

# Empire Church of the Brethren

## Sunday Service Sermons

11 August 2024

Recognizing the Holy Spirit

Text: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." *Gal. 5:22-23.*

The greatest commandment is to love.

If you want to be able to love you must allow the Holy Spirit to bring out the above qualities in you. I believe no one possesses all of these qualities without the Holy Spirit.

Maybe one or two sound like you but all of them?

We need God's help to display all of these good qualities.

Non believers watch us closely.

I have been amazed at how a person who wants to receive from me as a Christian knows just how I should act and respond to their need.

They can quote the Bible to make their point at how I have to help them.

We are being judged by how we act and how we respond to the needs around us.

One thing that puts non believers off is our religious vocabulary.

It makes us seem exclusive and above others.

I tried to witness to a neighbor, who was raised in the Waterford church of the Brethren, one night when I was getting ready to take the irrigation water from him to my place.

I was amazed at his inability to understand what I was saying, the words I was using due to his non-involvement with the church for the majority of his lifetime.

We must guard against being perceived as those who belong to a higher status than those on the outside of belief.

To attract others to join us in "The Way" we must manifest the fruit of the Spirit as set forth in today's text.

Let's look at the characteristics that others will clearly recognize in us as being produced by the Holy Spirit.

We want to walk the walk as well as we talk the walk.

The Holy Spirit produces Christian character.

What is Christian character?

The apostle Paul has told us clearly in Galatians what it is.

Here we have compressed into nine virtues not only a portrait of the life of Christ while he was on earth but also a description of the kind of life God would have Christians live here and now.

The question is, how do these qualities grow in our lives?

Some have become monks and entered a monastery, taking vows of poverty.

By becoming ascetics and applying various self-denial techniques, they have tried to acquire godly character.

Others have tried to bring about these graces through a whirl of feverish activity.

They have driven themselves to the point of exhaustion doing good works.

There is nothing evil about this in itself.

The problem comes when they inevitably start to keep a record of their good works, expecting the be rewarded for them.

Thus, instead of producing the character qualities Paul describes, they produce the ugliness of pride and project themselves as super saints.

But if we don't work at bringing to pass these nine character qualities in our lives, how do they

happen?

The secret lies in the fact that Paul calls them the “fruit” of the Spirit.

Fruit grows because of an inner compulsion.

Spiritual fruit develops as the believer is willing to say, “Father, I surrender to your Holy Spirit working within me. I will not interfere with his work in my life. As you help me, I will be as clay in the Potter’s hands. Produce this Christian character in me, not by me.”

The Holy Spirit produces Christian service.

Genuine Christian service is a direct result of the Holy Spirit’s working in and through the believer. Jesus told the multitudes one day that “whoever believes in me, streams of living water will flow from within them”.

John explains that Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit, who would come to indwell believers.

Now, we could never produce “living water” and certainly not “streams.”

At best, we can be nothing more than the channels for this divine outflow.

Paul said that “we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

God has already planned a very special service for each of us to perform.

Christian service is never merely a duty or chore when one has yielded to the Holy Spirit and is letting him direct oneself on the path of service.

It would be a delightful experience for any church if all its members were so yielded to the Holy Spirit that they were involved in that particular area of Christian service God planned for them to be involved in!

In that case, not only would they be doing exactly what God wanted them to do, but they would be doing it in power and with the strength of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit produces understanding: it is the Holy Spirit who teaches us.

Jesus said to his disciples before his crucifixion, “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.

But when he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.

In other words, Jesus was saying that he was going to send the Holy Spirit. One of whose vital functions would be to teach us, to lead us, beyond the range of mere human knowledge in regard to spiritual things.

When does this ministry of the Holy Spirit begin in a believer’s life?

The moment he or she is born again.

All of us have known new Christians who seemingly have grown by leaps and bounds in the faith.

We have marveled at their development, at the wisdom and understanding they seem to have achieved so soon.

That is no mystery.

It is simply the Holy Spirit doing his work in that believer’s life because that believer has yielded himself or herself to him.

There should never become a time in any Christian’s life when he or she is un-teachable.

The Holy Spirit produces identity, that is, he makes it possible for us to know who we are.

Paul said, “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

Christians who are consciously aware of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling never doubt their salvation. For one of the Spirit’s blessed ministries is to whisper to us constantly that we are God’s children.

It is one thing to accept with our minds the fact that the Bible declares that if we have repented of our sins and received the Lord Jesus as Savior we are forever and eternally his.

But it is quite another thing to feel the reality of that truth surging with power in our hearts.

Do you know who you are, not just with your mind, but with your heart?

That is the difference between a dutiful Christian life and one that is filled to overflowing with joy.

How is the Holy Spirit recognized in Christian’s lives, both by Christians themselves and by the world around them?

The Holy Spirit produces our Christian character, which is manifested in these nine virtues Paul calls “the fruit of the Spirit.”

He also produces Christian service, leading us to perform the good works he has planned for us.

He teaches us the meaning and the application of the great truths of the Bible, and he makes it possible for us to know who we are constantly and continually, the people of God, the sheep of his pasture, the beloved of the heavenly Father.

Those who continue the work of Jesus.

Simply, peaceably, together.

And bring God's Kingdom to earth.