

Revival - Part 14

by Doc Greenway

The sermon emphasizes the importance of character and the balance between the fruit of the Spirit and supernatural gifts in the Christian life.

Duration: 1:02:34

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 132:16, John 15:11, Romans 8:9, Galatians 5:22-25

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of balance in the Christian life. He refers to the concept of balance repeatedly throughout the sermon and highlights the significance of faith, hope, and love, with love being the greatest. The speaker warns against undervaluing eternal things and overestimating temporary things. He encourages believers to prioritize their focus and align their goals with God's purposes. The sermon also emphasizes the need to seek God's guidance and listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, particularly in times of uncertainty. The speaker emphasizes the importance of peace as an arbitrator and the peace of God that surpasses understanding. Additionally, the sermon emphasizes the importance of using spiritual gifts for God's purposes and not despising or discrediting them. The speaker concludes by cautioning against legalism and encourages believers to embrace the grace and purpose that God has for their lives.

Transcript

I believe that just as positively as the supernatural gifts of the Spirit are related to the ministry of the Christian, so the fruit of the Spirit is related to the life of the believer. The gifts are intended for ministry in the Christian church in our day, praise the Lord, but the fruit of the Spirit has to do with the life and the character, the inward being of the Christian, of the believer. And I'm sure that this is important to God, for it does seem to me that He is far more concerned about making us what He thinks we ought to be than He is about giving us what we think we ought to have.

And if we could only see this, then I'm sure that it would alter our prayer life quite a bit. It would certainly have perhaps a different viewpoint concerning prayer and the need of things for which to pray. I'm sure that if we understood, as God surely does, the value of character, that our concern would be with the inward life far more than with any outward expression.

However great and mighty that might seem in our estimation at the time, we have seen that the time will come when the gifts of the Holy Spirit will cease to function, when they will have no more place in the

Christian church. But we have also seen that the fruit of the Spirit will never end. It goes on and on.

Now abideth faith, hope, love. These three and the greatest of these is love, as we saw a little bit, I think, last Tuesday evening as we gathered together around that great classic on love, 1 Corinthians chapter 13. I think we ought to be absolutely certain in our own hearts that nothing is more detrimental to spiritual life than to undervalue the things that last and to overestimate the things that perish.

To me it's simply a question of viewpoint, of focus, of faith, a question of getting our priorities as they should be, in other words. This term is used quite a bit today, isn't it? Getting your priorities right. Well, it's a very important thing that we should do this.

In the end, you know, it's a question really of our personal vision and of what we feel to be the important thing in life for us as believers, as Christians. We have to ask ourselves continually, what is my aim in life? What is my real goal? What is it that I'm after, essentially? What is it that matters most to me in my life as a believer? Is it to possess some gift of the Spirit that I may use that gift for the furtherance of God's kingdom? To possess some spiritual bestowment in this way that my ministry might be more effective, that I might be used in a wider sphere of service for the Lord? Is this what I'm after? Is this my goal? Is this my aim in life? Or is it to be possessed by the Spirit that He may use me, that He may teach me how to lead the life that He leads, daily and hourly, in absolute conformity with His will, and at all times conscious of His guidance in my life as a believer? What is my aim? What is the goal that I have set before me? It is so important, isn't it, that we do have some concept, and a very clear concept of what it is we are seeking from the Lord. Some, I know, have fallen into the trap of concentrating all their prayer energies on procuring some special spiritual gift.

It varies from person to person. Some are keen on prophecy. Some want to be able to speak with tongues.

Others have a great desire for faith as a gift to the Spirit. Others still want to be used in healing. And I suppose that this is something which we have to decide for ourselves.

But some have fallen into the trap, you see, of concentrating all their energies on procuring something from the Lord, forgetting the need for balance in spiritual things, and especially in spiritual gifts. I know that we have mentioned this need for balance many, many times during our Tuesday evenings together. And I was saying to someone, I'm sorry in a way that this appears to be the last of this series.

I'm glad in another way, because I feel that we've had quite a long run. This is the 14th Tuesday night that I've had the privilege of coming to address you. But we've mentioned this concept of balance in the things of God, and I'm sure it's important from God's standpoint.

It occurs again and again in the Word of God itself. But if we have missed our aim in life, if we're not sure of what it is we're after, then let me remind you that to redouble your efforts when you've lost sight of your goal, it isn't faith at all, it's just fanaticism. We have to come to a point eventually where we know exactly what it is that our soul desires of the Lord.

