for the welfare of others when we support the ministries of of anger, of hope, and of legacy, which we are blessed to be able to do when we volunteer at the local homeless shelters in New London and Groton. When we use our deacon benevolence fund to provide for our own members.

Church, may the Lord increase our concern for the welfare of others. This is that outward mindset that we've been talking about. The gospel creates an upward, outward, not inward mindset. Concern for the welfare of others. Here's gospel treat number three. Generosity and giving. Now this is overlapping, but definitely distinct. Generosity and giving. Regarding the collection of the Jerusalem saints, Paul instructs the Corinthians. Look at verse two. On the first day of every week, on the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper so that there will be no collecting when I come. There are a lot of things we can link in this one verse about the giving that Paul is prescribing here. It is to be the giving that Paul is prescribing, the giving to be prioritized. He says the saints are to do this on the first day of every week.

Presumably Sunday, there was a transition from worship on Saturday to Sunday, in light of the resurrection, when the saints would gather. Now this reflects here a first fruits principle that we see in the Old Testament. A first fruits principle of giving to the Lord, the first of what we have, not the leftovers. It's to be persistent. Every week, the Corinthians are to set aside provisions.

[14:11] They're giving to be consistent, to be faithful. Paul calls it on the Corinthians to give personally. He says for each of you to put something aside. So he's calling on each individual believer in the church of Corinth. Now he doesn't though prescribe an amount for them to give. It's to be proportionate.

Paul says for each to give as he may prosper. He's calling the Corinthians according to what God has given to each of them to proportionate. It's also to be planned. This giving was not to be a spontaneous collection when Paul arrives. He's helping them and all the contributing churches to plan out the giving. Just like Matt was exhorting us in prayer, we plan for the things that we

prioritize. We plan for the things that we prioritize. Now we might respond to all this right here by saying, well, Paul's instructions here are for a very specific purpose. Like he's only talking about the needy saints in Jerusalem, so we can't make this prescriptive for our own giving. And I say, I agree, it's not prescriptive. But the principles here surely ought to inform our own giving today. And also, when we consult all of scripture, the whole counsel of God's word, we find these same principles present all throughout the Bible. And they help us to inform our own practice of giving. And beneath Paul's instructions, beneath these practical principles, there are undergirding theological principles that help us to form a theology of giving. Now, the reason that I'm sitting on this particular fruit here is because, as we mentioned just a few weeks ago at our congregational meeting, the topic of giving has been a very neglected area of teaching in this church. Now, if this is your first week here, you're probably like, yeah, right. Ask anyone around you, though, after this service who's been here for a while. And they would be hard pressed to think of any time where we talked about giving, except when we, you know, bring up the budget. But this is a very important area of Christian worship and of

Christian discipleship. This is why it says in our membership affirmation, I will support Shoreline's finances cheerfully and regularly. This act of worship is a benefit to my soul, the health of the church, and the proclamation of the gospel. And God's word has much to say about the topic of giving. We're we're scarcely even going to scratch the surface here. But here are three undergirding theological principles that inform our practice of giving. Here's the first one. Everything belongs to God for his glory. Everything belongs to God for his glory. In chapter 8, verse 6, Paul had said, yet for us, there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and for whom we exist. That's a good place for us to start when we think about giving. As the famous quote from Abraham Kuyper says, you've probably heard this, there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ does not cry, mine. Everything belongs to God for his glory. Now flowing out of that basis is this, we steward, we steward what belongs to God. Right? As Paul said in chapter 4, verse 7, he says, what do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? We are to use what is ours, realizing that it's really not ours, it's God's, and he's entrusted it to us to steward for his kingdom and glory. And this is readily seen back in Matthew 25, the parable of the talents. Here's the third principle. We generously give because we've generously received.

Okay? It's generosity born out of the gospel. Generosity born out of the gospel. What did we deserve in our sinful state? We deserved nothing good from God's hand. We deserved wrath and eternal punishment. But out of his super abundant loving kindnesses, his steadfast love, he has given us everything. In other words, himself. He's given us himself as demonstrated in the cross of Christ. In this chapter on giving in the disciplines of a godly man, Kent Hughes writes this, though Jesus could put his finger on every star.

