

**“The 7-FOLD Excellencies of the Mystery:
"The Church which is His Body:
Its Fruit Bearing, Under Grace”**

Introduction: An Illustration

Theme Verses Today:

[Paul’s prayer concerning the believers in the city of Ephesus] ...

Eph 1:17-20

17 . . . that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places

2 Cor. 4:14-18

14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Well, in coming down from such a high and special mountain top of divine revelation as this, we now have the privilege of continuing in our fellowship around how Almighty God is working out his most excellent power in us today.

This working of God that we will examine today is not less than what we have been reading of as we read of the very resurrection power of our Lord God as he raised our Lord Jesus from the dead and set him at his right hand in heaven’s glory.

No, in fact his working in us today IS equal to his other workings and so it must be, since it is still the working of almighty God and therefore GLORIOUS INDEED.

As we continue today, it is our desire to even further consider our Excellency, #5 in the list of “Our 7-FOLD Excellencies of the Mystery: “The Body of Christ”, and today, “Our Fruit Bearing, Under Grace”.

I. Our Fruit Bearing : Dimension #1 -- Our Fruit in Other Believers

2 Cor. 3:3 “Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart” (and also see Rom. 1:13)

- **We could spend our entire time on this wonderful theme today, that God sends forth his workers (in this case it was the apostle Paul) into a spiritually dead world to preach the gospel or good news of the grace of God to sinners, that they might believe and be saved.**
- **And God takes that word and applies it to the hearts of them that believe it. Praise his name.**

#1: Our Fruit Bearing : Dimension #1 -- Our Fruit in Other Believers

[Your thoughts?]

II. Our Fruit Bearing : Dimension #2 -- Our Own Growth and Maturing in Christ

Rom. 6:21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

Oh, the apostle writes so boldly concerning all of us, in that it is so natural, so easy really, to dwell in this life in the realm of our sin and our sins and never get to the glories of God’s working under his magnificent grace. I hope and trust that we will never do that. His words here are powerful indeed. To repeat,

Rom. 6:21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

[Please see also Heb. 12:11, 13:15 Phil. 1:22, and Phil. 4:17.]

- **So, fruit bearing, includes so much, and it is focused on our growth and maturity as believers.**
- **IF we would take God at his word always, and allow his fruit of a mature life in Christ Jesus to be manifested, oh, how blessed our lives would be.**
- **And to live otherwise, is to live in the realm of death as the apostle**

reminds us constantly in his letters to the church which is his Body.

#1: Our Fruit Bearing : Dimension #1 -- Our Fruit in Other Believers

#2: Our Fruit Bearing : Dimension #2 -- Our Own Growth and Maturing in Christ

III. Our Fruit Bearing : Dimension #3 -- Our Spiritual Fruit, or, the Fruit of the Spirit

As we continue in our subject today of God's working in us, we will look carefully at what Paul has written in Gal. 5. But two verses really should be read first, I believe, to put a proper focus on this subject as Paul saw it as his own life and his own martyrdom drew nearer as the days passed:

[READ] Phil. 1:9-11

9 And this I pray, **that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;**

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

And then, in the same regard, this great verse in Ephesians, chapter 5:9:

[READ] Eph. 5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

Note the connection here with the truth. Seeing this connection is so critical to our understanding as Paul has reminded us again here.

- *Now let's not forget that such words as these are spiritual words and cannot even be understood, except God gives us understanding, as it has been written, for example, in 2 Cor. 3 & 4. This is not primarily an ethics and morality teaching here, but the apostle writes of the life of the Spirit. Paul summarizes it in this fashion here:*

[READ] 2 Cor 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Of course, as written here, it is critical to know that none of this may be understood as God intends it WITHOUT the work of God in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who illumines us by his teaching ministry.

Let's look now at this great and quite profound teaching in Gal. 5 in some

detail. And I am expectant, I hope and pray, that you may each find here, as I have, a central key to victorious living:

[READ] Gal. 5:13-15

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

- ***This is the introduction to Paul's teaching here, as he underscores the obvious, that much of our lives are consumed in the realm of the flesh with the works of the flesh dominating both our thoughts and our actions.***
- ***But our high calling in liberty provides so much more, freedom and liberty from the power and control, even the dominion of the indwelling nature of sin within us believers.***

This is the key section stating the dynamic of the Holy Spirit in the spiritual believer. This is not about the delivery from the presence of the sin nature that abodes in each of us believers, but rather a delivery from its power and its domination, so that God's fruit, "the fruit of the spirit" may flow forth in our lives. That is abundant living indeed!