And then, by all means, that He Himself appoints to seek after Him, and not after it at all, but after Him, that finding in Him our sufficiency. We may then know what it is He has bestowed upon us, and what it is to which He calls us, as those who profess to believe in Him and to love His name. No gift of the Spirit should ever be disparaged because its source is divine, but neither should the fruit of the Spirit be

relegated to some place less than God intends.

And this is one of my deep concerns as a servant of God, when there is so much desire in charismatic movements for the manifestation of the Spirit and the demonstration of the power of God and the outpouring of the gifts. We should somehow lose sight of the tremendous importance of the fruit of the Spirit, the graces of the Spirit, because in the end, it is only character that matters, and the only character that matters at all is His character. If it is true that in these days we should be seeking for spiritual gifts, and the Word of God exhorts us to do this, I know.

We must remember that although gifts are bestowed and outpoured, graces are inward. This inward life of the believer is the important thing. God looketh on my heart every time.

I don't want to appear to be overstressing this, but sometimes, you know, you have to push the pendulum a little bit to one side to get it to swing properly and to find the balance. And I'm very conscious of this as I've come Tuesday by Tuesday, that perhaps you may have felt that I was stressing one aspect only. It hasn't been my intention.

I feel that in all fairness, we must look both at the gifts of the Spirit and the graces of the Spirit and see that they are complementary, never contradictory, and certainly never competitive, and give to them their true value from God's standpoint. And if we can do this, then we won't go far astray. In the final reckoning, the Christian's true worth cannot be measured either by what he has or by what he does, but only by what he is.

This is the final reckoning. And just as truly as the works of the flesh reveal a man for what he is, so do the graces of the Spirit demonstrate the Christian for what he is. And although you may have all the gifts imaginable, as we saw last Tuesday evening, and lack the one essential, then all of what you have may be valueless and meaningless and purposeless in the sight of God.

So, having looked last Tuesday evening at love as the first mentioned fruit of the Spirit, and having spent some little time in the first epistle to the Corinthians, the thirteenth chapter, I felt that tonight I would like to go over the rest of the graces that are mentioned in Galatians 5.22, because I would like to leave Hamilton with any ends untied, you know. I would like to see the thing done properly. Well, as you know, I've been typing out the Scripture references to save you having to turn to them over and over again, and I will be mentioning Scripture references throughout the address tonight.

But you just concentrate not on finding where they are in the Bible, but just believe me that I've typed them out correctly and with a paraphrase here and there, and that will save a lot of time, you know. And this is a great and important thing as far as I'm concerned. Time is a very precious commodity, isn't it? Especially when it comes to the Word of God itself.

All right? What do you think? There are so many things around here. All right. Galatians 5.22 and 23, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Against such there is no law. That's Galatians 5.22 and 23. The fruit of the Spirit is joy.

What about the character of this joy? Well, joy, which is the fruit of the Spirit, has something about it which is quite distinctive. It is strong. Strong.

The psalmist could say this, the joy of the Lord is my strength. Have you ever thought of the picture behind the word strength? It means twisted together. Twisted together.

And isn't it a lovely picture? When your weakness and His almightiness are twisted together, and this makes strength. And the joy of the Lord is the expression of this strength. Now, it's much stronger than any adverse circumstance could ever be.

And you will have noticed, I'm sure, if you've read in the books of the minor prophets, in the book of Habakkuk, for instance, the third chapter of the seventeenth and eighteenth verses, you have a demonstration of this fact, that this joy is stronger, far stronger, than adverse circumstances could ever be. For the prophet goes on to say, under inspiration, don't forget, Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines. The liver of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat.

The flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls. Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. What a tremendous statement this is, isn't it? I will joy in the God of my salvation.

The Hebrew word is gil, and it means I will spin around with delight. What an expression. Everything has gone wrong, nothing appears to be working out properly, and yet when the joy of the Lord possesses this man, this is exactly his reaction.

I will rejoice in the Lord, I will spin around with delight in the God of my salvation. And I'm sure that tonight, this is how the Spirit of God would come into the midst of his people, to give us a joy which is strong, stronger than adverse circumstances that could dictate to you. Dr. Sandster tells a very good story of Dr. Farmer, who was organist at Harrell, very famous organist, and he was once rehearsing with an orchestra in which there was a salvationist, and naturally his instrument would be a wind instrument, but he was quite enthusiastic.

