

Sermon notes for May 8, 2005

**Experiencing the Fruit of the Spirit
In the Local Church
“Love”
John 13:31-38**

Introduction

A. The Fruit Of The Spirit IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN.

1. Fruit of the Spirit **defined.**

- a. the fruit of the Spirit as defined in the book of Galatians is the “result” or “evidence” of Christ’s presence in the life of a believer
 1. when Christ enters a person’s life, He brings with Him His “fruit” or His “presence” as seen in these nine fruit: **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control**
 2. in a sense, these fruit are not only the **evidence** of Christ’s presence in your life, they are the **example** of Christ in your life
 - a. these fruit “illustrate” Him
 - b. and if Christ is in your life, you will become like Him and express His presence in your life
- b. notice that the word for fruit is singular
 1. there are not nine different fruits
 - a. you may think that you have three of the fruit but not all nine of the fruit
 - b. “Yes, I am loving but I’m not patient.”
 2. the fruit are somewhat like:
 - a. a diamond has all kind of facets, but still is one diamond
 - b. so . . . if a person is a Christian, he or she should have all of these “facets” or fruits, yet one Spirit
 - c. **Philip Keller – A Gardner looks at the Fruit of the Spirit** “A head of wheat, barley or oats may contain in itself nine individual, separate, and distinct kernels of grain. Each kernel differs from the others in its own particular shape, size, and content. **Yet all nine kernels are from the same source.**”

2. Fruit of the Spirit **designed.**

- a. **BASICALLY**, a person cannot act and live like Christ **WITHOUT HIM ENABLING US TO DO SO.**
- b. That is why it is called the fruit **of the Spirit**
 1. it is **not** the fruit **of the church**
 2. it is **not** the fruit **of the Bible**
 3. it is the **fruit of God’s Holy Spirit indwelling us**

B. The Fruit Of The Spirit IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.

1. To **experience Christ.**

- a. being a Christian is not simply the study of doctrine, theology and Christian living
- b. it is as well the blessing and anointing of God’s presence in your life

1. how many of us would be sitting here today if we sensed nothing of God's presence within our lives?
 2. **THIS** is the difference between the Old Testament saints and present-day Christians. **Jeremiah 31:33** - "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will **put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts**. I will be their God, and they will be my people."
2. To express Christ.
- a. we represent Christ to one another
 1. the fruit of the Spirit **ENABLES** us to live and serve Christ together
 2. what would the church be like without these spiritual graces?
 - a. no **love for one another**
 - b. no **patience with one another**
 - c. no **gentleness with one another**
 - b. we represent Christ to the world
 1. when we are filled with God's Spirit, we can faithfully represent Christ to a lost, watching world
 2. we can:
 - a. **love** the unlovely; the unlovable
 - b. show the **joy of Christ** to a world that has nothing to be joyful about
 - c. we can be patient with lost people who will need a lot of patience to be around
 - d. There was a Christian doctor who went to China many years ago. **He built a hospital. One day the army marched into town and destroyed that hospital.** This doctor followed the army and ministered to their wounded. It came to the attention of the leader of the army. He asked his wife, "**Why does this doctor do this?**" She said, "There is only one answer. **He is a Christian.**" The General humbly said, "**If that is what it means to be a Christian, I would like to be one.**"
3. To explain the church.
- a. this series on the fruit of the Spirit will not merely look at each facet of the fruit of the Spirit
 - b. **instead, we will look at each fruit and how it should be expressed in the life of the church**
 1. if we are Christians, we should exhibit the fruit of the Spirit in our lives
 2. if we are a Christian church, we should exhibit the fruit of the Spirit as a church

I. The INVITATION To Love One Another.

Vs. 34 – “A new command I give you. Love one another.”