Picture that for a second. He put his finger on every star. He emptied himself and became a poor earthly servant for us. That is heaven's stewardship program. And it is the pattern for us.

[18:59] Jesus told his disciples when he sent them out to minister, freely you received, freely give. Freely you received, freely give. There's so much more that we can say here, but in light of these theological principles, I want to ask a few questions. I want you to consider these things. Do you view your finances and everything that you have, including yourself, as belonging to God? Again, Kent Hughes, he says, it is easy to surrender parts when we have already given the whole. Do you view everything that you have, including your finances, as belonging to God?

Second, as you make decisions about your budget, how to spend your money, how to spend your resources, do you do so with the understanding that you are a steward of what belongs to the Lord? He's entrusted it to you, but it's his for his glory. Third, is your heart inclined towards generosity or towards self-preservation? And how would an objective onlooker answer that question if all they had was to see your spending habits, your budget, your giving? Lastly, I have a more practical note here. Are you giving, in light of these practical principles here, are you giving a planned, consistent portion of your first fruits to further the work of the Lord? And I want to say, if so, because I know there are many here who are doing that, praise God. Praise God. I want you to prayerfully consider now whether the Lord would have you to give even more. And if not, if you're not doing that, I want

to ask why not?

Perhaps the Lord is calling you this morning to open up your heart in generosity. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9, 7 and 8, each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Why? That displays Christ. That displays God's giving heart. And God is able, Paul says, to make all grace abound to you so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. Church, when our lives are rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ, the fruit of generosity and giving is produced for the display of glory of Christ. Okay, here's the fourth gospel fruit here. Integrity and accountability.

So after getting these instructions, pursuing aside provisions, Paul says in verse 3, and when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me. Now this is one of those flyover verses of scripture, right? We'd be tempted to just breeze right by this, but this is actually rich with gospel culture if we slow ourselves down here. Now I want to ask here by a show of hands, how many of you have personally attended a church where financial misdealings were brought to light? Anybody? You don't have to say the church's name. I saw a few hands. Now I assume that the rest of you could raise your hands if I asked how many at least know of such a church. There's a reason that Paul later tells Timothy that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. The human heart is deceitful and desperately sick, driven so often by selfishness and greed. And your lack of integrity and lack of accountability and transparency have resulted in many a church having funds embezzled.

[22:35] So look at Paul's wise leadership here with regards to collection. Those who are going to carry the gift to Jerusalem are those who are accredited, that is tested and approved by the Corinthian church and by Paul. And then Paul himself, he says, I'm happy to accompany these trustworthy sayings if they deem it advisable. And we learn in Acts and Romans, Acts 24, Romans 15, Paul does in fact end up going to Jerusalem himself. Now why does Paul erect these safeguards to handling the church's money and resources?

Probably first because he actually wants the funds to make it to the Jerusalem saints that need it. Secondly, because the reputation of Christ and the gospel is at stake. And my father-in-law Randy Matthews, who's in Cambodia now, he's shared with me stories, unfortunately, of seeing financial greed, even among Christian pastors and leaders around the world. And so he and his team of missionaries are on guard to that. When money trumps Christ within the church, this is a serious offense and greatly hinders gospel advancement. So I just wanted to say, what does this look like for our church to maintain integrity and accountability specifically in this area of finances? Can you trust your money to this church? Well, this is what it looks like, okay? It means that we take, first of all, elder and deacon qualifications seriously. Elders are to be above reproach and not a lover of money. Deacons are not to be greedy for dishonest gain. Paul says they're to be tested and proven, blameless first. That means that the elders here don't actually ever even touch the money. We always have a rotating pair of deacons, those that you've credited, counting the money received on a Sunday. That means there's always two deacons of finance.

And that every church purchase is actually authorized by a ministry leader, reviewed by the deacons of finance, handled by our accountant. And it also means that our budget is not hidden. We have any churches where you can't touch that thing. The budget is not hidden. It's published, it's open to your scrutiny, it's voted on by you. And if you ever have questions about that budget, we're not going to tell you, no, no, we got it under control. No, we want to transparently answer your questions.

