

## The Fruit of the Seed

Turn in your Bibles with me please to our Scripture reading this morning, **Romans 8:9**. After explaining the difference between being fleshly minded and spiritually minded, the apostle Paul says to the Christians in Rome, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, **(and then he qualifies it by saying)** if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Last month we talked about the miracle of the new birth and how the Holy Spirit is able, and we don't know how, to plant God's seed within the soil of our hearts, and how that seed represents God's very nature that we're able to partake of through faith in the exceeding great and precious promises. [1 Pet. 1:4]

We can have the forgiveness of sins today, "According to the riches of His grace" [Ephesians 1:7], and not only that, but "All things that pertain unto life and godliness." [2 Peter 1:3] These are given to us free of charge, and all these things can be ours if we will but exercise one of the greatest gifts God has given to mankind; the power of choice! The power of choice.

In ***Steps to Christ, page 47*** we're told that "Everything depends upon the right action of the will." This is in the context of our salvation. That means that if there is wrong action of the will, there will be consequences that we won't want to pay. It's really a pretty neat plan God has devised. It's a plan (by the way) that was formulated long before it was needed. Even before the foundation of the earth was laid, God chose every single person who would ever be born into this world to be born again of incorruptible seed. And it all hinges upon whether or not we choose Christ, because **Acts 4:12** is very clear, that there is no other name than the name of Jesus whereby we must be saved. Not your name, not my name, not the name Seventh-day Adventist or any other denominational name. Jesus is the only One in whom salvation lies.

What I would like to discuss this morning is the fruit that is in the seed. Last time I gave you a very short definition of the word fruit. "Fruit is the seed of a plant", and just as the seed of every plant can only produce fruit after his kind, so also the seed planted by the Holy Spirit can only produce the fruit of the Spirit and nothing else. If a professed Christian is not producing the fruit of the Spirit, it's because they are just professed or nominal. Just as God has set boundaries in nature, so He has pledged His word to operate within certain boundaries.

Did you know that there are some things that God can't do, and that there are some things He doesn't know? And you might be thinking, wait just a minute brother Jones, doesn't God know everything? Isn't He omniscient? And I wouldn't disagree with that, but here's what I mean, and I think you'll agree with me. In **Titus 1:2** and **Hebrews 6:18** it says, "it is impossible for God to lie." He can't do it. So that's one thing He cannot do. He has pledged His word that everything He inspired holy men of old to write is true and can be trusted. He can't lie.

Notice what it says in **Numbers 23:19**, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

Also **2 Corinthians 1:20**, "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen." In other words, as long as we are in Him, as we talked about last time, God will not and cannot break His promise. **Hebrews 10:23** says, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is **(what?)** faithful that promised."

Now, here is a sobering thought. Are you ready? Because God cannot lie or break a promise, He will be just as faithful in punishing the wicked as He will be in rewarding the righteous. True? Yes, that's true. There is no reason for any of us to think that God will change His mind concerning the things that have gone out of His mouth. He says what He means, and He means what He says, and based on the verses we already read, I can tell you also that there are at least four things that God does not know.

Even though God is all knowing, there are still some things that He does not know, and I know that sounds paradoxical, but it's true. #1, God does not know a sin He does not hate. #2, God does not know a sinner He does not love. #3, God does not know a sin He won't forgive, if confessed. And #4, God does not know a better time than NOW! What a wonderful God we serve, amen?

Turn with me in your Bibles to **Romans 8** and we'll look more closely at the context of the scripture we started out with this morning. **Romans 8:1-14**. After speaking of his experience as a convicted man, not a converted man in **chapter 7**, Paul states the following in **chapter 8:1**, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

To walk after the flesh is to produce the works of the flesh, and to walk after the Spirit is to produce the fruit of the Spirit, and you can read what they are in **Galatians 5:19-23**, and perhaps we'll do that later if there's time.

**Verse 2**, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Whoopee! We're free from the law if Jesus is our Saviour. But I want you to notice something, Paul doesn't say that to be "In Christ" is to be free from the Ten Commandment law, but "Free from the law of sin and death." In other words, if we are in Christ and walking as He walked, after the Spirit, then we are free from the law that says if you sin you're going to die. The law of sin and death is the power of sin that leads to death, why? because to be "In Christ" is synonymous with obedience to God's commandments, and if we're obedient we're going to live. In **Romans 6:23** this law of "Sin and death" is stated a little differently, but means the same thing when Paul wrote, "The wages of sin is death."

