

# The Fruits of the Spirit

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, and welcome to be with you. Thank you for the kind welcome in the door and the fellowship and the worship.

It's been lovely. I'll pray in a moment, but before I do, I'm going to read from Galatians 5. Galatians 5.

As yourself. If you bite and devour each other, you will be destroyed by each other. So I say, walk by the Spirit, desires of the flesh.

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the facial immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft.

[ 1 : 32 ] Hatred, discord, jealousy, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies. That those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self-control.

Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucial passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with you.

Amen. Let's pray. Amen. Let us here this morning to worship you.

And for us all to hear, Lord, from your Word, which we hold before you together. Friend, that you help us one and all, hear and receive and be led by you.

[ 2 : 34 ] Amen. Amen. So, a thousand years ago, there was too extremely to live.

And here in Galatians, Paul clearly said to him, the spirit-filled life and the flesh-filled life.

Two thousand years later, i.e. today, there is still two very different ways to live.

The spirit-filled life and the flesh-filled life. And so, these very words here in Galatians are as true and as vital today as back then.

And so, as we go forward into 2025, as we start the new year, and indeed press forward with the rest of our lives, and as the culture around us is challenging us more than ever to show what does it really mean to live like Jesus.

[ 3 : 58 ] As we go forward to that, let's each of us take a moment to pause, reflect, remember how God has called us to live.

For as in verse 14 here, he calls us to, above all, fulfill the command to love.

Love God first. Love your neighbor as yourself. Love your neighbor as yourself. Love your neighbor as yourself. And one of the great things about living for our God, the only God, is that he doesn't just say, here's what I expect from you, now do it.

No. Our God says, here's how I am calling you to live, and here's my spirit to enable you to do it.

Here's my spirit and his fruits to make sure you succeed, to help you.

He, by his strength, enables us to fulfill the command he calls us to live, and he gives us the fruit of the spirit to do so.

[ 5 : 18 ] For if we truly live a spirit-filled life, a Jesus-filled life, via these fruits, then it will produce that life of love that Paul starts with, here in verse 14.

And so again, I stress, as we delve into 2025, let's recommit to this way. Let's get refreshing with the fruits.

And as we do so, let's get two soaring examples of what a life lived via the fruits looks like, and a life lived without the fruits looks like.

And to do so, let me introduce you to Hetty Green. And who on earth is Hetty Green? Hetty Green, of the 19th and early 20th century, was a Wall Street trader.

And she has two world records. The first, for being the richest woman during World War I. Yep.

[ 6 : 33 ] Whilst the rest of the world was enduring a time of international misery, Hetty was busy making her millions, and so, right on cue, her second record is a Guinness World Record, and it is for being the most miserable person ever.

True story, the richest woman during World War I holds a Guinness World Record for being the most miserable person on earth.

The greatest misery is the actual title. And I wasn't sure if some of the youth would be with us now or not, but perhaps you will enjoy this anyway.

Hetty Green ran a truly miserable stock exchange unit. Even though she had her millions, she would only pay for one very small office on Wall Street.

fellow traders said she had a mean spirit and an awful attitude. She was miserable to be around.

[ 7 : 42 ] She literally made her millions at the expense of mistreating others. Now, the other traders also talked about her hygiene.

Hetty is never known to have paid for soap or hot water because she's seen it as a waste of money. Reports from her day say she wore one dress literally until it fell off.

She would wear it until it was in tatters. When her son fell from a tree injuring his arm, she took him to a local welfare hospital in America.

They demanded payment to treat him and when she refused to pay, they left her son in extreme pain never to heal properly. And Hetty worked until the day she died.

And she died an extremely miserable person. And I'm told it goes as so. One of her work colleagues tells how at a meeting taking place in another trader's home, Hetty was served a cup of tea.

[ 8 : 49 ] On drinking some, she became aware this cup of tea was no ordinary cup. It was served with expensive milk. Full cream craven deal.