A. OLD TESTAMENT Teaching About Love.

1. Old Testament teaching

- a. the Old Testament was very clear about the calling to love your neighbor
Leviticus 19:18 - "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but **love your neighbor as yourself**. I am the LORD."
- b. in fact, much of Leviticus 19 showed the Jew how to practically love his neighbor
 1. **verse 11** – Do not steal, do not lie, **do not deceive one another**
 2. **verse 13** – **Do not defraud your neighbor** or rob him
 3. **verse 15** – Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, **but judge your neighbor fairly**
 4. **verse 16** – Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that **endangers your neighbor's life**. I am the Lord.

2. Jewish application of Old Testament teaching.

- a. the real problem was that the Jews defined their “**neighbor**” as other Jews –
 1. so, Jews were called to love their fellow Jews
 2. that was easy to do – since they all believed and practiced the same laws
- b. **thus, they had NO obligation to love non-Jews**
 1. in fact, Jews believed that it was **THEIR DUTY** to hate non-Jews
 2. so, the Jews hated:
 - a. the Romans
 - b. the Samaritans
 - c. all Gentiles – “the goyim”

B. NEW TESTAMENT Application Of Love.

1. So, Jesus does not use the word neighbor – meaning Jews.
2. Instead, He uses the more generic “**one another**.”
3. This is perhaps why Jesus said, “A **new commandment** I give you.”
 - a. there was to be no discrimination in loving others
 - b. we are to love all kinds of people!

II. The ILLUSTRATION Of Loving One Another.

Vs. 34 - "A new command I give you: Love one another. **As I have loved you, so you must love one another.**”

A. The Call Of Jesus To Love Others.

1. To love others “**as I have loved you**”
 - a. Greek – **Kathos**
 - b. “**in the same manner**”
 - c. “**in the exact way**”
 - d. “**just as**”
2. Who taught you to:
 - a. tie your shoes
 - b. my mother taught my wife Jane to cook a black bottom pie
 - c. I learned how to fold my pants from a childhood friend's mother

3. **How** does Jesus love us?
 - a. however He loved me . . .
 - b. we are to love others **THAT SAME WAY**

B. The Love Of Jesus FOR HIS DISCIPLES.

1. Thomas

- a. a man with a “question mark for a brain”
- b. and when he made the bold statement –
John 20:25 - “**Unless I see** the nail marks in his hands and **put** my finger where the nails were and **put** my hand into his side, **I will not believe it.**”
- c. and what does Jesus do?
Vs. 27 - Then he said to Thomas, “**Put** your finger here; **see** my hands. **Reach out** your hand and **put** it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

2. Peter

- a. What extremes we see in Peter.
 1. in the **upper room**
John 13:6-9 - He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “**Lord, are you going to wash my feet?**” Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” “**No,**” said Peter, “**you shall never wash my feet.**” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” “**Then, Lord,**” Simon Peter replied, “**not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!**”
 2. in the **Garden of Gethsemane** – attempting to take a guard’s head off!
 3. at the **trial of Jesus** – denying that he was one of Jesus’ disciples
 4. at the **crucifixion** – Peter was nowhere to be found
- b. **Why would ANYONE want to put up with Peter?**

3. Judas

- a. you must realize the **seating arrangement in the upper room**
 1. Jesus is in the Upper Room with His disciples before His arrest and crucifixion
 2. Jews ate in a circle while seated on the floor
 3. the favored position in which to sit was to the **left side of the honored guest**
 - a. they leaned on their left hand and ate with their right hand
 - b. their heads rested on the one to their left
 - c. **Jesus, as the honored one, asked Judas to sit at his left side.** Judas’ head would be resting on Jesus’ breast at the Last Supper (see John 13:22-27) read
- b. Jesus showed grace even to Judas in the seating arrangement.