**Verse 3**, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

We could spend the next hour talking about what this verse teaches, because there are some very clear and wonderful truths here, but I'll only touch upon a couple things that are essential for us to know. First of all, fleshly obedience to the law can't save us. Why? Because the flesh can't obey from the heart, that's its weakness. All it can do is look like true obedience on the

outside, while the heart is corrupt on the inside, and that kind of obedience can't help us form a righteous character.

What the law can do is show us what sin is and condemn us for breaking it, that's it! The law cannot save you; it cannot forgive you; and it can't give you the power to obey it. But what did God do in order to turn our hopeless situation around? On account of sin, He sent Jesus to this earth "In the likeness of **(what?)** sinful flesh", and He condemned sin in sinful flesh. What does that mean? Here's what it means. To condemn sin in sinful flesh means to live life without sin in sinful flesh; that's what Jesus did, and through His Spirit that's what He gives us power to do.

The reason Jesus was able to live without sin in sinful flesh, and I want to be careful how I say this, is because He had a divine nature as well as sinful flesh, and He always chose to do what the divine nature prompted Him to do and not what the fallen flesh prompted Him to do, and the same ability is given to everyone who partakes of the divine nature, [2 Peter 1:4] and it all depends upon the right action of the will.

And again, I want to be careful not to bring Jesus down to our level in every respect, because He's God and never had any sinful propensities like we do, and by the way, in ***God's Amazing Grace, page 235*** it says, "We need not retain one evil propensity." We may have evil propensities, but we don't have to keep them. Through the sanctification process God can replace the evil with the good. But here's the bottom line, we can walk in the Spirit as Jesus walked as long as the right action of our will is exercised in the right direction. We can live without committing sin, because the divine nature gives us that choice and ability. There's one thing the devil cannot do, because God won't allow it, He cannot force the Christian to sin. All he can do is tempt, but yielding to the temptation is our own act.

Notice these encouraging words from ***Patriarchs and Prophets, page 421***: "God has made ample provision for His people; and if they rely upon His strength, they will never become the sport of circumstances. **(Isn't that wonderful? You see, it takes someone strong to make someone strong)** The strongest temptation cannot excuse sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to do evil. Satan attacks us at our weak points, but we need not be overcome. However severe or unexpected the assault, God has provided help for us, and in His strength we may conquer."

And that my friends, is good news! But the question is, are you conquering? Since the devil can't make us sin, it has to be what we choose to do, and we can just as well choose not to if we be in Christ. We know what our weak points are, and we need to guard against placing ourselves in a vulnerable position, and for whatever reason if we are brought into a situation not of our own doing, we can still resist the urge to give in to our fallen flesh; God will see to that, because He has promised power to obey, and we have to believe it or the power won't come. That's where faith comes in.

**Verses 4, 5** "That the righteousness of the law **(the Ten Commandment law)** might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."

If we walk after the Spirit, we will do the things the Spirit wants us to do, and if we walk after the flesh, we will do the things the flesh wants us to do, it's that simple. We will become dominated by the sinful nature if we allow our mind to think about sinful things, and we will become dominated by the Spirit if we think upon things that please the Spirit.

**Verse 6**, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

So, if our sinful nature controls our mind we're going to suffer the consequences of eternal death, but if the Holy Spirit controls our mind we will have eternal life that leads to immortality and peace even now.

And how do we know this to be true? **Verse 7**, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be", it's impossible!

The carnal or fleshly mind is hostile toward God. It has never obeyed God's law and it never will, that's why we need to partake of the divine nature, so we can receive the mind of the Spirit, it comes with the divine nature.

**Verses 8, 9**, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

So it's very plain here that if we have the Spirit of Christ, we will not be controlled by the fallen flesh, and if we're not controlled by the fallen flesh we will be controlled by the Holy Spirit, because there are only two powers by which human beings can be controlled. And if we're not controlled by the Spirit, we are Christians in name only.

**Verse 10**, "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead **(or will die, it's a sure thing)** because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness", or because we have been made right with God. Through the Spirit we have eternal life, so we don't have to be concerned that our mortal bodies are going to die, because of what **verse 11** says. Notice: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." And once that happens we become immortal.

We're going to get a new body; an immortal one without defects; one that will live and never die, and that's something to look forward to and be thankful for, especially those of us who have grown old and things don't work so good anymore. We can throw away the glasses, the crutches, the wheel chair, the walker and the Pepto-Bismol, because everything will work perfectly.

**Verse 12, 13** "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. **(We have no obligation whatsoever to do what our sinful nature urges us to do)** For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body **(or consider your fallen flesh dead to temptation and not yield to it)**, ye shall live."

**Verse 14**, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

So, are we considered sons and daughters of God when we live according to the flesh? Absolutely not! When we yield to temptation we are children of the devil, as it says in **1 John 3:10**.

I didn't know if we were going to have the time to do this, but I think we better look at the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit as it's brought out in **Galatians 5**, because there may be a few things in there that might surprise you. If the works of the flesh will cause eternal death and the fruit of the Spirit eternal life, then we better know what they are.

**Galatians 5:19**, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; **(and it's interesting that the first four things mentioned deal with sexual sins)** Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness." Adultery, of course, is unfaithfulness to the marriage vow; fornication is sexual relation between unmarried persons; uncleanness is physical or moral impurity; and lasciviousness is uncontrolled sexual passion.

Now, usually when there's a list of things, the most common, or those things that are most indulged in are listed first. Let me ask you, did the Holy Spirit know what He was talking about when He inspired Paul to write these words? I don't have to tell you that sexual sins are running rampant today. Divorce rates are sky high; there are more people that are living together without the benefit of clergy today than ever before. And how about the gay movement? It has definitely come out of the closet with legalized same sex marriage and people allowed to go into whichever public restrooms and locker rooms they want depending on their sexual identity, and uncontrolled sexual passion is everywhere you look. It's enough to make any rational being wonder if the whole world has gone crazy. It's absolutely insane that people can come up with such nonsense, but they do, and it's all because they exercise the wrong action of their will. It's because they have not been born again.

That's an indication, by the way, that the Holy Spirit is being withdrawn for the earth and soon the man of sin, apostate Protestantism, and spiritualism are about to fulfill the prophecies of the last days. And aren't we told the last movements will be rapid ones? Who would have guessed that the moral condition of society would have deteriorated to the degree it has in just the last year or two? It's amazing how the devil works. The escalation of sin has exponentially increased over the past few years and it will continue to do so.

When I was a kid, my family and I used to make a snow man every winter, and if you've ever done it, you'll know what I'm talking about. When the temperature and the condition of the snow is just right, not too hot and not too cold, you can start out with a small snowball and begin to roll it along the ground and it will begin to collect more snow as you roll it, and the more you roll it the bigger it gets and the faster it accumulates. That's what's happening with sin in our world. The devil is rolling the snowball of sin and it's picking up steam, and if you're shocked now at what you see going on in the world, may I say, "You ain't seen nothin' yet."

**Verse 20**, "Idolatry." We're not talking so much about image worship here in this day and age, although there is still much of that in heathen nations and within Catholicism and a few other religions, but it's also referring to such things as the worship of self and of other people, and of

things, especially the young who look to various pop stars and would sell their souls for a little fame on You Tube.

To put it simply, anything in your life that is more important to you than doing what God says is idolatry. And so it can take on many forms. For instance, there are many Christian idolaters today, because they worship Sunday, the idol sabbath, when there is not one word in all the Bible that directs them to do so. If they don't know any better, God winks at their ignorance, but when they've been enlightened and continue to ignore the sacredness of the seventh day, that's when it becomes a problem, and it's the same way with any truth. When light comes, God expects us to change our course or we'll become guilty of deliberate sin, which then leads to the unpardonable sin to where the Holy Spirit will no longer bother you but let you go on free from guilt because your conscience has become seared, and once that happens there's no hope.

***Christ's Object Lessons, page 237*** explains it pretty well, listen to what it says, "Every time you refuse to listen to the message of mercy, you strengthen yourself in unbelief. Every time you fail to open the door of your heart to Christ, you become more and more unwilling to listen to the voice of Him that speaketh. You diminish your chance of responding to the last appeal of mercy. Let it not be written of you, as of ancient Israel, 'Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.' Hosea 4:17. Let not Christ weep over you as He wept over Jerusalem, saying, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.'"

