

Readings: Deuteronomy 2, Proverbs 29, John 12

The Fruit of the Spirit

When we were baptised we had reached a point in our life where we knew we had to change our ways. Instead of pleasing ourselves we had to focus on pleasing God and so we began a process of radical change of both thought and deed.

How do we to effect this change? Galatians 5:22-25 reveals that we must start to develop the 'fruit of the spirit' in our daily life. *"But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."* Love is a fruit of the spirit.

We are commanded to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength. Our example is the Lord Jesus Christ who never strayed from His Father's will and whose speech was without deceit or malice. Jesus instructed his disciples to *'love one another as I have loved you'* John 15:12 and this is the type of love we should show to each other.

Jesus also tells us to *'Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you'*. (Luke 6:27). This is very difficult to do, tests our faith and is demonstrated in the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10 25-37). The lawyer had asked: *"Master what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"* This parable shows the lawyer, the Priest, the Levite and us the importance of loving everyone, even our enemies. The man who was robbed was shown compassion by the hated Samaritan, who not only took him to safety, but also committed to paying for his ongoing care.

The lawyer must have been humbled by this answer and Jesus' question: *"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he (the lawyer) said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."* (Luke 10:36, 37). What a powerful lesson for us.

Peter wrote: *"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity (love)"* (2 Peter 1:5-7).

Our acts of love spring from our faith and our faith springs from our delight in God's word which highlights what God expects from us. Those Jews in the parable knew what was expected of them, but chose not to do it. Let us choose to follow Jesus' example.

Showing love is a very important aspect of daily discipleship. Let us show love to all with whom we come into contact, knowing this pleases our Heavenly Father. Although we fall short of the high standard that Jesus set, God understands our human weaknesses and we can take confidence from Paul's words in Romans 8:38-39: *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

Since God cannot be approached by sinners He gave His Son to the world as proof of his love for us. Jesus showed his love for God and us by laying down his life for the forgiveness of our sins.

So let us now remember with love and thankfulness the death and resurrection of Jesus by partaking of bread and wine as he commanded us too.

Brother Peter Rogers: Weston UK 19.04.20