C. The Love Of Jesus FOR US.

1. He loved us in the **past**:
 - a. came from heaven and glory
 - b. born in a cattle stall
 - c. lived quietly on this earth as a common carpenter for some 30 years
 - d. wandered this earth with no permanent place to live and no planned meals to eat and taught twelve nobodies
 - e. was arrested, beaten and crucified
 - f. and was under the power of death for three days
2. He loves us in the **present**:
 - a. He has saved us unto eternal life
 - b. filling us with His Holy Spirit and giving us peace and purpose
 - c. is interceding for us EVEN now
 - d. is preparing a home for us in heaven FOREVER!
 - e. NOT to mention all of the blessings He gives us each and every day!
3. He will love us in the **future**:
 - a. no sin, no pain, no tears in heaven
 - b. as believers, we will be in glory with Jesus FOREVER!

D. The Love Of Jesus For OTHERS - Pastor John Ross

1. The **“leprosy love”** of Jesus.
The first thing that Jesus does after **giving the Sermon on the Mount** was to visit, touch and cure the most rejected person in Jewish culture, **a leper**.
2. The **“leftover love”** of Jesus.
On two occasions, **Jesus fed masses of people who had no food**. And He made sure that they had **leftovers!**
3. The **“blind love”** of Jesus.
Bartimeaus, a blind man, was crying out to **Jesus**. **Others told him to be quiet** and not bother Jesus. Jesus **went straight to Bartimeaus and healed him**.
4. The **“unlikely love”** of Jesus.
No one was more hated and despised by the Jews than tax collectors. Jesus calls diminutive **Zaccheus** out of a tree and goes home to have dinner with him.
5. The **“look in the mirror love”** of Jesus.
Few accounts are as vivid as the **woman caught in adultery**. Jesus, standing between her and an angry crowd said to the crowd . . . He said to: look in the mirror first.
6. The **“stinky foot love”** of Jesus.
Jesus showed His disciples the “full extent of His love” **by washing the stinky, filthy, dirty feet of those who in less than twenty-four hours would use those same feet and run from Him**.

III. The INDICATION Of Loving One Another.

Vs. 35 – “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

A. The Impact Of JESUS’ LOVE ON OTHERS.

1. Have you ever looked at the **many people that Jesus loved with His touch**?
 - a. healing a **leper**
 - b. healing a **centurion’s servant**
 - c. healing a **demon possessed man**
 - d. healing a **paralytic**
 - e. **calling Matthew, the tax collector**
 - f. **eating lunch with Zaccheus**, a tax collector
 - g. speaking to the **rich young ruler**
 - h. feeding the **5,000**; feeding the **4,000**
 - i. speaking to the **Samaritan woman** at the well
 - j. protecting the **woman caught in adultery**
 - k. sharing with **Nicodemus**
 - l. bringing **Lazarus** back from the dead
 - m. **washing the disciples’ feet**
2. **THIS WAS JESUS’ MISSION – TO LOVE OTHERS.**
 - a. what does the **most memorized verse in the Bible** say?
John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."
 - b. listen to what Jesus said as He began His ministry:
Luke 4:18-19 - "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

B. The Impact Of JESUS’ LOVE ON OTHERS.

1. We want to **represent God**.
 - a. when we as Christians do not express love, **WE MISREPRESENT GOD!**
 1. **WHEN WE ARE ARROGANT, OPINIONATED, DIVISIVE AND SLANDEROUS – WE DON’T REPRESENT GOD.**
 2. **WHEN WE ARE JUDGMENTAL, PETTY, SELFISH, WE DON’T REPRESENT GOD.**
 - b. **love is the true indicator of the Christian**
 1. **John Phillips** – “The badge of true discipleship is **not** in the doctrinal statements to which we subscribe, not in the type of hymns and music we prefer, **not** in the rituals we observe or the ordinance we cherish, **not** in our soul winning zeal, our faithfulness to the churches of your our choice – **but in our love for all those who love the Lord.**”
 2. **A.W. Pink** – “Love is the badge of Christian discipleship. It is **not** knowledge, **nor** orthodoxy, **nor** fleshly activities, **but** supreme love which identifies a follower of the Lord Jesus.”