Such is the result of idolatry and a persistent rejection of any truth. But before we move on let me ask you, can food be an idol? If you eat what God says not to eat, it is an idol.

Also, we're in the midst of a presidential campaign right now, and you would think the way people act when their candidate comes on stage that he or she was a God or Goddess that will fix all the ills of society. And so, to many politics is their God, to others it's something else, but all such worship is idolatry and will end in eternal ruin.

"Witchcraft", and here we're not just talking about various movies and games and magic and occult practices, but something that many people don't even think about. The word witchcraft in the Greek is "Pharmakeia." Yes, witchcraft covers such things as sorcery, magic and spiritualism in general, but the primary meaning of witchcraft is "Medication" or "Pharmacy." Does that mean we should never take prescription medication or over the counter medication? Not necessarily.

If you are on medication of some kind and you don't know how to improve your condition with either dietary changes or by natural means, if that's even possible, you may do yourself great harm by stopping it. And so, we must be very careful and become educated before making any changes. In a larger sense here, and this is my opinion, I think we're talking about mood altering drugs especially, both prescription and street drugs. These things will definitely affect you spiritually, because you won't be able to think clearly enough to make intelligent decisions about your eternal destiny, and once a person is hooked on mood altering drugs, and alcohol is a drug as well, they're extremely difficult to kick. We could go on about this for a long time,

because the Spirit of Prophecy has much to say about it, but we need to get to the rest of the list.

"Hatred." That's the opposite of love, by the way, which is the first fruit of the Spirit. Hatred is enmity against God, and if we hate God we'll also hate people, especially if they cross our path. And if we hate people, doesn't that affect the way we deal with them? If we have hatred, we can't possibly be a witness for the truth.

"Variance." Variance is quarreling. Do you like to argue with people? This is one of the main problems in the church, isn't it? Rather than sitting down and studying a thing out together with a Christlike spirit, we'd rather quarrel about it. And this is one of the main reasons married couples get divorced.

I remember hearing a story years ago about a couple that agreed together to have a certain place to stand in their home that meant they wanted to make up if there were ever a quarrel, I think it was on a small rug, and whenever they were in the midst of a quarrel, the one that realized what was going on and wanted to stop it, would go and stand on that special spot, and the other one would know exactly what that meant, and the quarreling was defused. And you can do the same thing with saying you're sorry. Isn't it hard to say you're sorry sometimes? But when one goes to that special place and stands there, it can have a great healing effect.

"Emulations." Emulation is Jealousy and a spirit of revenge; a problem in the world and in the church. You don't have to look very hard to see that the works of the flesh operate in most churches, and it's because many people are not converted. So what's needed? A seeking after God is what's needed.

***Gospel Workers, page 451*** says, "If every child of God would seek Him earnestly and perseveringly, there would be a greater growth in grace. Dissensions would cease; believers would be of one heart and one mind; purity and love would prevail in the churches."

"Wrath." Here's the way the concordance defines the kind of wrath mentioned here, "Passion as if breathing hard." Now that's pretty angry. Remember when the religious leaders got mad at Stephen when he said he saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God? It says they stopped their ears and probably gnashed their teeth and then cast him out of the city and stoned him. And friends, every human being is capable of that kind of wrath under the right circumstances if the Holy Spirit is not in control. It's like road rage on steroids.

"Strife." Strife means "To provoke to anger." Instead of provoking each other to wrath, we should provoke one another to love and good works as it says in **Hebrews 10:24**. Sometimes certain words are better left unsaid, and we don't always have to get the last word, because all that does is escalate things.

"Seditions." Seditions means to cause division. We've got plenty of that in the church today, don't we? And we better make sure when division comes that we're on the right side of it. There are legitimate reasons for division sometimes, even Jesus caused division by the truths He uttered. You can read what He said about it in **Matthew 10**, but more times than not, division is caused when people separate from Christ.

"Heresies." The concordance defines heresies as, "A choice." Now that seems kind of odd, doesn't it? But not really, because choosing your own opinion over a "Thus saith the Lord" will result in heresies of various kinds. When we make a conscience choice to deny the truth because we value our own opinion more than what the Bible says, we will surely become a heretic.