Hetty, now of older age and a weaker heart, was furious at such a waste of money. She got into such a frenzy, shouting and barking, she caused herself a heart attack and died there and then. She died as she lived. A truly miserable old cabbage. And true story, her son blew her left millions on wild living, fast cars, big holidays and so on.

Her life produced nothing that lasts. And it seems she never desired to produce anything other than money.

she lived according to the other values in Galatians. Idolatry, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and the lot.

[ 10 : 03 ] She lived according to the acts of the flesh and you could tell. Verse 19 says the acts are obvious.

The acts are obvious and yes, you could certainly tell she modelled a self-obsessed look-after number one only life.

Now, don't be discouraged, the good is yet to come. For while Hetty Green was living in New York, another very wealthy person was living in Britain, George Cadbury.

George's family made a wealth of money in the upcoming business of cocoa beans. His father left the money and business to him and his brother with which he turned in to Cadbury's chocolate.

Now, as a younger man, Cadbury had discovered a real relationship with Jesus and so on starting his new Bourneville factory, working life and business was very, very different.

[ 11 : 13 ] Keep in mind, early 19th century, factory life, forced 12, 16-hour shifts, children as young as 11 working away, six days a week, very little pay, so on and so on.

The top chief said it was the only way to make a profit. George's factory from day one, 10-hour shifts max, Saturday's half days, the working day started with prayers and in what was seen as a bit bizarre, George built houses for his employees.

For the first time, a factory job came with dental, healthcare, and a pension, a free school for his children. And George was known for doing some crazy things in the business world.

At the height of a summer heat wave, he closed his entire factory and told his staff to have fun.

Another time, at the height of a mass Birmingham freeze, he bought loads of sleighs and skates and told the staff to go and have fun.

All the other business people, like Hetty, told George, you have no future, you won't survive. Well, a hundred plus years later, you can barely enter a shop without seeing Cadbury's.

[ 12 : 30 ] George Cadbury had something that the likes of Hetty and many other executives didn't have. he had a relationship with Jesus Christ.

And you could tell. You could tell. And the power in that relationship had produced Holy Spirit within him. And where the Spirit is, there is fruit.

And where the fruit is, there is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

fruit. And what an extravagant difference having that fruit makes. Not just in the world of business, but in everything.

The world of the media, the world of celebrities, the world of the government, the world of the powerful, and here in our world, in our lives, in our workplaces, in our universities, our families, our neighborhoods, and so on.

[ 13 : 32 ] Where the Spirit is, there is fruit. And that fruit transforms people's lives and produces community.

Like this church. Produces communities of love. Paul points out in Galatians that if we follow Jesus and live according to his fruits, we will look and sound very, very different than the rest of the world. It will be as visible and as clear as the difference between telling Hattie and Georgie's story 150 years later.

And it is for sure the fruit of the Spirit that enables us to look different. So, the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is the spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit in us.

The Spirit produces these character traits that are only found in the nature of Jesus. They are the byproducts of Christ's control.

[ 14 : 46 ] We can't obtain them by trying to get them without his help. If we want them, if we want the fruit to grow in us, then we must join our lives to him.

We must know him, love him, remember him, and imitate him. As a result, we will fulfill the two greatest commandments, which of course, are love God first, then love our neighbors, and don't forget verse 14, Paul's very reason for even going ahead to give the fruits was that we may love. love. There are nine fruits of the Spirit, the first one being love, because the other eight are results of real love.

They are what happens if we genuinely love. Now, Holy Spirit will come and enable such living, but we also need to keep in mind, we need to choose.

We need to choose to allow Holy Spirit to work in us. Because of the cross and all the love shown there, it means we are free to choose.

[ 16 : 03 ] And so today, taking each of these fruits, choose to allow Holy Spirit to work in your life. Let's look at each one briefly. Choose love.

For no occasion justifies hatred. Choose to love others as God loves you and to do so, choose joy. Our world doesn't give us much to be joyful about, but the Word of God does. The Word of God does.

