

Fruits Of The Spirit #6

Galatians 5:22-23

Oh My “GOODNESS”

God has always wanted His people to be “good.” He places such a high priority on it that he repeatedly commands His people to do just that.

For example: Galatians 6:9 God encourages us to “not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

In John's 3rd letter he tells us “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is from God, but he who does evil has not seen God.

Romans 2 says, “God will give to each person according to what he has done. For those who are self-seeking and reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger, honor and peace for everyone who does good.”

I read something strange in the book of Matthew this week while I was preparing for this message. It's found in Matthew 19:16-17. It says, “A man came up to Jesus and asked, Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life? Jesus replied, why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good.”

Well, I'm confused!! In one place I'm told that God wants me to be good, but then, in Matthew, Jesus says there is only one who is good and that's God. In fact Romans 3:10 tells us “There is no one righteous, not even one.” Romans 3:23 says, “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”

So if that's true, if we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, or none of us are inherently good or righteous, then why do so many people think of themselves as basically good?

Let me illustrate it like this: How many of you have had your picture taken for your driver license? It is almost a universal complaint that those photographs don't do us justice. To prove this point I have found some very unfortunate driver license pictures that I would like to show you.

They're not glamour shots. One well known photographer said: "There are very few beautiful women or handsome men in the world. It takes careful lighting and posing to make people appear attractive. Many do not know they have a crooked nose, one small eye, a lopsided jaw, or some other flaw. Unfortunately when they look into a mirror, they are usually in some type of activity like shaving or combing their hair. This is deceiving, for when a person is in motion physical defects aren't noticeable. But when he is still, as a photographer, his undesirable features become obvious." How's that for truth?

What the Bible teaches us is.... We have a flaw in our souls. And when we are still, when we sit down long enough to examine our lives and meditate on the things we've said and done over the past week we would see that flaw ourselves. Because there are things we've thought, said and done that, if known to those around us would make us sink away in shame. The flaws would be apparent and that flaw is SIN!

One person put it this way, "God formed us' sin deformed us, but the good news is, Christ transformed us.

That's the good news of Galatians 5. God doesn't say we'll be filled with goodness because we're nice people. God says that we will be filled with goodness because we're filled with His Spirit. If your walking in the Spirit of Jesus, then your producing a good crop.

Take this branch I pulled from an apple tree. Will it ever again produce apples?
No, because it is no longer attached to the tree.

Jesus said "remain in me and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself' it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me." John 15:4

Jesus is saying, if I want to have the kind of goodness that God desires in my life then I MUST remain in Him.

So the question is, how do I produce the kind of crop or fruit that would be pleasing to Him?

1. The first thing we should do is what we are already doing right now which is go to church. I know that sounds so simplistic but sometimes we miss it

because we think, "it cannot be that simple. Hebrews 10:24,25 "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the day approaching."

My job is to challenge you from the pulpit, but a church really grows strong when you folks encourage each other.

2. The second thing we can do to produce good fruit is found in 2 Timothy 3:16,17 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God maybe complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

We need to constantly find ways to get this Book in us!! John F. Brand said, "The Bible is meant to bread for daily use, not cake for special occasions."

God's Word changes our hearts. It makes us better people. The more exposure we have to Gods Word the more of Christs goodness we'll have in our hearts and lives.

Jesus said, "Let your light shine before all men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven."

When God dwells solidly within us by our constant fellowship with each other and by our constant exposure to Gods Word, then He begins to shine through in everything we do and say. This is how I can produce the kind of fruit that God desires for my life. The only way to be a part of Jesus, is to attach yourself to His tree!!