The concordance also defines "Heresies" as a "Sect." In other words, a sect in this context would be feeling that everyone else is wrong except your own little group. It's the attitude that you and I are the only ones that have the truth, and I'm beginning to wonder about you! This is one of the problems I've seen in the independent movement over the years and is one of the reasons why so many groups have dwindled and split over and over again. I think we all have a little bit of this kind of attitude in us, and we need to be careful we don't fit into this category.

**Verse 21**, "Envyings." Did you know that envy is worse than jealousy? That's right, it's worse because envy not only covets something your neighbor has, but also wishes bad things upon him because he has it and not you.

"Murders." This is not just talking about the physical kind, but also character assassination and trying to ruin someone else's reputation. The Bible principle is that if you hate your brother in your heart, you're just as guilty as if you murdered him.

"Drunkenness." There's a way to be drunk without drinking alcohol, isn't there? In **chapters 16 and 17 of Revelation** it warns about becoming drunk with the wine of Babylon. The cup of intoxication which the harlot presents to the world represents the false doctrines that she has accepted as the result of her unlawful connection with the great ones of the earth. And so yes, this is a warning against drinking alcohol, but more importantly to those of us who already know that, it's also a work of the flesh to become drunk with the false teachings that come from the Mother of Harlots.

And the last one is "revellings and such like." The meaning here is "To let lose." In other words, it's to have a party spirit, or a boisterous and turbulent spirit. By contrast **1 Peter 3:4** says it is "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

And then at the end of **verse 21** Paul summarizes by saying, "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."

I've heard many professed Christians over the years try to excuse themselves for indulging in one or more of the works of the flesh and thinking that God won't hold them accountable for it, but the Bible is crystal clear, if we do such things we shall not inherit the kingdom of God, end of story.

Now, for the sake of time we're going to have to go quickly through the fruit of the Spirit, but before we do I want you to notice that it's not Fruits of the Spirit, but fruit, singular. It's OK to say fruits of the Spirit, because the Spirit of Prophecy uses it in its plural form many times, but we also need to understand that we have to have all of them and not just a few. It's kind of like



the 10 Commandment Law being one law, not ten. That's why **James 2:10** says if you offend in one point you're guilty of breaking them all. And that's also why *Desire of Ages, page 676* says, "When we live by faith on the Son of God, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen in our lives; not one will be missing." You see, they're all connected, and if one is missing, you really don't have any of the others either. If one is missing we're not living by faith on the Son of God, and if we're not living by faith, we're not going to leave this earth when Jesus comes.

**Galatians 5:22** starts out by saying, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love."

And if that's all it said, that would be enough to show a stark contrast with the works of the flesh, wouldn't it? This fruit of the Spirit is the kind of love that would lay down life, not just for a friend, but for an enemy. That's the kind of love Jesus had, isn't it? **Romans 5:8** tells us that Jesus laid down His life for us while we were yet sinners. While we were enemies of righteousness, Jesus shed His blood on the cross that we might receive the adoption of sons. And so, love is everything, that's why it's listed first, and in **1 Corinthians 13** the apostle Paul makes it clear that we can possess all kinds of gifts, but if we don't have love, they're worthless. And according to **1 John 4:8** this is the chief attribute of God; in fact, love is what He is through and through, and love does no wrong.

The next fruit is "Joy"; it's defined as "Cheerfulness, or calm delight." The dictionary says it's "To have pleasure in the possession of something." And what possession will bring us joy? It's Christ! If we possess Christ we'll have real joy. **Psalms 16:11** says, "In thy presence is fullness of joy." Remember when David was praying the sinner's prayer in **Psalms 51:12**? He said, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." There's joy in having the assurance of acceptance with God. Having joy doesn't mean we'll be laughing all the time, but that we'll have a deep and abiding calmness, even in the face of death, and grief, and sorrow, and coming disaster, that everything will be alright in the end.

And if we have joy we will also have the next fruit listed; "Peace." The concordance says it comes from a primary verb meaning "to join." In other words to have peace we have to be joined to the Lord. The word peace means "to be reconciled", or to make friends out of enemies. Isn't that what Christ did for us? The 1828 Noah Webster's dictionary says peace is, "Freedom from agitation or disturbance by the passions, as from fear, terror, anger, anxiety or the like", then it quotes **Psalms 119:165**, where it says, "Great peace have they that love thy law and nothing shall offend them." That means, if we get easily offended, we don't have this fruit of the Spirit.