[READ] 5:16-17

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

- ***So the consequence the apostle writes here, namely, that "ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh", is assured, it is promised by God!***
 - ***Firstly, there is an essential matter of "exegesis" here.***
 - ***This really is an "if-then" statement though those actual words in the original language are not found here.***
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- ***Verse 17 is an explanation of how that can be true. It is most profound.***
 - ***This is not a statement of the fact that we believers possess two natures, the old and the new, the carnal and the spiritual, as it were.***
 - ***This is a statement of the condition that exists in the believer when he is "walking in the spirit"***

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

- ***Such a glorious list here of what the apostle calls “the fruit of the Spirit”, starting with LOVE!***
- ***The works of the flesh, in other words, the works that flow out of the old nature in the believer, when it is not checked, are evil to the maximum extent possible. There is no grey area there at all.***
- ***And the contrast with the desires that spring from the new nature is so evident. Our privilege in this life are to fulfil the very desires of God in each of us to bring forth this great fruit, the segments of which are:***

“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance”.

- ***The apostle adds, “against such there is no law”. The believer walking by the spirit lives entirely above the dictates of the law... above and beyond it, and its condemning cries, he reminds us.***
- ***“Love, joy, peace, . . .”, such a glorious list indeed.***
 - ***Take note that these are NOT WORKS at all, not even GOOD WORKS, but these are each segments of that great fruit of God coming forth from our innermost beings, where God dwells.***
 - ***As the new nature desires to please God, the fruit comes forth without hindrance, AND ALL BECAUSE the evil desires of the flesh are being quenched by the mighty working of the Spirit of God.***

Let’s finish up our fellowship this morning on a very practical note. In our final verses today the apostle applies his teaching on the fruit of the spirit to everyday living.

And, I think we should see that these several verses are the key to living the abundant life that has been promised to all of us -- IF, IF WE WOULD TAKE TO HEART THIS TEACHING HERE IN GALATIANS:

[READ] 5:24-26

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

- ***This is the central teaching on bearing fruit found in Paul's letters in a "nutshell", as it were. We must reckon upon it, taking God at his word, by faith living the life he has offered with the empowering he has supplied.***
- ***Note that verse 25 gives us another gracious exhortation, that "if we are living in the Spirit", then we should WALK in the Spirit.***
 - ***There are different words for walking used here in comparison with verse 16:***
 - ***Περιπατέω (peripateo) in verse 16***
 - ***But, στοιχέω (stoicheo) in verse 25 here. Also see Acts 21:24; Rom. 4:12; Gal. 6:16 and Phil. 3:16, all very relevant.***
 - ***This word found here speaks of walking in order, as troops that are marching, for example.***
- ***The point of this is that if we (really, "since we", there is no doubt about this, we all), if or since we have new life in Christ, we are indeed indwelt by him and his spirit. A living spirit, as we have learned from 1 Cor. 15:51, has taken residence in us all. Christ has been poured out into us all, and that has made all the difference. Amen.***

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#2: Our Fruit Bearing : Dimension #2 -- Our Own Growth and Maturing in Christ

#3: Our Fruit Bearing : Dimension #3 -- Our Spiritual Fruit, or, the Fruit of the Spirit

[Your thoughts?]

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS:

- ***What is God doing today, beloved? He is working according to the riches of his glory in and through our weakness.***
- ***And why is this vehicle being used? To manifest forth most effectively, his strength, his power, even the resurrection power displayed in that he raised Christ from the dead..***
- ***But there is an exhortation that must be received with great thanksgiving,***

to walk very carefully in the spirit, since we are alive in Christ Jesus. And then, we shall be able to exclaim as Paul did that whatever our circumstances, we shall enjoy God's work in our lives and shall be blessed by "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ":

Phil. 1:19 "For I know [even Paul's imprisonment in Rome!] that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ"