

THE224 Christian Narrative 2 Redemption

Unit 4b The Fruit and Gifting of the Holy Spirit

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Welcome to Session 4B of Christian Narrative 2. Today we'll focus on the fruit and gifting of the Holy Spirit. Our main teaching point today is that the Holy Spirit has especially equipped each believer in order that he or she might accomplish the mission of Christ. Let's start by first taking a look at the fruit of the Spirit. This comes from Galatians 5:22-23. You see that on the left of your screen there. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." So the purpose of the fruit of the Spirit is that it gives evidence of the life lived in the power of the Holy Spirit and Christ Jesus. So we have been called to live a holy life. And without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, this is in fact impossible. Yet when we submit ourselves in the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives as believers, these things begin to grow in us. These fruits of the Spirit, they are planted as seeds and they grow into a fullness in the life of the believer over time. And so they should be displayed more and more and more. So let's take a brief and quick look through these individual fruits of the Spirit.

Now, all the descriptions you're going to see in the right-hand side are going to come from Ronald Fung's work on Galatians in the New International Commentary on the New Testament series. I would encourage you to take a look at that. He gives some great simple definitions of the fruits of the Spirit. But let's take a look at, first, love. Of course, we've seen love in other places throughout the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians tells us it's a very important part of the Christian ethic. But here we simply see it listed as one of the fruits. It's the love from God. Nothing, no being, event, or object can separate us from the love of God, which is also the love of Christ. This incomprehensible love should be the controlling force of the Christian life. We shouldn't be surprised to see it at the front of this list, given priority because it is given priority throughout the New Testament, love particularly.

Next, we come to joy. Joy is defined here not as an earthly happiness, but an eternal happiness. Christian joy is unperturbed by sorrow and tribulation and indeed gives proof of its power precisely in the midst of these things. So this joy is not the absence of trouble, but the ability to experience happiness in the midst of trouble because of our relationship, because of our rootedness in the Spirit and in Christ. Next, we have peace. The Greek form for the Hebrew word shalom, we've talked about that in our first course together in Christian Narrative 1. This word shalom is definitely a loaded word. And the Greek equivalent here brings about the idea that it's not just the absence of war or trouble, but this actually denotes a positive state of wholeness, of soundness, and prosperity, of a relationship as it was always intended to be. Perfect relationship. Relationship that hasn't had any problems yet. This is supposed to define the Christian relationship. The Christian is supposed to have this type of peace with others.

Patience. A quality of God himself which is intended to lead people to repentance. That's a great definition and one which really provokes us to think about true patience. True patience leads to repentance. Kindness. This is an essential ingredient of love and, like love, expresses itself in action. Those who are kind treat others in the same way as God has treated them. Goodness. Moral excellency. I like this. Being generous in kindness or being generous with kindness. We don't just give a little bit of kindness away. We give a lot of kindness away. Goodness. Faithfulness. Loyalty and trustworthiness in one's dealings with others. Are you a faithful individual? The fruit of the Spirit, the evidence that the Spirit is working in your life is that you are loyal and trustworthy in your dealings with others. Gentleness. A humble disposition which submits to the divine will one who is able to avoid quarrels. So really kind of two different sides to this word gentleness: one who submits to God, often to the will of the divine, and yet also one who is able to navigate life in a way that avoids quarrels whenever possible.

Of course, leading then into self-control, the ability to keep one's passions under control and/or to resist temptation.

So there we have the fruit of the Spirit. Now we end with this. The Christian should display all of the fruits of the Spirit increasingly as he or she matures in Jesus Christ. In other words, it's not about picking one of the fruits of the Spirit and becoming a master of that fruit while leaving the rest behind, but rather, God has called us, if you will, to be a fruit salad, to have all of the fruits represented in our life and to grow all of those fruits up into maturity in our life because this is the true mark of Christian maturity. Now we turn our attention to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. A little bit different but also given to us by the Holy Spirit.

There are several purposes for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. First, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given for the building up of the community of Christ. We read this in several different places. Acts 1:8, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." So, it is the gifts of the Holy Spirit that enable the building of the community of Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:7, "You are not lacking in [every] gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ." You have everything you need in order to live the life that you've been called to. 1 Corinthians 14:12, "With yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church." Also then, Ephesians 4:12, you are "equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." So, the Holy Spirit gives us certain gifts that are divinely enabled to allow us to build up the church, the community of Christ. That's the first purpose.

The second purpose is that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are in fact a foretaste of the age to come. They are the down payment, if you will, of the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:4-6, "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you." They were enriched. This testimony of Jesus Christ was confirmed in them. They have lived in an age of grace. And then we go a little bit further into 2 Corinthians 1:22. We're told that it is he "who has put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee." So there's a dual role, if you will, of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. First, to build the community up to make sure that it has everything it needs in order to survive well. And then also, to seal it, to make it a promise, to make it a down payment for the age to come, the kingdom of God.

Wayne Grudem there defines a spiritual gift as any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church. Now, before we get to the individual gifts, take a look at a couple of other things important to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. First of all, Joel 2:28-29 tell us that even in the Old Testament, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit were looked forward to. There it says, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit." The gifts of the Spirit are promised by Jesus Christ. Matthew 3:11, "I will baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me (this is John speaking) is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." John 14:16, Jesus himself, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever." So, the Spirit is promised and the gifts of the Spirit are promised by Christ himself; given as the Holy Spirit wills.

With the gifts of the Spirit, we don't just come and say, "Well, here's the list. Pick which one you like." Rather, they're given specifically by the Holy Spirit. This is important. 1 Corinthians 12:11, "All of these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills." God knows who you are, Christian, and he gives you specific gifts, Christian, to be used in the service of his kingdom. Now, also we have to understand that the gifts of the Spirit are given to those who believe in Jesus Christ. These aren't gifts that are given to every individual. These aren't personality traits. These aren't other natural things. These are supernatural gifts given to us, being those who are believers, to exercise the building up of the kingdom of God.

Now, these gifts should foster specific things in us. First, the exercise of the gifts of God should be an expression of God's grace in a fallen world. So 1 Peter 4:10, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." It is grace that has allowed us to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is the grace of God that has allowed us to receive the Holy Spirit's gifts. And so as we exercise these gifts, we should do so with the servant's heart. There it says, "Serve one another with these gifts." And gifts were not given so that some could boast in the gifts that they have over and against other Christians in the church. In fact, quite the contrary, the exercise of the gifts of God should develop a healthy sense of interdependency in the local church. We read in 1 Corinthians 12 a beautiful description of the church and how it is supposed to relate to one another. There it says, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one is honored, all rejoice together."

This passage beautifully describes the necessary sense of interdependency that there needs to be in the local church. If one suffers, all suffer. If one is honored, all rejoice together with that part. This is done in conjunction because the gifts of the Spirit make us rely on one another. So here we have a list of the gifts of the Holy Spirit taken primarily from Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. Now, I haven't given you definitions at any length here on this list primarily because once we're finished with this video, we'll actually be going into an exercise that will help us both understand each one of these individually and also help us assess which spiritual gifts we ourselves have. But here you see the list in alphabetical order: administration, apostleship, discernment, evangelism, exhortation, faith, giving, healing, interpretation of tongues, knowledge, leadership, mercy, miracles, pastor or shepherd, prophecy, serving or ministering, teaching, tongues, wisdom.

Now, as we wrap up our discussion about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, I want to contrast something that we said about the fruit of the Spirit with the gifts of the Spirit. A little earlier, I told you that the fruit of the Spirit should be displayed in total, and that is, that the Christian should display all of the fruits of the Spirit increasingly as he or she matures in Jesus Christ. However, the same is not so for the spiritual gifts. Rather, the Christian should display some of the gifts of the Spirit increasingly as he or she matures in Jesus Christ. This is because the gifts themselves require interdependency. I do not have all of the gifts, but I rely on others who do have the gifts that I do not, and they rely on others who do not have the gifts that they have. And so we create a community that is interdependent on one another. If one individual were to have all the gifts, they wouldn't need other believers in their life. And so we recognize that we should develop all of the fruits of the Spirit. But the gifts of the Spirit, we should seek to understand which the Holy Spirit has given to us and then increasingly mature in those particular gifts as we mature in Jesus. So we come to the conclusion of this video by reminding ourselves that the main teaching point for this session was that the Holy Spirit has especially equipped each believer in order that he or she might accomplish the mission of Christ. He has given us the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.