"Longsuffering" means, "Having long patience." That means not having a short fuse! It means not giving up on God when things don't go right. It means "blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for the Lord's sake" and still not come down to their level. Longsuffering is God's willingness to take us back even though we may have committed spiritual adultery time and time again. But we need to realize that even God's patience has its limits. The sin against the Holy Ghost is God's warning to us to not continue to be a spiritual adulterer.

"Gentleness." The primary meaning in the Greek is "Usefulness and moral excellence." We're being useful to the Lord when we are of a gentle character, because we are reflecting Christ's

character. How do you describe gentleness? Sometimes it's best to describe a word by stating the opposite, which is, "Rough, Harsh and Severe." I know of professing Christians who treat their dogs more gently than they do their own family members, and because of this, they cannot enter the pearly gates unless they repent and receive all the fruits of the Spirit.

"Goodness" is virtue. The Bible says, "there is only one that is good, and that's God." Therefore if we exhibit any goodness, it has to come from someplace other than fallen flesh. Just like all the other fruit, it comes through the Holy Spirit working in us. Virtue is good moral behavior, and morality comes from obedience to the moral law of Ten Commandments; therefore to be good we must stop violating the law; we must stop sinning.

"Faith." Faith is "To entrust one's spiritual well-being to Christ." We experience righteousness by faith when we believe what the Bible says about Jesus, and even faith is something that's given to us by God. **Romans 12:3** says, "God hath dealt to every man a measure of faith", but that doesn't mean we are to be passive! Faith grows as it's exercised, and it's exercised as we study God's word, and then take Him at His word. **Romans 10:17** says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." According to **Ephesians 6:11** faith is the number one piece of armor we must wear in order to defeat the devil, but like the fruit of the Spirit, we need the full suit of armor in order to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And so faith is extremely important.

"Meekness." If you'll study it out, meekness is the same as humility. Meekness doesn't mean being a mouse and letting people walk all over you; that's timidity or cowardice! Meekness is a deep sense of your own unworthiness in the sight of God, and a submission to His will without murmuring and complaining. This is a good description of Jesus, isn't it? And we have to become like Him if we are going to inherit the earth made new.

And the last fruit is "Temperance", better known as self control or to exercise self-restraint. Temperance has to do with eating, drinking, dressing, working, thinking, and just about anything else you can think of; it has to do with our whole being. **Romans 12:1** is very clear, we are to "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service." It's for our own benefit that God requires it.

***Patriarchs and Prophets 562*** says, "True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything hurtful and to use judiciously that which is healthful. There are few who realize as they should how much their habits of diet have to do with their health, their character, their usefulness in this world, and their eternal destiny. The appetite should ever be in subjection to the moral and intellectual powers. The body should be servant to the mind, and not the mind to the body."

And ***Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2, page 70*** says, "It is just as much sin to violate the laws of our being as to break one of the Ten Commandments, for we cannot do either without breaking God's law."

Oh I tell you brothers & sisters, we've got to get serious about this thing called Christianity! We need to "examine ourselves to see if we be in the faith." As we find that there is even one fruit

missing, we need to get right with God, because one missing is breaking the chain that links us to Christ through the Spirit, and if we don't have "the Spirit of Christ, we are none of His."

The wonderful thing about the gospel is that we can have all the fruit today without one missing. If we are born of the Spirit we will produce all the fruit of the Spirit. It's ours for the asking! Jesus said, "as your faith is, so be it unto you." We can and must actually live the life of Christ. God, speaking through the apostle Paul tells us how it's done in **Galatians 2:20**, and I'll use this for my closing text: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

In **Matthew 7** Jesus made it clear that the fruit born on the Christian tree would reveal its true character when He said, "By their fruits you shall know them." He didn't say by their profession you shall know them, or by their church affiliation you shall know them, or by their doctrines you shall know them, not that doctrine is unimportant, or by their pedigree you shall know them, but by their fruits.

Friend, Jesus gave Himself for you that you might have His Spirit and His fruit and thus belong to Him, so that one day soon you can be with Him where He is, and I hope that's your desire this morning? If it is, I would ask you to bow your heads with me as we pray.