Get the Bible verses that bring joy to your life. Have them on your phone, in a pad, by your bed, or wherever else, and start the day with them.

Choosing to be joyful, and then enter your day inviting our God to be the God of circumstance in all occasions of your day.

[ 17 : 09 ] That those circumstances may happen with joy. Choose peace. The world has far too much hostility as it is.

With Jesus' words and actions, we can make our little patch, our workplace, our school, our street, a bit more peaceful.

And choose peace within. Live your life knowing you are forgiven, with all your wrongs behind you, and also forgive others, that you may be able to live at peace.

Choose patience. This is a natural element of love. It is quiet, it's not in a hurry, and it doesn't rush. So choose to overlook the inconveniences of the world. And rather than complaining, the wait is too long, be patient, and thank God for a moment to pray whilst you wait.

[ 18 : 28 ] Choose kindness. Love is active. It naturally produces kind actions. Have you ever noticed how much of Christ's time on earth was spent simply doing kind actions.

Choose to be kind to all, to the rich and the poor, to those in authority and with no authority, and particularly be kind to the unkind, for such is how God has treated us.

Choose goodness, because far too many around us have been wounded already. The gospel is good. It's the good news with which we can show others real, genuine goodness.

And as we press on day after day, keep choosing goodness. Be overlooked before you boast. Confess before you accuse. Go without a pound before you take a dishonest one. Choose goodness. Choose faithfulness. Because there is no standard of faithfulness left in the world.

[ 19 : 52 ] It's changed. But Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He remains faithful.

So today keep your promises. give your colleagues no reason to question your word. Your family no reason to question your commitment. Your spouse no reason to question your love. Choose faithfulness. And gentleness choose gentleness. Because people are desperate and Christ is gentle.

and because in the end of the day, whether it's two countries at war or two work colleagues, truth is nothing, absolutely nothing, is won by force.

Nothing. So choose to be gentle in all circumstances. And self control. Choose self control.

[ 20 : 53 ] the world offers lots and lots of nice things. Money, power, moral relationships, status, and all sorts of things.

But the fruit of the spirit is very, very different than the acts of the flesh. So choose to be impassioned only by faith.

Influenced only by God. Taught only by the Bible and inspired only by Christ. I talk to myself as well. Choose to commit to these each and every day. If you succeed, give thanks to God. Keep going. If you fail, seek His grace, try again, keep going.

These are the fruits of His spirit. And when we call upon Holy Spirit to strengthen us to live in such a way, then as we have already said, we are living in accordance with those two commandments and again, which was Paul's initial reason for even describing the fruits in the first place that we may love.

[ 22 : 09 ] And so what we see is that once again, as always, with our amazing, awesome God. Love is the one leading factor. Whichever angle we look at God from, we are in view of love.

Because Hetty Green refused to have a relationship with Jesus, she never knew Holy Spirit. And because she never knew Holy Spirit, she never received the fruits.

And because she never received the fruits, she never truly loved. George Cadbury had a relationship with Jesus and therefore was blessed with Holy Spirit.

And so he chose to allow Holy Spirit to work in his life and therefore produced heavenly fruit. And therefore he was loving, he was lovely, and he loved.

And it's all down to Holy Spirit. And later after Galatians, as the New Testament begins to conclude, John seeks to broaden our knowledge of Holy Spirit's work.

[ 23 : 16 ] He reaffirms we are fully and completely reliant on Holy Spirit to his love. But he also goes further by saying if we have the Spirit in us and live these fruits out, then we will be able to press on through this longsome world as they live the acts of the flesh.

We will clearly be able to distinguish between light and dark. We will be able to clearly distinguish between true and false prophets, teachers, and other claimants of Christ because we will know the fruit and the flesh actions.

We will know the truth, God's truth, and of course love. But the point of capturing some of John's words on this is to stress commitment.

It is as we commit to allowing Holy Spirit to work in our lives, as we commit to living out the fruits, that he will also equip us with the strength and the ability to patiently persevere through this world and keep honoring Christ.