This salvationist had not been saved for very long, and so he was inclined to play rather too loudly, and Dr. Farmer very kindly went to him at the end of one of the sessions and just, you know, spoke to him kindly and gently and said, Brother, I know he said that you're very enthusiastic for the Lord, but could you please tone it down a little bit? Because, you see, it seems to put everything else out of balance. You play this instrument so loudly. Well, certainly, sir, I'll do my best, but God bless you, sir.

You know, I'm so full of joy, I could blow this thing out straight, he said. Well, the joy of the Lord is my strength. I don't know if the psalmist meant just that sort of strength, but this is how he felt anyway.

This is not only joy that is strong, but it is joy that is spiritual. The fruit of the spirit is joy. It shouldn't be confused with human happiness or pleasure.

The man of the world has his pleasures, and the man of the world has happiness, but happiness is because something happens to make him happy, and then something happens to make him sad, and his loss is happiness. And so with human pleasures. Pleasure is concerned with circumstances, as is happiness.

But this joy is triumphant over circumstances, because, you see, its foundations are spiritual and not circumstantial. And so it is a spiritual joy. And in the absolute sense, naturally, we have to say that this joy is supernatural, because if it is a grace of the spirit, if it is the fruit of the spirit, then it doesn't belong to the natural plane at all.

So it's not simply a matter of natural optimism here, an inclination which some very fortunate people seem to have, who always look on the bright side of things. Their disposition seems to be this way. This joy is a supernatural bestowment, supernatural.

And I do want to stress that word, because it's a word which is not in great favor in some quarters, but it is a supernatural bestowment. Father Brown of a Calcutta mission was once speaking on this very subject, the joy of the Lord. And as he spoke, there were peals of laughter that came out of him, until the whole assembly, they too were, they caught the contagion of it, and they were also rejoicing and laughing their heads off, because this is how the thing went.

At the same time that these peals of laughter were coming from this dear man of God, he was suffering intense agony with an incurable disease that no one would know about it. The joy of the Lord is my strength. It's a supernatural bestowment.

Jesus, before the agonies of Gethsemane and the darkness of Calvary, could say, My joy I give unto you, that your joy may be full. Why it is true that there is a specific promise concerning joy in the word of God given to his people. You remember, you will read about it.

I will also clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout for joy. We sing about it even, can't we? Yes, it's very true. But this joy which is a fruit of the Spirit may lie deeper than any such audible or visible manifestation.

And Peter caught a glimpse of this. When he said, Whom having not seen, he loved. In whom though now he see him not, yet believing, he rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

So it's not just a matter of shouting your head off because you're joyful. This doesn't necessarily mean that you are therefore full of the joy of the Spirit. The joy of the Spirit at times can be unspeakable joy.

Too deep for outward expression, for this is not an emotion. This is a principle in spiritual life. This is a grace of the Spirit.

This is a supernatural bestowment. The fruit of the Spirit is joy. Isn't it wonderful what Peter tells us? Here we are in love with a person we've never seen.

What an unusual affection. Whom having not seen, he loved. Hard to love some people you can see, I'm not talking about anyone here tonight, of course.

In whom though now you see him not, yet believing, he has an unrivaled confidence. Can't you believe in a person you've never seen and believing to the point where you stake your eternal destiny upon that belief? Tremendous, isn't it? Here is a joy unspeakable and full of glory. As the old Scottish lady said, better felt than felt.

Beyond description, beyond expression, supernatural. The fruit of the Spirit is peace. In a Spirit-filled life, if you take this idea of love, joy, peace as belonging to a kind of separate category, as many do, then if love is the foundation and joy is the superstructure, peace must be the crowning glory.

In classical Greek, this word, peace, *airene*, which comes into our English language in the proper noun, *airene*, *airene*, was mainly negative, freedom from war, that's what it meant. But in New Testament usage, the content of meaning in the Hebrew, *shalom*, has been taken up. And that meant, of course, not simply

freedom from war, but it meant harmony within a total community where the whole nation, like a family, were at one.

And this is the thought behind this word, peace. As you have it here, the fruit of the Spirit is peace. It's the peace of fellowship, the peace of family relationship.

It's the undisturbed peace which is the result of the Holy Spirit's working and moving in the lives of God's people. Praise the Lord. It's a marvelous gift, this, isn't it? A marvelous grace of the Spirit, this peace which passes all understanding.