God wants his people to be above board in every area, and specifically in this area of money management. Why? Because the glory of Christ, the spread of the gospel, the care of the needy, all those things are at stake. Gospel produces integrity and accountability.

So we've got to move on to the next verses here. Gospel fruit number five, humility and interdependence. So Paul transitions in verse five from the collection to travel plans. So let's read verses five through seven. Paul says, I will visit you after passing through Macedonia. For I intend to pass through Macedonia, and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter so that you may help me on my journey wherever I go. For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you if the Lord permits. I want you to think about this for a second. The

apostle Paul was perhaps the most capable and successful theologian, pastor, evangelist, church planter, and missionary the church has ever known. And he relies on the help of the saints. He relies on the help of the saints. Paul is not above needing others. And time and again, all throughout his letters, we see that he depends on the church's support. And then down in verse 11, we see a similar thing. He's calling on the Corinthians to help

[26:15] Timothy as well. So Paul and Timothy, they're both looking to the church for help and support in their gospel work. There's an analogy coming to mind here. The church is like something about a whole bunch of members being joined together, each part playing a vital role, no part claiming that it's not needed and others aren't needed. Anybody remember? Anybody? What's that analogy? The body, the body. The church is like a human body. Paul just preached this in 1 Corinthians 12. And Paul is practicing what he was just preaching. He's practicing this. He's operating in humility and interdependence. Church, we need each other. We need each other. If the Apostle Paul needed the church, how much more do we? I want to ask, do you live as if you don't need your brothers and sisters in Christ? You live as if you don't need them. And what causes us to live this way? As if we don't need our brothers and sisters in Christ? Could it be pride? Thinking that you or your gifts are superior and those of others or others are inferior? Could it be that you have past wounds that affect your present engagement with the body? And you're not allowing God's grace and healing to do its work?

Could it be that you're afraid of being known, even though you're already fully known and fully loved by God in Christ? Now I have a related word of caution on this idea, which stems from my desire to protect this flock. And we today have ready access to endless sources of teaching, endless sources of counsel.

And I want to caution you, if you know of Christian leaders who think that they're above needing the help of others, who maintain a posture of not humility, but arrogance and superiority, don't follow them.

Okay, don't follow them. And if you ever see those tendencies in me, church, if you see those tendencies in me, please confront me in love. The gospel creates humility and interdependence. Now related to this, gospel fruit number six, relational depth. And we see this especially in verse seven. Paul does not want to see the Corinthians, he says, just in passing. He hopes to spend time with them, even the whole winter, in spite of all their problems. See, Paul has spoken a lot of really hard words in this letter. He risks getting tomatoes thrown at him when he gets to Corinth because of these hard words. But he wants to be with these brothers and sisters. Are you fostering depth in your relationships? Are you fostering depth in your relationships? You know, what better place to cultivate relational depth than in our homes? Husbands, are you fostering depth in your relationship with your wife? Parents, are you fostering depth, connection with your children? Kids, are you fostering depth with your siblings? Are you seeking to know and to love one another? Church, are we pursuing depth of relationship with other brothers and sisters here in this local church? And I don't mean with everyone here. Like, we're all limited in our capacities. We can't know everybody, you know, at depth, but at least with someone. With a small group of people. Are you arranging your week? You know, we prioritize what's important. Are you arranging your week to be able to spend time with others? Opening up your heart, opening up your life to know and be known by others.

[30:05] Saints, this is what God in Christ has done for us. He has opened up his heart. He has laid down his life upon the cross so that we could have fellowship, so that we could have relational depth and intimacy with him. And he, the King of kings, is the Lord of lords. He calls us friends. He calls us friends.

And he's preparing a place in heaven for us to be with him forever. His desire for us is that like him, he would pursue others in love, going deeper and deeper in relationship and fellowship with one another.

This gospel fruit of relational depth, it displays Christ. It brings glory to Christ. Okay, here's number seven. Shared mission. Paul specifically asked the Corinthians to help him on his journey. He calls

him to help Timothy in verse 11, on his way. In Paul and Timothy, you go to verses 9 and 10. Paul and Timothy are both doing the work of the Lord.

They're both carrying out the great commission, gospel work that God has called them to do. And Paul is inviting the Corinthians into that mission. Why? Because it's their mission as well. They might play a different role, a different function in that work, but it's the same work. And Paul charges the church in Philippi, only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you, that you are standing firm in one spirit with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

This is the shared mission that every believer in Christ has. We've been forgiven, redeemed, adopted through the gospel of Jesus Christ. One day we're going to be finally glorified in his presence.

[31:54] So now we want others right here in New London and around the globe to the nations to experience that same life-transforming power in Christ. This is our mission, church. We share this with one another and with every other Christian to know Christ, to make him known for the glory of God. The gospel not only gives us this shared mission, but it also gives us zeal for this mission. Gospel fruit number eight, zeal for kingdom expansion.

Zeal for kingdom expansion. We see this in Timothy's example in verse 10, and especially in Paul's in verse 9. Paul is abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that his labor is not in vain.

He tells the Corinthians that he plans to stay in Ephesus, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. If you read Acts 19, you read about Paul's time in Ephesus. He stayed there for two years, boldly teaching and preaching the gospel, performing extraordinary miracles by God's power, and the presence of, he says, many adversaries. For many, that be a reason to flee. For Paul, that was a reason to stay, to pray, to work zealously to expand God's kingdom. Jesus calls us to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness.

Jesus calls us to pray, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus calls us to make disciples of all nations, and that work, saints, that starts right here. That work starts here for us in southeastern Connecticut.

There is here a wide door for effective work. Yes, there are many adversaries, but we take our stand in the strength of the Lord, zealous to expand the kingdom of Christ in his power.

[34:04] Church, like Paul, let us stay and pray and work. And you know, this starts in the home. Again, this starts in the home. Fathers, let us not run from the battlegrounds, working later, exercising longer, or simply retreating into our well-known nothing box that our wives are jealous about.

We do these things sometimes, if we're honest. We do these things to avoid our responsibilities. I don't know if I'm alone in that. Fathers, we are the pastors, shepherds of our homes.

And there is, in our homes, a wide door for effective work. And there are many adversaries. So, fathers, let us engage in the battle for the good of our families, for the glory of Christ.

Now, moms, I have no way of discounting your vital role in the home. That is a giving. I have scarcely, if ever, seen a passive mom disengaged in the fight.

That's a problem that we husbands are prone to. Wives, pray for your husbands regularly. And as Matt was exhorting us, let's pray together. Let's pray together.

[35:17] My community group right now, we are holding one another accountable. Thank you, Nate. And praying for one another. Or praying with one another. Wives and husbands together. And moms, remember, God is with you each and every moment of the day as you disciple your children.

He's with you. Church, in our careers, let us display Christ in all that we say and do. Even when everyone else is complaining. Even when cutting corners would be more efficient.

Even when we're mistreated. We're taking a stand. And church, let us make, not wait for. Let us make opportunities for gospel conversation.

Whether it's with coworkers or neighbors or unsafe family. Because we so desire their salvation for the glory of Christ. In so many more ways.

And we're going to talk about this next month when we're walking through our vision. Hearts rooted in the gospel. They're the fruit of zeal for kingdom expansion. And we pray, Lord, give us greater

passion to spread your gospel.

[36:24] Here's gospel fruit number nine. We only have two more to go here, church. Mutual trust and respect. Mutual trust and respect. In these verses here, Paul is embodying this gospel fruit.

And he's calling on Corinthians to do the same. If we go back to verses three and four in the collection. Rather than asserting his authority in every area. Paul shows deference for the Corinthians.

And for their leaders. He defers to their wisdom. He's giving them autonomy. To decide who's going to bring the gift to Jerusalem. And whether or not Paul should go. He could have just told them what to do.

He gives deference to them. He gives them a measure of autonomy. Similarly in verse 12. When Paul's talking about Apollos. Paul's not shy. And he urged Apollos to go to Corinth.

But then he shows trust. That Apollos is making a wise decision. And choosing not to come now. And we're not entirely sure why. Maybe Apollos didn't want to go. Because they were heralding him as one of the leaders.

[37:27] In their party factions. But either way. Paul is trusting Apollos. And even as the Corinthians were creating those factions. You know. I follow Paul. I follow Apollos. No. Paul and Apollos have shown.