1 John 3 23 says, and this is his command, to believe in the name of his son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us, the one who keeps, who commits.

[ 24 : 52 ] God's commands live in him and he in them. And this is how we know he lives in us. We know it by the spirit he gave us.

And that's because that same spirit produces all these wonderful characteristics and traits in us that belong to Jesus. And they make us look like Jesus.

And as we've said this morning, as John says here, as Paul says in Galatians, we will certainly be able to tell. Christmas Day, I opened a little gift and it's in my bag.

I meant to bring it up. The world renowned 19th century Scottish evangelist Henry Drummond, German on love. And he preached it way back in 1884.

And it has been re- and the title may explain why. The title is The Greatest Thing in the World Experiencing the Enduring Part. It struck me so much.

[ 25 : 59 ] It caused me a stir. It got me really thinking it's what inspired me. Because the theme is that above all and before everything else, Jesus' command for us to love.

It's that very famous new command in the Last Supper. A new command I give you. love one another as I have loved you. So you must love one another.

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another. And the pivotal reason why I really wanted to start 2025 with this message is because as Jesus is very, very keen to point out in that new command, if we truly do this, love life, love, then others will know we belong to him. And they too will then be attracted to Jesus and they will join in, they will get saved. We will evangelize, we will grow the kingdom. And what's the foundation we need to fulfill that command so that others will be attracted to Jesus?

Right on cue, Henry Drummond points out that to truly do it, we need to get the fruit. He describes the fifth chapter of Galatians as the ingredients needed to fulfill God's supreme command.

[ 27 : 26 ] He writes, as you may have seen, a man of science take a beam of light and pass it through a crystal prism to come out the other side, broken into all the elemental colors of the rainbow.

So Paul passes love through the magnificent prism of his Holy Spirit inspired intellect and it comes out the other side, broken into its elements.

And then he adds, the elements you will notice, they're very common, they're very easy, very approachable, very ordinary virtues. they are of course love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and so on.

He derives how these ingredients done properly enable us to love. And so as we near finish, let's keep with the Last Supper in John 13.

Let's keep with the Last Supper. because to truly learn how to model, how to live, how to do, how to be like Jesus and do all these fruits, we must copy Jesus.

[ 28 : 55 ] And because the most purest and most beautiful example of living out all the fruits of the Spirit is of course Jesus. Jesus' whole attitude and personality was a living out of all nine fruits of the Spirit.

And we are told that our attitude should be the same as Jesus. And so of all the times we can learn how to model Jesus, none is more precious than when he kneels before his disciples and washes feet.

And so John 13 and verse 1 tells us it was just before the Passover festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.

Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. the evening meal was in progress and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God.

[ 30 : 15 ] Now let's not get too far ahead just now. Let's get this scene in our minds. it's been a very very busy day in Jerusalem.

It's the massive festival of Passover. Jews from all over the Roman world have gathered for this big event and this year everyone wants a glimpse of the ever rising famous teacher Jesus.

They want to shake his hand, ask questions, hear stories, see miracles and so on and so on. So very very crowded streets.

In the middle of the crowd is the twelve and in the middle of the twelve is Jesus and everyone is pushing through trying to get to him. It's hot, it's sticky, it's tiring.

A good meal and a refreshing drink is well needed. And so at day's end everyone is off for a good meal and Jesus and his twelve are no different.

[ 31 : 19 ] They are off to their lodgings, booked out in Bethany village beyond the city walls. Earlier that day two of them had went on over and prepared the meal in the upper room.

And so they finally arrive, the crowds are gone and one by one they shoot up the stairs through a side door and in they go. It's all prepared. They just choose a place, get comfortable, rest back, put their feet up and wait for Jesus to give the go-ahead dig-in.

But by the door sits the towel, the water and the basin. It was dusty streets, hot sticky weather. People wore sandals.

It wasn't just cultural but rather necessary and polite to wash the dirt of your feet as you entered home, especially when entering someone else's home.