Now, this isn't a peace of passivity, letting the world drift by without accepting any responsibility. Nor is it the peace of withdrawal, like the detachment of the sage, the poet, the philosopher, the hermit, not at all. This fruit of the Spirit is virile, strong, active.

And in at least two passages, the Apostle Paul makes this very clear. The first is Colossians 3.15, I'll let the peace of God rule in your hearts. The word rule, bravetto, comes from brabus, the umpire, the arbitrator.

Let the peace of God become the umpire, the arbitrator in all moral and spiritual issues which you may face. So this peace, which is the fruit of the Spirit, is something strong and virile and active in the lives of God's people. Are you contemplating some line of action? You've prayed about it? Don't feel happy about it? What is happening? This fruit of the Spirit, this arbitrator, this umpire, is trying to say something to you.

When in doubt, don't. If the road ahead of you takes a bend and you can't see beyond, it's time to take short steps. Wait for the voice of the arbitrator.

Listen to the voice of the umpire. And as you listen, then you will soon find out whether or not what you're about to do will bring the blessing of God. Peace, in this sense, is the arbitrator, the umpire.

But then again, in Philippians 4, 7, you read, The peace of God which passeth all understanding, and thank God passeth all misunderstanding too, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Now, the idea of virility is in the word keep. Floresai.

It means keeping like a fortress warder garrisons a fort. Protecting, guarding. And that's the idea here.

The peace of God like a fortress warder garrisoning your heart and mind and keeping it intact from the attacks of the evil one. So the fruit of the Spirit which peace fulfills is really an important function in the life of the believer. It safeguards his spiritual interests and his integrity.

And although this is a spiritually endowed peace, yet it certainly is based on practical issues. For instance, we are told in the longest psalm in the Bible, Psalm 119, verse 165, Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. The continuity of this peace is therefore dependent upon observance of certain principles in the word of God.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee. That's Isaiah 26.3. So here's another principle. Staying the mind on God.

Calling the wandering thoughts together and focusing the attention upon Him. Continuity of peace depends upon this too. There are many who seem to lose this continuity of peace because of confusion.

They confuse temptation to sin with sin itself. And so they lose their peace. Others, they lose this continuity of peace because they confuse natural preference with divine guidance.

Others do it because they confuse impression with revelation. And still others because they confuse Christian perfection with absolute holiness. They forget that for the believer, sanctification is not innocence, as we have often said, but conquest.

Not a state, but a standing by faith. And on the other hand, there are those who lose the continuity of peace because they tolerate sin in their lives and refuse to listen to the voice of the arbitrator, the voice of the umpire. They say, well, time is a great healer, but time will never heal sin.

The only thing that can deal with this situation is conviction and contrition and confession and cleansing and nothing else. So, my brother, my sister, if you are conscious of unconfessed sin in your life, it is no wonder that you do not have the peace of God continuing like a balm of Gilead in your life's experience. You will have to do something about that sin before ever the peace of God will descend upon you like the dew upon Mount Hermon.

There is a principle involved. The continuity of this peace may also be sacrificed because surrender to God is incomplete. Although with his lips a man may say with Solomon, blessed be the Lord God that hath given rest unto his people Israel according to all that he promised, that hath not failed one word of all his good promise, he may say it with his lips, and with his life he may deny it.

Or he may resign himself to the will of God. He may conform to the will of God, but he is not wholly abandoned to the will of God, neither can he say, I delight to do thy will, O God. There is something wrong here.

This person has never yet discovered the thou and me relationship that Saul discovered on the way to Damascus. Who art thou, Lord? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Thou and me, Lord, thou and me.

It is when you reach this position in your relationship that you can be sure of the continuity of peace because your abandonment is then complete. S. D. Gordon, in one of his wonderful quiet talk series, tells how on one occasion, as the evening shadows were falling, a horseman in the American forest came upon a clearing, a little clearing, and there he saw a log cabin, and framed in the doorway was an old colored lady standing there, her white hair and her face so tranquil, so peaceful, that he himself sat there in amazement, looking at her. And then he ventured to call out in the quietness of the evening hour, Are you all alone there, auntie? Are you all alone? And the answer came back so quietly, Just me and Jesus, master.