3. **I John 4:7-8** – “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. **Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.**”
- it is **not** our doctrine
 - it is **not** our ministry
 - it is **not** our giving
 - IT IS OUR LOVE**

4. **Davon Huss** – “Recently, the **Associated Press** conducted a survey of **39 different Protestant denominations**. And they asked one question: “**What is the number one factor that causes congregations to grow?**” Are there any factors you can find in every growing church regardless of doctrine, denomination, location, culture, etc.?

Well, it wasn't the preaching. It wasn't the presence of a children's ministry. And it wasn't air conditioning. On the basis of the survey, they discovered that the number one characteristic of a growing church was the **atmosphere of love among the membership**. The Press concluded that people everywhere are looking for love. And if Christians really began to love each other the way God would want us to, then we would have **to lock the doors to keep the people away.**”

2. We want to **reach others**.

- a. DO YOU REALIZE WHAT JESUS IS SAYING?

- THE MAIN METHOD OF EVANGELIZING THE LOST IS TO SHOW THE WORLD HOW WE LOVE EACH OTHER! . . . HOW ARE WE DOING?**
- Because showing love to a lost world is showing to them what God is really like!**

- b. why is love God's method to reach the lost?

1. consider the **spiritual understanding of a lost person**

- a. **I Corinthians 2:14** – “The man without the Spirit **does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God**, for they are **foolishness to him**, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

- b. they don't understand:

- our theology
- our priorities
- the power of Christ in a life

- c. what **DO** they **understand**?

- they understand **WHAT THEY CAN SEE AND FEEL**
- Albert Camus**, the French existential philosopher once said: “My experiences, my passions, my ideas, my images and memories **are all that I know of this world – and they are enough.**”

3. we cannot ‘EXPECT’ the unbeliever to understand the spiritual life
 - a. but . . . we CAN EXPECT the unbeliever to understand what he can understand – what he can **see and feel** not what he cannot see and feel
 - b. **J.Vernon McGee** – “Now friend, I believe in being fundamental in the faith, I believe in the inerrancy of the Word of God, in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that He died on the cross for the expiation of sin; that He died a substitutionary, vicarious death for the sins of the world. I believe He was raised bodily and ascended back into heaven and that He is coming personally to take His church out of the world. **But I want to say this, and I want to say it very carefully: believing those things does not convince the unsaved world outside. The world is dying for just a little love.**”
2. consider the **emotional understanding of a lost person**
 - a. **every person on this earth has the capacity to understand love**
 - b. and they can see it in any form and be drawn to it
 - c. have you ever been to a function where you did not speak the language of the people in the room?
 1. everyone in the room was speaking a different language
 2. all that you could do was watch and guess what they were talking about . . .
 3. all that you could do was watch how the people related to one another; their expressions, etc.
 4. you would “guess” what was going on in that room
 - a. Mayan Village – Yucatan
 - b. Romanian Church

- c. therefore, love in the church is **THE METHOD THAT GOD WANTS TO USE TO REACH THE LOST FOR CHRIST**
1. Jesus not only calls us to love one another
 2. He allows the world to “**judge us**” if we fail to love one another
Christian Philosopher Francis Schaeffer once said:
 It is as if “Jesus turns to the world and says, ‘I’ve something to say to you. On the basis of my authority, I **give you a right**: You may judge whether or not an individual is a Christian on **the basis of the love he shows to all Christians.**’ In other words, if people come up to us and cast in our teeth the judgment that we are not Christians because we have not shown love toward other Christians, **we must understand that they are only exercising a prerogative that Jesus gave them.** “And we must not get angry. If people say, ‘**You don’t love other Christians.**’ **We must go home, get down on our knees, and ask God whether or not they are right. And if they are, then they have a right to have said what they said.**”

Conclusion:

1. Of all of the things that we as a church should EXCEL in, it **MUST BE LOVE!**
 - a. we love teaching
 - b. we practice ministry
 - c. we are committed to prayer
 - d. we work hard at our worship services
 - e. **BUT . . . LOVE MUST BE OUR MISSION!**
2. **This is what the early church became.** They took to heart the call of Jesus to love one another.
 - a. An unbelieving Greek historian in the first century (**Lucian 120-200 AD**) wrote this about Christians: “It is **incredible** to see the **fervor** with which the **people of that religion** help each other in their wants. They spare nothing. Their first legislator has put it into their heads **that they are brethren.**”
 - b. One of the leaders of the Christians, **Tertullian**, wrote this: “**It is our care for the helpless, our practice of loving kindness, that brands us in the eyes of many of our opponents. ‘Look!’ they say. ‘How they love one another! Look how they are prepared to die for one another!’**”
3. Now, **HOW** do we become a church that loves?
 - a. **YOU CANNOT CREATE THIS LOVE ON YOUR OWN!**
 - b. **I John 4:7-8** – “Dear friends, let us love one another, **for love comes from God.** Everyone who loves has been **born of God and knows God.** Whoever does not love **does not know God, because God is love.**”

- c. You cannot love others unless and **until you have been loved by God.**
Philip Keller – A Gardner Looks At The Fruit Of The Spirit - “The crisis came one mellow autumn day in the foothills of the Rockies. Alone, in anguish of spirit I went to hike along the high cliffs bordering a deep coulee. Down in its depths ran a crystal clear stream of ice-cold water. It flowed from the glaciers and ice fields of the snow-mantled mountains shining in the west.

“O God,” I cried out from the depths of my being, “come flooding into my spirit; into my soul; into my entire body and being. O Christ, come in like these snow-fed waters from the high country stream down into this valley. O Spirit of the Living God, pour into this parched and barren soil of mine. Shed abroad in me the very life of God – the love of Christ. Fit me to be good ground in which the seed of your good Word can take root and flourish and prosper.”

It was a heart cry of utter desperation. **For five full hours** I tramped up and down that lonely canyon trail in awesome anguish of soul. If ever a man hungered and thirsted after righteousness – the right life of God – I did that day.

The gentle, gracious, yet galvanizing response of God’s gracious Spirit to my cries came as a surprise: “If you will just comply with **My wishes**; carry out **My commands**; cooperate with **My desires** I will give Myself to you in abundant measure. *I give Myself – My life – My love – My Spirit* wholeheartedly to those **who obey Me.**”

It meant my priorities in life suddenly had to be reversed. Life was no longer to be lived for myself, **but for Him and His.** It was the beginning of a brand new relationship with God. **As I complied with His wishes in everyday details, His life and His love flooded in to produce eternal, enduring fruit.**

4. **As we think also about Mother’s Day**, there is a story of love that a mother had for her child. The story is told by William Gladstone, who was announcing the death of **Princess Alice** of the **House of Commons** many years ago. **The little daughter of the Princess was very sick with diphtheria.** The doctors told the princess not to kiss her little daughter, or breathe the little girl’s breath – the princess might get sick herself, and die. **“Stay away from your daughter,”** she was told. Once, when her child was struggling to breathe, struggling to stay live, the mother, forgetting herself entirely, took her daughter in her arms to keep her from choking to death. Gasping for breath, her little daughter said, **“Kiss me Mommy!”** And without thinking of herself, the mother tenderly kissed her daughter because she wanted to help her and comfort her. **A few days later the Princess got sick and died.**
- a. Mothers certainly understand this kind of love.
 - b. Do we love one another this way? The world will certainly take notice if we do.

1. As you look at the fruit of the Spirit as seen in Galatians 5:22-23, do you see the various attitudes listed as God's love expressed in "nine different ways" or "like one diamond with different facets?"

2. What is the danger of looking at these nine characteristics in galatians 5:22-23 separately and not as a part of the whole?

3. Why do you think that love is the first spiritual attitude listed in galatians 5:22-23?

4. Why is love seen as a "major tool" of the church to lead unbelievers to Christ? Why does Paul not list teaching or prayer?

5. What is the statement being made to the world by a church that does not love one another? Why do you think that the world has such a jaundiced view of the church?

6. How can a church truly love one another so that unbelievers are drawn to Christ?