

## 1 **Jesus Fruit**

- Galatians 5:1, 13-25

## 2 **Tonight's Scripture**

- It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Gal 5:1 NIV)
- But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. (Gal 5:13-15 NIV)

## 3 **Tonight's Scripture**

- So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. (Gal 5:16-18 NIV)

## 4 **Tonight's Scripture**

- The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. (Gal 5:19-20 NIV)
- I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal 5:21 NIV)

## 5 **Tonight's Scripture**

- But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Gal 5:22-25 NIV)

## 6 **Introduction**

- Fruit comes in all shapes and sizes.
- Some are spherical -- like oranges, blueberries and grapes.
- Others are oblong -- like mangoes and papayas.
- Still others are apple- or banana-shaped like, such as apples and bananas.

## 7 **Introduction**

- Some farmers, though, are challenging our assumptions about the shape of fruit.
- Watermelons, for example, no longer need to be the rounded oblong shape with which we are most familiar.
- Go to the right market, and you may find square watermelons grown by botanical artists.
- At a restaurant, the cucumbers in your salad might appear heart-shaped rather than round, due to the produce shaping of another farmer.

## 8 Introduction

- While amazing, forming produce into basic shapes like squares and hearts is just the beginning.
- One agricultural virtuoso has developed a process where pears—having long been pear-shaped—can now arrive at your farmer's market in the shape of little Buddhas.
- The arms and facial features are so well-defined that the Buddha appears to be in a prayer-like, meditative state.

## 9 Introduction

- These fruits look like beautiful little sculptures or carvings, but no knives are used to create them.
- These pears are grown this way.
- To grow square watermelons and Buddha-shaped pears, farmers use specially designed molds they attach to the fruit when it first appears.
- As the young fruit matures, it grows into the mold, taking on the shape of the inside of the tool.

## 10 Introduction

- When the fruit is ripe, the mold is removed.
- The fruit retains the shape of the mold, allowing the farmer to deliver a square watermelon, heart-shaped cucumber or Frankenstein-shaped pumpkin to the market.

## 11 Producing Fruit

- With or without the mold, producing fruit is no easy task.
- Because of our distance from the farm or orchard, many of us have lost our appreciation for just how difficult this process is.
- We simply go to the local grocery store and pick up whatever fruit we like, at a reasonable price.
- It's all right there before us and we can receive it instantly.

## 12 Cultivating Fruit

- Unfortunately, there's no market where we can acquire the fruit of the Spirit -- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
- Instead, we need to become orchard keepers, cultivating these virtues within us.

## 13 Our Role in Fruit Production

- Ordinary pears, watermelons and all other fruit we consume require a great deal of time and labor.
- Seeds are planted. Trees are pruned. Weeds are removed. Plants are watered. Pests are treated.
- Farmers take great care to ensure that the plants have all they need to produce beautiful, delicious fruit.

## 14 Our Role in Fruit Production

- Then there's the waiting.
- Trees and plants take time to grow.
- Buds appear slowly, and fruit grows and matures over many days and nights.
- Successful growers need both hard work and patience to bring the fruit to market.

#### 15 **Our Role in Fruit Production**

- We often would like the fruit of the Spirit to appear instantaneously in our lives, making us, for example, more joy-filled or generous people.
- Instead, receiving the fruit of the Spirit requires us to become more like the farmers, patiently working the soil of our lives to make the conditions right for the fruits of joy and generosity to grow within us.

#### 16 **Our Role in Fruit Production**

- As a farmer waters the plants, we need to include times of spiritual refreshment like worship, Scripture reading and prayer in our lives.
- Farmers prune, weed and treat pests.
- Likewise, we need to remove from our lives anything that is counter-productive to our growth as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Like a farmer works the soil, we, too, need to get our hands dirty by serving, living as citizens of God's Kingdom in the world today.

#### 17 **Our Role in Fruit Production**

- As an uncultivated or untended apple or peach tree might occasionally produce some fruit, we, too, might receive some of the fruit of the Spirit without much effort.
- When cared for, though, those fruit trees can become far more productive, producing beautiful fruit more regularly.
- So, too, it is with us.

#### 18 **Our Role in Fruit Production**

- We become growers of spiritual fruit as we participate in making the conditions right to allow the fruit of the Spirit to grow within us.
- We must then be diligent in watering, weeding and working in the orchard of our lives.
- We do not do this work to earn the fruit.
- Rather, we enter into this process to make the conditions right for God to produce the fruit in us.

#### 19 **The Produce Section**

- So when you go to the grocery store. Where do you find fruit and vegetables? Is it in the "Hardware Section" or in the "Produce Section?"

- In other words, fruit is not something that is manufactured by the hands of men, but the byproduct of the natural process of life of sowing and reaping.
- The role of the farmer is to participate in that natural process.
- By no means do farmers cause the fruit to grow. Instead, they make the conditions right to give the fruit the opportunity to grow. Then they get to collect what the earth produces.
- The same is true in our spiritual lives. We cannot manufacture fruit on demand, but nurture the process that makes it grow and flourish.

## 20 **The Produce Section**

- These fruits aren't zapped into our lives.
- Rather, we are given the opportunity to allow them to grow within us.
- When we participate in the process, cultivating spiritual fruit by planting, watering, pruning, weeding and waiting, we make room for God to do wonderful work within us.

## 21 **The Mold of Christ**

- While love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control are not necessarily unique to Christianity, they are nevertheless the byproduct of someone who is cultivating a relationship with God and submitting themselves to the mold He has given us, which is seen in His Son Jesus Christ.
- In other words, the fruit of God's Spirit is produced in us as we submit ourselves to the teachings of Christ, which was modeled for us to see and know through the life of Jesus Christ.

## 22 **The Mold of Christ**

- The freedom that Christ has set us free is freedom from the Mosaic Law along with its many ceremonial, sacrificial, and religious obligations, which had some educational value to the coming of Christ, but also easily distracted us from the virtues of true religion, righteousness, and godliness.
- In other words, Christ has set us free from the power of Satan and the obtrusiveness of the Mosaic Law, so that we can serve God through the words of His Son—Jesus Christ.
- As we do so, relying upon the Holy Spirit for strength and guidance, we position ourselves for the production of good fruit, which will never spoil.
- But this will not happen, unless Jesus is LORD of our lives and His word takes precedence in how we live.

## 23 **Free to be**

- There is a common, cultural assumption that you and I are limited by circumstances beyond our control.
  - A psychologist might tell us we are the products of our parents and limited by their emotional health.

- An economist might say we are products of our class, limited in our options by the wealth or poverty into which we were born.
- A sociologist might say we are products of our neighborhood or ethnicity, shaped and limited by cultural traditions and norms.

#### 24 **Free to be**

- However, my Bible tells me, God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. (Eph 3:20 NIV)
- In other words, when our faith in God causes us to surrender to His will, it puts us into position where all kinds of good fruit can be produced in us—regardless of our circumstances and personal background.
- Christ has set us free to worship God in spirit and in truth—not in religious forms, but in true righteousness and godliness.
- In these kinds of conditions, abundant fruit will be cultivated and grown in our lives.

#### 25 **Free to be**

- So then, let us sanctify (set apart) Jesus Christ as Lord in our lives (1 Peter 3:15) and put on the new self (the mold Christlikeness), created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph 4:24 NIV)
- For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph 2:10 NIV)
- Therefore, let’s allow the transformational grace of God work in our lives as we walk according to God’s Spirit—who always leads us to put on the mold of Christlikeness in our lives so that we produce abundant spiritual fruit in our lives to the glory of God.

#### 26 **Summary**

- If Christ lives in you, know this . . . He has set you free to produce “good fruit.”
- We are the field and God’s word is the seed.
- If we abide in sowing good seed, the life of Christ will produce in us, all kinds of good fruit.
- As Jesus has said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5 NIV)

#### 27 **Communion**