Just me and Jesus. Thou and me. And I am sure if there is one thing the Spirit of God desires of doing, it is of bringing us into this relationship, where it is not thou and half a dozen other people, and somebody else's desires or expressions, and then me.

No, thou and me. The continuity of this peace, which is a grace of the Spirit, can be broken if our abandonment to the will of God is not complete, if we are holding back part of the price. You can never deceive God.

The fruit of the Spirit is long-suffering. Now, some of the qualities mentioned in the graces of the Spirit may appear to be merely passive, certainly not as robust and strong as others, but this is due to association in

our thinking with certain human traits unrelated to Christianity as an experience altogether. But we must remember we are not discussing human disposition as such, but we are thinking of the harvest of the Spirit, and none of this will ever be found to be weak, apologetic, vacillating.

But always strong and active. Every one of the graces of the Spirit, without exception, is strong and vital and vibrant with supernatural spiritual life. Everyone, without exception.

Long-suffering, makrathumia, we considered this last Tuesday night, when we talked about love which suffereth long and is kind. And we saw it is the ability to remain steady and good-tempered under extreme and prolonged provocation. And I think the key to this lies in the Christian's utter trust in the essential goodness of God.

Every Christian will know suffering in some shape or form, but he should also know that if he is in the will of God, then every miracle of suffering grace is only preparing the way for a miracle of reigning glory. For if we suffer, we shall reign. And therefore, he can accept this, and by so doing, can manifest that long-suffering which is a grace of the Spirit and which brings glory to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, there are three essential ingredients in this long-suffering. The first is unending patience. As we have seen, it is the reaction of a love-filled life to intense provocation.

This is long-suffering. We are inclined, perhaps by nature, to suffer long and then to be very unkind, but this is human nature. The grace of the Spirit is unending patience underlying this long-suffering.

Do you recall how Paul could write to the Corinthians, commending the testimony of himself and his workers to them and reminding them of how they had lived amongst them, how they had proved the reality of their relationship with Jesus Christ? He said, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love and fame. That is 2 Corinthians 6.6. And this sort of long-suffering is produced by the strengthening which the Holy Spirit Himself supplies, for this is His gracious way. Colossians 1.11. Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, and to all speaking with tongues, and to all prophecy, and to all faith, and to all healing, and to all manifestation, and to all demonstration, not a bit of it, and to all patience, and long-suffering, and joyfulness.

But we forget this side of the Holy Spirit's power. We ought not to. Here it is, underlying this grace of the Spirit, the strengthening, the empowerment, the endowment which the Spirit of God Himself brings into the life of the believer.

The second ingredient is unfailing endurance. The quality of long-suffering enables a man to stand up and to endure hardship without retaliation, without revenge. Peter knew about this, 1 Peter 2.19. In fact, Peter is quite an authority on suffering.

He talks about suffering as a busy body. But if you suffer as a busy body, it's your own fault, and that's the end of that, isn't it? Suffering for faults. Well, if you're at fault and you're suffering, it's your own fault, and that's quite negative, too.

But the suffering as a Christian, suffering in the will of God, suffering for consciency, and this is something that he talks about here, for this is thank-worthy if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. Long-suffering as a fruit of the Spirit knows neither bitterness nor resentment. And if it is born of the Spirit, if it is endowed by the Spirit, this will be its characteristic.

This will be something of its expression. The third ingredient, unwavering confidence. There's a devastating courage about the man of God who knows this kind of long-suffering.

Because, you know, he can say with Job, it seems to me, though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. That's devastating courage to me. Or with Peter and John in Acts 4, as it is recorded, when they said, you cannot speak in this name.

They said, we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard. Whatever the consequences may be, this is how it's going to be. And so, you see, this long-suffering has an unwavering confidence about it that is part of its expression.

Now, a great deal more could be said about this very essential grace of the Spirit, but as I said, we mentioned this last Tuesday night, so we will leave it at that. Just remind each other that the Spirit-filled man does not retaliate under provocation. He doesn't do it.

The fruit of the Spirit is gentleness. This word may be translated kindness and has within it the idea of usefulness in the service of others. We saw this, too, last Tuesday night as we came to talk about love being kind.

There's a travesty of kindness, of course, and we see this often on the human level. Through popular concepts, the term itself becomes debased. And you know the kind of thing that happens.

He has a vitriolic tongue, and he fair bites your head off, but he has a kind heart. Brother, if what he has got is of the Spirit, it has got to come out somewhere. Oh, you know, he really means well.

He's very kind at heart. Haven't you heard that kind of thing? I'm sure you have. It's used as a sort of compensation for somebody who doesn't do the right thing, you know, and you try to defend him in this sort of way.

There can be human attitudes that can become a travesty of this fruit of the Spirit. Then it is divorced from clear thinking, and from reality itself, and eventually from God, too, divorced completely from what is truly spiritual. I read the other day something that just passes into my mind.

A man, a business man, was talking to his wife, and he said, look, I'll have to get rid of that chauffeur that you hired. Three times now, he said, including this time today, three times. I've just about lost my life because of him.

He's not fit to be driving. Oh, dear, she said, don't sack him. Don't, don't, don't dismiss him.

Give him another chance. You must be kind. Give him another chance.

But you see, this is the travesty of what the Spirit of God wants to do, isn't it? This sort of thing can be equated with compromise, with a failure to be honest, with a kind of gentleness that is certainly not born of the Spirit at all, but is very often simply a convenience. What about the reality of this sort of kindness that the Spirit of God imparts? It isn't passive. It's an active thing.

But be kind one to another, says the Apostle, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. This fruit of the Spirit, which is gentleness or kindness, has the ring of reality about it. It's supernatural, as we say.

Not simply a human trait as carried to its furthest extent and then sanctified to a divine use, not that at all, but a grace of the Spirit of God. And I believe that God wants us to see this quite clearly, that it isn't a question of sanctifying what we have as a disposition and merely using that that satisfies the heart of God, but the creation of a new kind of life within you and within me, an inwrought character that can only come because the Spirit of God is allowed to have His right of way in your life and mine. In the 18th century, when the mission to Lepers asked for volunteers, there was a great response.

Those missionaries who went, they understood exactly what was involved. They knew that when they entered that compound, they could never leave it. But they went because they had this gentleness, this kindness that loves to serve.

And they labored amongst these poor people. They ministered to them. They suffered with them.

They lived with them. They rotted with them. They died with them.

But they pointed them home to God. The fruit of the Spirit is kindness, gentleness. The same thing.

The fruit of the Spirit is goodness. This word comes from *agathos*, and it means, from the standpoint of definition, kindness in action. But who on earth would want to imprison goodness within the bounds of a definition? As I looked into this word, I discovered it is essential holiness that is in view here, an inward quality, not imputed, mark you, but imparted, bestowed by the Holy Spirit, an inward quality of holiness.

And it isn't withheld from any Christian at all. But each one of us has to lay hold upon it. Writing to the Corinthians in his second letter, the seventh chapter and the first verse, Paul makes this very clear.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. It's a great text, isn't it? Holiness predicted. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, holiness provided, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, holiness perfected, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

It's a lovely text, that. Often said, God has Himself provided the agencies for this sort of experience. The Word of God, sanctified by the Word, as Jesus Himself shows in John 17, the informing agent, sanctified by the blood, the cleansing agent, sanctified by the Spirit, the applying agent.

Sanctified by faith, the appropriating agent. But we've got to do it. Something we must do.

Cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. So you see that when this essential holiness becomes the keynote to what is mentioned here, the fruit of the Spirit is goodness. We mustn't lose sight of what is involved.

This grace of the Spirit is experientially the secret of the Christian's personal attractiveness. The earliest artists, remember, they used to think in terms of a halo around the heads of the saints. I suppose it was because they wanted to express an inner radiance in some way.

But thank God we don't need a halo to express the inner radiance. Because Christianity, with a purpose, is what holiness is all about. Not religion with a halo.

And this true goodness is not the type of holiness that is repellent, but always attractive. True goodness is like this. It isn't repellent, but it can be terribly convicting.

It's a very embarrassing thing to try to walk with a God person if your life isn't right for the God. Isn't it? But that isn't done purposely. One thing is absolutely certain as I see it.

This fruit of the Spirit can grow only in soil that isn't choked with the weeds of selfishness. Dear Dr. Harry Ironside was once attending a huge convention held in a tent. And there was a banner outside the tent.

It just said, Holiness Convention. And underneath, somebody had, I think, tacked some words on. But underneath, the words were, Jesus only.

He said, this is marvelous. But in the night time, a storm arose. And the first three letters in the word Jesus somehow disappeared.