Any disciple could have done the job but such a job is for servants, particularly the lowest of servants. Every circle has its pecking order, right?

[ 32 : 31 ] And the circle of household servanthood was no different. The servant at the bottom of the ladder was expected to be on his hands and knees washing feet.

And so the meal begins with on washed feet. They talk, they eat, they enjoy the company. And then Jesus rises from the table. He takes the basin, he takes the towel.

I imagine the twelve are now feeling uncomfortable as their master comes before them with foot washing equipment. Peter's probably annoyed that he didn't think of it first as Jesus very, very kindly, first fruit of the spirit here, Jesus very kindly begins to wash their feet clean for them.

Jesus kneels before Peter, begins to untie his sandal. Peter exclaims, no, Jesus, and Jesus in his very usual gentle way, second fruit of the spirit here, gentle way assures him it will soon all make sense.

You will know why later, he tells him. And so Jesus washes feet. Hands that flung stars into space now remove dust from feet.

[ 33 : 50 ] Hands that made mountains now massage toes. Of all the times we would expect to see Jesus calling emergency meetings or making an escape committee, this would be it.

This would be it. Jesus knows this is the night of his arrest. but in spite of that, he very patiently, third fruit of the spirit here, patiently takes care of the job at hand.

And just hours before his arrest, his concern is fully and completely singular. He just wants his twelve friends to know that he really, really does love them.

Jesus knows over the next twenty-four hours, these twenty-four feet will run and hide, committing the vilest acts of their lives. Yet Jesus shows full faithfulness, fourth fruit of the spirit here, to standing by them and loving them.

Jesus knows the plans made by Judas. I looked for a Bible translation that might have read Jesus washed all their feet but Judas's, or Jesus washed eleven pairs of feet or something similar.

[ 35 : 07 ] I could not find one. I could not find one. What a deeply delicate moment when Jesus came to wash Judas's feet and Jesus gives Judas a sense of peace, fifth fruit of the spirit here, and not a sense of enemy.

Jesus peacefully loves Judas as much as much as the others. Exercising a great amount of goodness, sixth fruit of the spirit here, towards someone focused on the opposite of goodness. The love of Jesus is so great, powerful, and mighty. He has made sure that after it's all over, that when the disciples are all ashamed and in tears for hurting Jesus, that when they look down, hang in their heads in shame, and see their feet, they will remember Jesus still loves me.

You will know why later, Jesus told Peter, and he did. He saw his feet, he remembered his feet being washed, and he knew he was forgiven. And so they all rejoiced as Jesus filled them with joy, the seventh fruit of the spirit here.

And as already pointed out, what tremendous self-control, eighth fruit of the spirit here. Jesus had to have exercised through this whole event.

[ 36 : 36 ] He knows what was ahead, yet he is controlled, as he peacefully, gently, and lovingly spends time with his friends.

And there, of course, we have it, the overarching fruit of the spirit here, love. The entire event is saturated in love, love, love, by the other eight fruits being done.

They were all amounting to love. And so as Jesus exercised all these fruits in one go, the only one to ever do so, he ultimately produced love.

And one of the most exciting facts about that night is that the attitude and choices of Jesus towards the twelve that night are actually a model example of how Jesus wants to be with us today in 2025. That is to say, Jesus is offering us all a special relationship of love and devotion with him today.

[ 37 : 43 ] Jesus, John's whole purpose for detailing Jesus' loving heart and the special relationship he had with him was to tell us ordinary people that what he himself, what John himself had with Jesus is all simply by choosing to believe and follow Jesus, we too enter into a deep as the disciples did and as many, many, many have done since then.

And it all begins so simply by prayer. It begins as any friendship begins, talking, chatting, talking, choosing to tell God, you believe in him, asking for the forgiveness of your sins, trusting his

forgiveness.

If you haven't done so, do so today. The big, big challenge for us fellow disciples, fellow followers of Jesus today is returning to that command.

Jesus said, I give you a new commandment, love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another. And this is why it's a big, big challenge because Jesus has just washed the feet of the guy arranging his death.

love. And then he says, now we, I, us, go and do likewise. We here, Jesus' disciples today, are called to strive for that same level of love, to have that same attitude, that same personality.

[ 39 : 26 ] And as humans, that seems impossible. all. But that's where the fruit of the spirit comes in. Because all we have to do is take one fruit at a time.

One fruit adds to the next and so on and so on, just like Jesus' fruit washing example here. One fruit led to the next one being done. And so, as we fully embark on 2025, and indeed the rest of our lives, let's choose to make a fresh recommitment to live and act like Jesus, to model his personality and attitude, to love like him.

Though perhaps you're thinking, well, I'm done for then. I'm done for because I can't. I could never, ever, ever, ever live up to that level of Jesus. Well, neither can I. Do remember where we started this morning.

The opening verse was obey the command to love. Then we're followed with these fruits of the spirit, the equipping to do so. So if for a moment I can paraphrase, the Apostle Paul says, obey the command to love.

And then he says, but we can't. None of us can. We're human. So God in his mercy and wisdom has gifted us particular gifts via his spirit that should we choose to let in, they will in turn generate love.

[ 40 : 52 ] And then that again in turn will enable us to obey Jesus two greatest commandments. And being reminded of this should really take the pressure off, should really reassure us that we absolutely can live like Jesus because he has first equipped us.

So let's go forward in confidence and show all of our family, friends, neighbours, work and school colleagues what Jesus is like. and as a final reminder of reassurance hear the words of 2 Corinthians 9.

My grace is sufficient for you he says. And as we approach communion let these final words bless you and lift you because after all our focus this morning being on us choosing to be like Jesus and treating others like Jesus which we must do the finishing line is and don't forget you are individually loved and loved by God.

First and foremost when it comes to us individually God's first and foremost focus is your personal relationship with him and that last supper example yes is how God is asking us to be with others but that lovely precious time described by John is also just as much the perfect example of how Jesus wants to be with each of us personally and individually firstly it's about him loving us because we only love because he first loved us his grace is sufficient for you so be blessed be blessed with a fruit spirit is there is fruit where the fruit is there is love and where love is there is God let's pray Lord Jesus we do thank you so much for the wondrous example in John's gospel of that deep intimate passionate relationship you had with your twelve disciples and two thousand years later we take so much pleasure in knowing you're offering that same intimate relationship with us and thank you that we have chosen to live that relationship and enjoy it and Lord we seek you that we may be able to show that to others act it to others let others come in and enjoy what we have

Lord through our working week help us love and do the fruits of the spirit in the name of Jesus Amen Amen Praise God I believe we're now going to sing make me a channel of your peace as we start to prepare our hearts for communion make me a channel peace where there is hatred that may bring your love where there is injury you'll pardon Lord and where there's doubt your faith in me

[ 44 : 50 ] I want to grant that I may never seek so much to be blessed all as to the soul to be understood as to understand to be loved as to love with all my soul make me a channel of your peace where there's despair in life let me remove where there is darkness only light and where there's sadness ever to draw what's to love that I may never see so much to be consoled as to the soul to be understood as to understand to be loved and to love with all my soul make me a channel of your peace it is important that we are pardoned giving to all men that we receive dying and born to eternal life past the ground that I may ever see so much as to be consoled as to console all to be

understood as to understand to be loved as to love with all my soul make me a shadow of your peace where there is hatred and making your love where there is injury of heart and love and where there is doctrine in you and so keeping in fame was the last supper just like

Funnel House you can know of which we of course invite all to know and love the Lord Jesus as that personal relationship to partagion we come to this table his table joyful happy and blessed because as we have just read in John's gospel we come to his table to receive his warmth his nurturing his fellowship his friendship and his love but thank you father for being amongst us this morning for talking to us chatting to us and coming close send us out by the power of your spirit and we pray to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy to the only God our saviour the glory majesty power and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord before all ages now and forever more amen thanks Thank you.