That they trust and respect each other. There is no animosity between Paul and Apollos. And then in the middle verses. Paul is calling for the Corinthians. To show mutual trust and respect for Timothy.

When he comes to visit. There is a Christ-like graciousness here. Not steamrolling over others. But honoring them. Not skeptical emotives.

But trusting. Not demeaning. But respectful. Not authoritarian. But promoting shared ministry and leadership. This is beautiful. What Paul is doing here. This is gospel culture. This is Christ on display.

And Sherlyn. I believe that this. That mutual trust and respect. I believe that this is being played out among this church all the time. And it's not always easy. Is it? Our sin gets in the way.

[38:30] Sometimes we hurt each other. And need to ask for forgiveness. But I believe among this body. There is mutual trust and respect. So thank you. And praise God.

And let's go deeper still. Church. Finally. Gospel fruit number 10. Hospitality and peace. Hospitality and peace. Paul asks the Corinthians to show hospitality to him.

And to Timothy when they each visit. Paul tells the Corinthians to put Timothy at ease among them. It's literally to take care that he's without fear. Now why would he say that?

Well let's remember. Paul has spoken some very difficult words. And Timothy is going to come in Paul's stead. Right? Paul's representative. The Corinthians might be tempted to treat young Timothy with contempt.

But that would be antithetical to the gospel. Right? Paul is calling the Corinthians. Open up your hearts. Open up your homes to Timothy. As he tells the Romans. Welcome one another.

[39:29] As Christ has welcomed you. For the glory of God. Welcome one another. As Christ has welcomed you. For the glory of God. Romans 15. That's a good verse to have at the ready.

And this hospitality involves peace. Paul again tells the Corinthians here. Let no one despise him.

Talking about Timothy. Help him on his way in peace. To reach a bit into next week's passage.

Paul is asking the Corinthians to follow the example of some of their leaders. And bring refreshment to Timothy's spirit. Paul wants them to nurture an environment. A culture of peace among their body.

Peace that refreshes Timothy. And prepares him for the journey ahead. Now surely I'm a bit biased. But I think there exists a culture here. Of hospitality and of peace.

And again I say praise God. And let's pray. And let's work to improve that culture all the more. We still have progress to go here. Let's open up our hearts.

[40:29] Let's open up our homes to one another. Let's labor to put one another at ease. To refresh one another's spirits. To cover over offenses in love.

To welcome one another as Christ is welcoming us. So there they are. Ten gospel fruits. Fruits produced in the lives of those who root themselves in the gospel.

The gospel fruits that both display and glorify Christ. Now I'm going to read through this whole list of ten again. And as I do, I want you to consider.

Okay. Which of these is God calling you specifically to work on this week? This season? Knowing in church that in Christ your labor is not in vain.

But here's the ten gospel fruits that display Christ and glorify him. Solidarity among God's family. Concern for the welfare of others.

[41:24] Generosity in giving. Integrity and accountability. Humility and interdependence. Relational depth. Shared mission. Zeal for kingdom expansion.

Mutual trust and respect. Hospitality and peace. We're doing that church-wide gospel culture study. In the very first week, one of the personal studies said this. Gospel doctrine that doesn't show up in gospel culture essentially ignores the triumph of Jesus.

So church, may the increasing presence of this gospel fruit among us proclaim and herald the eternal triumph of Christ. Please pray with me.

Father, you have, to a degree that we will spend eternity, coming to understand, opened up your heart to us.

[42:25] You gave us your very best. You gave us your son, Jesus Christ. Who became the lamb who was crushed for our iniquity.

The lamb who takes away the sins of the world. And you're coming again, Jesus. You're coming again to make all things right and to raise these bodies to newness of life. And to unite us perfectly forever with yourself and all the saints in glory.

And that changes us now. Oh God, would you help us day in and day out to slay the flesh. And to live and walk by the Spirit.

Putting these gospel fruits on. Would you bear these fruits in us because we can't do it on our own. But we depend on you, Christ. You are the nourishing vine from which the life flows.

Help us to root ourselves in you, Christ. Amen. Amen. Amen.