When he got there in the morning, Holiness Convention, us only. He realized, he said, that there must have been some reason why there wasn't very much blessing around. And don't you see that this kind of holiness about which we are speaking here can only be developed in ground which has been cleared of all the choking weeds of selfishness.

The fruit of the Spirit is faith. The word is peistis. And it means faithfulness or trustfulness.

Faithfulness preferably. This is the quality of character wrought by the Holy Spirit that enables a man to stand firm and true and loyal. Faithfulness.

I wish there was more time to deal with this. The first thing I notice about a person who has this grace of the Spirit developed in his life is that he possesses fidelity. And here, fidelity as a term is not a synonym for orthodoxy in the narrow sense of the word.

It doesn't mean that he has passed some creedal test or that he has subscribed to some rules of belief or some tenets of faith by some church or denomination. Although this faithfulness originates with the Holy Spirit himself, never forget, it is still deeply rooted in the personal faith of the believer. He is the person concerned here.

And if the fruit of the Spirit is faith or faithfulness, then that faithfulness is applied to the person. And he is trustworthy. If he possesses this grace of the Spirit, this essential faithfulness, he will be dependable in every situation.

Although circumstances may seem to be against him, I'm controlling him. He knows there is someone controlling the circumstances. And you can never say of him, well, under the circumstances, he's not under the circumstances, he's in the circumstances.

Circum, around, stand, side, stand. You're not under the circumstances, you're in them. And so he is trustworthy.

He knows that the confluence of circumstances themselves will result in his ultimate blessing. Because each situation, as he sees it, is part of the all things that work together for good to them that love God. And so he refuses to doubt in the dark what he has proved in the light.

When Bramwell Booth came to the General with the sad news that the doctors could do nothing more to save his sight, save the General's sight, the old man paused for a moment and then said to his son, well, Bramwell, it seems to me, I have served the Lord as best I knew how with my sight, and now he expects me to do my best for him without my sight. That was all he had to say. Trustworthy.

The fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness. The third thing about this man is that he experiences victory. The attitude of such a man is in perfect accord with what John was able to say.

This is the victory of overcoming, even our faith. Is his reputation being attacked? Is suffering his lot? Does he have to endure loneliness or even estrangement? Is it gross misrepresentation? Is it plausible reasoning of his nearest and dearest friends that caused the conflict? And this can often happen. It happened in John Bunyan's case.

He says that it wasn't the ravings of his enemies that brought conflict to him, but the reasonings of his friends who came to the prison and said, John, you'd better give in to the authorities. Think of your blind daughter, Mary, and how she's suffering. Think of your family.

Man, God doesn't expect this. Give in. Just say that you won't preach again in the way that you've been preaching.

If it were not for this grace of faithfulness, he could never have stood the test. But he came through with flying colors. I sometimes really think we have to pray very earnestly, Lord, save me from my friends.

Haven't you ever prayed that prayer? I guarantee you have. Because very often, the advice of our friends can be so contrary to the will and purpose of God. And so in all these ways, we are tested that the fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness, trustfulness, the ability to possess fidelity, yes, to be trustworthy, to know victory in the midst of the circumstances.

The fruit of the Spirit is meekness. This word is *prautes*. In classical Greek, meekness was condemned as being weakness, denoting a servile, groveling kind of spirit.

But remarkably enough, it is the one grace of the Spirit which Jesus chose in his own self-revelation when he said, I am meek. Not the only time you hear Jesus speak of himself in this way, but he said, I am meek and lowly in heart, ye shall find rest unto your soul. The man who has this grace of the Spirit possesses a spiritual forbearance.

This is a sign of spiritual maturity, Christian maturity, if you like. As Paul wrote, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, spiritual forbearance that denotes this sort of thing. And it also reflects the grace of forgiveness.

For it is only in meekness that Christian forgiveness has any real value in the sight of God. Forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so do ye in meekness. Possessing this in-wrought grace of the Spirit, there is reason to believe that the person has a spiritual intelligence that he couldn't have in any other way.

The idea is implicit in this kind of meekness. James tells us this, James 1 and 21. Therefore receive with meekness the engrafted Word which is able to save, to deliver you souls, and this in the fullest sense of salvation.

There is a need for such spiritual meekness that will bring intelligence concerning the things of God. For only thus can we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This meekness is not rooted or grounded in an inferiority complex, but finds expression in the attitude of Jesus to the will of God, who humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

This is the sort of thing where we can say, Sweet will of God, still fold me closer, till I am wholly lost in thee, the fruit of the Spirit, his temperance, self-control, concerned with a mastery over the self-life of the believer. And I'm sure I don't need to ask you whether you believe in the necessity for self-control, for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. We have heard this so many times, and we know it in bitter experience, many of us.

The inevitable conflict which arises when the aspiring soul is confronted with the down-thrusting passions of the flesh life, and the fight is on. Jesus said, That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit, and you can never get the two to meet, or ever to agree. And so we don't doubt the necessity for this self-control.

What about the agency which God has appointed? It lies in the application of the cross in the power of the Spirit. The 24th verse of Galatians 5 will tell you this, And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections, that is, require that in this application we take into account the personal ministry and the function of the Holy Spirit. Verse 25 of the same chapter, If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

In other words, seeing this as your true principle of life, not the flesh but the Spirit, then see to it that you adapt your conduct to this principle. For there is the possibility of self-control offered to each one of us in this grace of the Spirit. It's not a state from which you can never fall, or in which there is no possibility of failure, not at all.

It's a standing by faith, and in reliance on the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. For only thus is the mastery over the self-life a reality. It can be an ideal in any sense of the term you like, but it's only a reality when the Holy Spirit functions in this experience, applying the cross as only He knows how.

When Paul comes to the end of this list of the fruit of the Spirit, he concludes it with these words, Against such there is no law. What does he mean? Against such virtues and graces as I here recorded, there is no law to condemn them. No charge can be brought against them.

But could this in all honesty be said concerning the gifts of the Spirit in their function in the Christian church? Unfortunately, the carnal playground of an unsanctified life has often made havoc of these wonderful spiritual things. The church at Corinth is an example, as we know, of this situation. But let us not therefore set them aside as though they are of no value.

These gifts came from God. They belong to God. They will be required by God on the day of accounting.

And remember, they must be used for God. Don't disparage them. Don't despise them.

Don't discredit them. But put them alongside the fruit of the Spirit. Keep them there in true perspective.

And then you will see that behind it all, God is working out a glorious, beautiful, wonderful purpose in your life and mine, to endow us with gifts for service, but to bestow upon us graces that will make us fit vessels and fit channels that He can use in and through these ministries appointed in the church. The healthiest climate for the Christian is not the frigid zone of legalism, where you say, it's all over and done with. We'll have nothing more to do with it.

Let's be finished. Let's get out of it. Nor is it yet the torrid zone of fanaticism, where you say, hallelujah, we've got the gifts of the Spirit.

It's everything. Marvelous. But always the temperate zone of realism, where you value the gifts for the sake of the giver, and you treasure the graces because they are enwrought by the Spirit of God.

I trust that in what I've said tonight, I haven't given you the impression that in the least way I would want to disparage any one of God's gracious gifts, far be it from me. I've spoken with tongues. I've prophesied.

I know what it means. But I do know this, too, that there is a lack, it seems to me, in the church in many, many quarters, a lack of understanding of the true character and nature of the Holy Spirit, the kind of person that He is, the loving, gracious, sympathetic person that He is, and how He longs to impart His very own character to you and me in the fruit of the Spirit. And if He can bring us to the place where we are as ready and as open to receive from Him these gracious and wondrous fruits of His very nature and being, as we are to long for spiritual gifts and manifestations, then I am sure that He, by His marvelous way with us, will accomplish in us the sweet will of God.

We shall yet see in the Christian church a manifestation of His presence that the world has not seen up to this date. May God bless His Word. Let us pray.

O God our Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee again tonight for the deep consciousness we have of Thy presence with us in this place. For we know that out of Thy Word Thou hast spoken to us by Thy Holy Spirit, and we have felt and known and have been conscious of Thy voice speaking to us, even as we have tried to speak to others. And now, O Lord, we pray that we may not simply be hearers of the Word, but doers also.

We long to be more like Jesus, and surely the fruit of the Spirit that we have been considering tonight, including love, which heads the list, is nothing more nor less than the summing up, not simply of the nature and character of the Holy Spirit, but of the very life of Jesus, our Lord and Master. We would be like Him. And so we pray that Thou wilt help us to open up our very being to all the workings of Thy Holy Spirit, whose one great passionate yearning and supreme function it is to magnify Christ in the hearts of His people.

We ask these things for His dear name's sake. Amen.

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